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COMPILATION OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

GENERAL STUDIES PAPER – 2

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

1. Write a brief note on the basic features of the Indian constitution. If you are asked to alter or replace any of these basic features, what would they be? Justify. (200 Words)

The doctrine of Basic Structure of the Indian Constitution was evolved during the landmark judgement in Keshvananda Bharti case 1973. The basic structure concept implies that the Parliament's power to amend Constitution (Article 368) is not unfettered. So any law or amendment made is subject to the judicial review and the judiciary has the power to struck it down if found ultra vires. So the Basic Structure reflects the understanding of the thought and wisdom of our founding fathers and seeks to curb any autocracy on the part of the State. It also bolsters the idea that Judiciary is indeed the last resort of a citizen. We can also see this judgement as a precursor to judicial activism.

The basic structure according to SC include: Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State Policy, Preamble, Judicial independence, federal character of the State, separation of powers, judicial review, nature if the Indian state as secular, socialist, etc. So any law on these subjects is subject to the review and can be declared unconstitutional if against the spirit of the Constitution.

Following changes can be made:

1. Right to health, right to food, right to work can be made fundamental
2. DPSPs can be made semi-justiciable
3. FDs can be made compulsory. It can also include paying tax, voting in elections etc
4. Distribution of powers can be made more equitable in the era of cooperative federalism.
5. Transition from procedure established by law to “due process of law” as in American constitution.

Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

2. A new study says that five billion people globally do not have access to safe, affordable surgery and anaesthesia when they need them. Examine the reasons and suggest what union and state governments can do to address this issue in India. (200 Words)

Most of the poor and underdeveloped nations face the issue of lack of access to safe and affordable surgery and anaesthesia. This is because of various reasons:

1. Lack of adequate number of hospitals and also the emergency transport methods to them. The problem is more severe in rural areas of these countries. Shortage of power is another issue for operation theatres.
2. Lack of adequate number and quality of trained medical staff at these centres. Also there are shortages of medical instruments and properly sterilized kits as was seen in recent Chattisgarh tubectomy incident.
3. Often the cost of surgery is quite high for poor people who can ill-afford such expensive treatment
4. Due to such acute problems, many people die of preventable conditions like appendicitis, delivery complications, etc. This amounts to gross violation of their basic rights

To improve the situation, government can initiate measures:

1. Preventive Cure Nutrition, Sanitation Eliminating Hunger, Ensuring Food security is comprehensive Approach to be followed by Central and state govt
2. Increase investment in the Healthcare Sector from the present 1.04 % of GDP (11th plan)
3. Universal Health Coverage scheme. Arogya siri of AP provides universal coverage to its population.
4. Cost of the medicine should be lowered, use of generic medicines should be encouraged through more Jan Aushadhi outlets
5. More number of medical colleges, AIIMS. Training of AYUSH doctors in performing simple surgeries like deliveries etc as envisaged in Medical termination of pregnancy act and is also followed in US.
6. Increase penetration of health insurance.
7. Amending National Pharmaceutical Pricing Policy to make more drugs affordable.
8. Mobile surgery vans to rural areas to perform surgeries like that of eyes as is happening to be increased.
9. Making rural service compulsory for 2 years for doctors and also provide better facilities to doctors in rural areas

10. Provide tax relief who establish health institutions in rural and marginalised regions.
11. PPPs to tap the material, human and managerial resources of the private sector for public good. Also encourage corporate social responsibility.

3. Water security for rural India is measured on the following parameters: quantity, accessibility and quality. Based on these parameters, critically analyse the situation of water security and evaluate the performance of schemes in ensuring it in rural areas. (200 Words)

Water security can be measured on the basis of: Quantity - if sufficient water is available, Accessibility - How far it is available, Quality - What is the Quality of the water available.

Quantity and accessibility:

1. According to WHO if water source is more than 30 min distance then it is considered as inaccessible. In many part of rural India women spend their majority time in bringing water to their homes.
2. Ground water is overexploited leading to reduction in quantity and also quality of water available.
3. Agri waste dumping into rivers is causing eutrophication which reduces its quality and quantity.
4. Taps are almost always situated outside households and used as a centralised facility by multiple families. Every household does not have tap water.

Quality:

1. Water is contaminated with arsenic and fluoride in many areas and directly affecting health – causing water borne diseases like cholera, typhoid etc
2. River water is polluted from waste and open defecation

There had been various programmes by the government to address the water security issues, like:

National Rural Drinking Water Programme, Jalmani - to ensure safe drinking water at school. Drought Prone Area Programme, Watershed Management Programs, Rainwater Harvesting schemes, Sprinkle & Drip Irrigation, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY), Namami Gange etc.

There has been a rise in the overall 'accessibility' to 'quality water' with the increasing use of bottled water, piped water into dwelling, public tap and borewells. Yet, ~80% of rural households depend on privately extracted groundwater. The construction of toilets through 'Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan' needs to be expedited to prevent ground water pollution. Lack of regular water supply forces people to store water which turn into breeding grounds for mosquitoes, which spread diseases like malaria and dengue. Precious hours are lost in securing water. This implies a huge opportunity cost for the entire nation.

Assessments of economic impact of water pollution by WHO, taking health effects into consideration, shows that India loses 2-4 % of GDP each year because of its unclean water. This explains the need for accelerating measures to ensure quality, quantity and accessibility of water in rural areas.

4. Achieving gender parity in school education is *sine qua non* for ensuring the larger goal of women empowerment. In this regard, critically examine the progress made, roadblocks that exist and measures needed to overcome these roadblocks in achieving gender parity in school education. (200 Words)

Progress made:

1. Through govt efforts like sarva shiksha abhiyaan, RTE, MDMS etc, we have achieved the crucial goal of gender parity in primary education. Even in secondary and higher education, we have made fast progress with gender parity index being 0.9 and 0.8 respectively.

Roadblocks:

2. Patriarchal society – does not consider education of girl child important. They prefer educating boy child as they will be income earners.
3. Additional burden on girls – they have to do the usual household works, look after siblings etc. This develops an attitude that education is not meant for them. At most they are to be educated so that they have better

chances of finding good in-laws in future but not for economic empowerment.

4. Distance – Even though access to schools has improved, students still have to travel more reach schools. This is considered a problem for girls, where the chances of eve-teasing on the road are also more.
5. Poverty – Poor parents cannot afford to educate their children in general and girl child in particular.
6. Poor infrastructure facilities at school – Lack of separate toilets for girls in schools which has resulted in large number of girl drop outs from schools. Drinking water facilities are also not good

Measures needs to overcome this problem:

1. Better access to schools. Recently rajasthan govt decided to close down 17,000 govt schools for lack of students attending such schools. This will further disincentivise children from getting educated.
2. Provision of cycles to girls so that they can easily reach schools
3. Building of separate toilets to girls under swach vidyalay abhiyaan (under SBA)
4. Proper implementation of RTI. There have been many instances of private schools demanding capitation fee and transfer certificates from poor children.
5. Initiatives like beti-bacaho and beti-padhao should create enabling environment for girls for education.
6. Sukanya samriddhi accounts can help deal with monetary crunches for educating girl child
7. Conditional cash transfer schemes like dhanlaxmi should be strictly implemented.
8. More girl hostels, scholarships
9. Cooperation with voluntary sector in creating awareness about importance of girl education and the need to change attitudes.
10. Dedicated scholls for girls education like kasturba Gandhi vidyalayas in every district.
11. Awards to villages which achieve 100 % girl education on lines of nirmal gram puraskar.
12. Linking eligibility for participating in panchayat polls to compulsory girl education.

Topic: *Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes;*

5. A recent study has found that the work being offered under the MGNREGS scheme is falling with each passing year and in the past three months, it has worsened. Critically analyse the reasons for this decline in demand for jobs under this scheme. (200 Words)

Launched in 2005, the MGNREGA creates a justiciable “right to work”. It promises 100 days of wage employment in public works per year to all rural households whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work. However, it has been reported that of late the demand for work under MGNREGA has been dwindling. Following are reasons for the same:

1. Insufficient budgetary allocation and delay in release of funds from the Centre hampers the generation of enough work thus artificially squeezing demand.
2. There is delay on part of the Centre to transfer funds to the states for payment of wages. This delay in payment of wages discourages people from taking up more work,
3. Under the provision of the law on MGNREGA, if the government does not provide jobs within the stipulated 15 days, it has to pay unemployment allowance. Given that states face a cash crunch, they resort to non-registration of work demand to avoid paying the unemployment allowances.
4. Wages paid under MGNREGA is less than the private market wages in almost all states. Administrative expenses have also gone up from 5 % to 9 %, leaving little for wage payments.
5. The government has selected 2549 blocks on the basis of them being most poor and backward and looks for more allocation to them which provides for doubling the allocation, while the rest of 4000 odd blocks have same support, this will cause huge differences in wage money procurements
6. Though MGNREGS is supposed to be demand-driven, in reality the scheme is driven by officials at the top.

There is ample evidence that shows that MGNREGA has had a positive impact on rural poverty. In this light, the government needs to address the above mentioned issues to arrest the decline in demand for work, both genuine and artificial. Enhancing administrative capacities and generating awareness must be the twin objections of the proposed solution.

Topic: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

6. Should India worry about recent geopolitical developments taking place in Afghanistan? Critically comment. (200 Words)

Afghanistan has been an important element of India's foreign policy because of strategic, economic, security and connectivity [to Central Asia] implications. It is gateway to central asia, important for energy security and peace and stability in the region. But, recent spate of events in Afghanistan have caused some anxiety and concern in India. :

1. Back to back visits of Afghanistan president to Pakistan
2. Shelving of Afghanistan's demand for military equipment from India and suspension of the construction of a \$400 million tank and aircraft refurbishing plant
3. Acceptance of Pakistani offer for Afghan army cadets to train in Pakistan.
4. Holding of first China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Strategic Dialogue and increased financial commitments from Beijing in Afghanistan's infrastructure development- Dam in Kunar and Motorway to connect Peshawar with Kabul and a rail link between Quetta and Kandahar etc.
5. Growing role of SCO post withdrawal of US forces where India is yet to acquire membership inspite of repeated attempts.
6. Developing 4 iron blocks and building a steel plant in Hajigak may face road blocks due increased Pakistani say in its internal matters

However, Afghanistan shouldn't be seen as a zero-sum game with limited scope for engagement. India is the fifth largest investor in Afghanistan and has invested \$2 billion in infrastructural and humanitarian projects and formidably popular among the Afghan population.

Afghanistan's current shift is because of the current political exigencies [for e.g indispensability of role of Taliban] rather than a principled one. India must continue to engage with Afghanistan on projects of Capacity building and development.

India can engage Afghanistan in opening up of transit through Pakistan for india-afghan trade and accelerate the expansion of chabahar port which will provide an alternative route to afghan and central asia.

India needs to join hands with Iran and also China and other players in the region. China too has economic and security interests in Afghanistan. (Its domestic Uighir problem, investment in copper reserves and oil fields, and its Economic belt initiative also needs a stable Af-pak area).

Topic; Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

7. Compared to India's relationship with US, Germany and France, its relationship with the European Union (EU) is said to be in doldrums. Critically examine why. (200 Words)

India today has better bilateral relationship with countries of Europe than multilaterally with the EU. This cool down in the relationship with the EU can be attributed to various reasons:

1. The economic crisis in the EU region post the sub-prime mortgage crisis of 2008 have resulted in decreased demands, thus impacting the India-EU economic relations. On the other hand East Asia, ASEAN regions have become major trading partners of India. Only the vibrant economies in the EU like France & Germany, and the US have been able witness good recovery.
2. The EU with 28 nations have become overly bureaucratic and institutionalised. This has hampered swift decision making in India-EU relations. On the other hand India's engagement with the US, France and Germany has been increasing productively. Developing common understanding with the US over nuclear issue, Rafael deal with France etc. are examples of India's vibrant relations with these countries.
3. The failure of India to sign the free trade agreement with EU for over a decade now due to issues such as import tariff imposed by India on European auto makers. This has resulted in slowed growth of trade between the two
4. Issue of the Italian marines on trial in India has resulted in much heartburn in Europe. The EU parliament has also passed resolutions condemning India on this front.
5. The issue of denial of visa to Indian PM by EU over alleged human rights abuses in Gujarat and the recent controversy over delayed response to India's request to convene the Indo-EU summit has further strained the relationship.
6. The insistence of the EU to include the social protection clauses like human rights, child labour, caste based discrimination, labour standards in the Free Trade Agreement are of concern to India.
7. Other issues like data protection regime and Intellectual Property Regime also need to be sorted out for a stronger trade relation.
8. EU has been more concern with its existential crises due to the Greek default issue and recently the Russian invasion in Ukraine.

EU has had a long term foreign relations with India. For the relationship to grow, it would have to resolve its own economic and financial crisis and play a constructive role by giving effective resolution to regional challenges.

8. “...IBSA has been overshadowed over the past few years by that other acronym without an adjective, BRICS.” Critically discuss the potential of IBSA forum, India’s role in it and the need for its revival. (200 Words)

India Brazil and South Africa came together in 2006 to form IBSA. It brought together 3 great democracies of developing world – multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious committed to rule of law and strengthening of multilateral institutions.

It has however been overshadowed for the past few years because of following reasons:

1. Emergence of BRICS. Political leadership of china and Russia have shown greater commitment to the idea of BRICS then the political leadership of india, brazil and south Africa with respect to IBSA
2. Proliferation of such groupings has kept the foreign ministers busy and due to this shortage of time, they have paid little attention to most of the groupings.
3. The shared objective that brought IBSA inot being – namely UNSC restructuring and membership, seems to have become less compelling.

However, due to shared concerns, it has great potential and can be revived with india playing a major role in its revival. It needs to be revived for following reasons and potentialities:

1. India considers UNSC membership to be its right. IBSA can give it better strength to make the claim
2. UN has become moribund. It was unable to deter unilateral action by powerful countries – US in Iraq, Russia in crimea, Saudi Arabia in yemen. Against this backdrop, voice of 3 great democracies would carry weight.
3. The 3 countries have many common security concerns – drug trafficking, money laundering, terrorism, maritime security. IBSA could articulate the need for maritime security, stability and rule of law in Indian ocean and south atlantic. They can come up with a maritime doctrine for the region.
4. Freedom of navigation, climate change, energy security could be the common agenda that IBSA can pursue.
5. They also have a common political concern – China’s growing influence in their own individual neighbourhood.
6. There are lot of synergies and complementarities between these nations. Like India has land resource crunch while Brazil is land rich. India and

South Africa share a cultural and heritage link due to Gandhiji and Nelson Mandela.

As countries of the global “south” and given their shared concerns, IBSA could act as a bridge between the “west” and the “east”.

9. “If Pakistan joins other SAARC countries to sign the Motor Vehicles Agreement and fully implements the Afghanistan Pakistan Transit and Trade Agreement (APTTA) it signed in 2011, the subcontinent could see a revolution on the roads.” Elaborate and examine how this benefits India. (200 Words)

In today's globalised context, regional trade is the way forward. While, the SAARC region has made progress in integrating itself with the global economy, it continues to be characterised by low intra-regional trade. The absence of physical connectivity by a network of highways/roads hampers the economic integration of the region and this is mirrored in the low regional trade volumes. It is against this context, that the implementation of the MVA and the APTTA must be analysed.

- **MVA:** It will ensure seamless cross border movement of cargo, personal and passenger vehicles without the need of loading and unloading at the border points.
- **The Afghanistan Pakistan transit trade agreement** will provide the export of the goods from Afghanistan through attari to India and china

Benefits:

1. Closely integrate the Indian economy with those of the neighbouring SAARC nations. South Asia has been one of the least integrated regions of the world.
2. This will lead to the reduction of costs and time, thus making cross border trade more efficient and attractive. It can develop into economic corridor and we will move closer to South Asia Free Trade Agreement.
3. The seamless movement of people will encourage people-to-people contact and boost the tourism industry, which is the mainstay of many in India.
4. This will be especially beneficial for regions such as the North East, which could then be easily accessed from Bangladesh, thus enabling the effective and efficient integration of the NE region with India
5. Such integration will help India deal with the challenges thrown by natural disasters especially in the remote and inaccessible frontier regions.
6. Boost to trade will create more employment opportunities for youth in Pakistan, afghan, india weaning them away from jihadi factories. Insurgency and terrorism in the remote border regions can also be effectively checked.

7. This will help counter the increasing Chinese influence in the region. (china-pak economic corridor, china's one road, one belt initiative)
8. It will provide India with land route to Central Asia, which will help secure her energy security.
9. India along with entire south asia will have a greater role to play in global governance due to better integration

The benefits are not for India alone but for all participants of SAARC. All participants will have access to each others' markets as countries get connected from Kabul to Chittagong.

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

10. In your opinion, how will the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) be different from IMF and World Bank? In the light of its stated objectives, critically examine how would it benefit global economy. (200 Words)

Differences:

1. AIIB does not envisage catering to the balance of payment requirements of member countries as in case of IMF. It may impose less conditionalities.
2. AIIB will not look after requirements of concessional, soft credits or financial grants for ambitious projects aimed on larger benefits of humanity across the globe like MDG goals, climate change, CDM or social sector projects.
3. AIIB is a critical element of china's one road, one belt initiative. WB and IMF were part of no such initiative.
4. Context of emergence is different. Changed global power dynamics from uni polar to multipolar world, wanting more representation is the region was reason for AIIBs emergence. The twins (WB and IMF) were came in post world war II scenario where many of the countries facing balance of payment crisis, financial crunch and extremely vulnerable, thus context was different

5. WB and IMF aims at providing support to all the countries equally and as per the requirements, AIIB has an explicit focus on Asian Countries.

Benefits to world economy:

1. Opens up more borrowing opportunities for the countries . WB and IMF not being the only option after AIIB comes into existence.
2. AIIB will ease the Global Scarcity of funding due to drying finances of IMF and WB
3. Help developing countries in aisa to bridge their infra bottlenecks by getting loans from AIIB. Aisa needs \$8 trillion funding for infra in next decade. This will result in their better integration to world economy and there will be net gain to global economy.
4. Infra development sin aisan countries will attract global investments in them, will boost manufacturing, employment opportunities.
5. Trade across Europe, asia and S-E asia will get a boost with improved infrastructure, increasing the financial strength of developing countries to fight poverty, hunger etc

It should not be considered a threat to the world bank, the ADB or other multilateral lenders. Nonetheless, it will complement and compete with them.

Topic: mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections.**11. “The Cabinet’s nod to amendments in the Juvenile Justice Bill would not only violate the basic principles of the Constitution, but also be in conflict with evidence-based social policy.” Critically comment. (200 Words)**

The Union Cabinet has recently agreed to the provisions of Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection) Bill, 2014 in which it proposes to try Juveniles between 16 & 18 years of age would be tried as adults for certain class of heinous crimes like rape, murder, dacoity. The provisions of the bill are criticised by many experts and child rights activists.

Arguments against the above provision:

1. The said provision of the Act are in violation of the constitution and UN convention on Child Rights which treats anyone below 18 years of age as a Child.
2. The evidence that such policies do not lead to any palpable drop in crime rates by the Juveniles in the countries which try Juveniles as adults for certain crimes, goes against the principle of evidence based policy making.
3. Other provisions of the Act which says that a Juvenile Justice Board, which will include psychologists, will decide after examination of the Juvenile if he could be tries as an adult seems flawed. The subjectivity in such examination violates the principle of rule of law under the constitution. There is also the issue of availability of large number of such experts.
4. Other arguments like reformatory justice, social upbringing of such juveniles, etc. go against such an Act.

Arguments in favour of the Act:

1. Children during current times mature early with the kind of exposure they have.
2. The crimes committed by the Juveniles are on the rise
3. Many developed countries already have provisions for trying Juveniles as adults for certain class of crimes.

Adolescent age is when child is emotionally & hormonally imbalanced so leaving him prone to such crimes. It has often been observed that those who go to prison become hardened criminals later. The root causes of such crimes like poverty, lack of education, broken families, poor rehabilitation and foster homes, unlimited access to pornography should be addressed to solve the issue.

12. “By equating reservation and social justice, the political discourse has prevented a deeper debate on the meaning of equality of opportunity and ideas for effective economic redistribution, where reservation is just one tool.” Elaborate and examine if reservation, as practiced in India, furthers substantive equality.(200 Words)

The provision of reservation was given by our founder fathers for a limited times, during which the govt could be able to take decisive steps so as to bring the backward communities on par with the mainstream society, with the reservation being scrapped eventually.

Why revision policy needs to be revisited?:

1. The reservation as practised in India rather than emancipation of whole class of deprived had created an elite class between these groups and created a creamy layer who benefits most from these reservation.
2. Reservation did not lead to the goals for which it was accepted in first place. And its manifestation can be seen in the still vulnerable position of schedule castes and schedule tribes. Tribal people could not benefit because their right in forest-land was not properly recognised and capitalist class was favoured in the name of economic development.
3. Used as an instrument of vote bank politics. Eg- Jats in OBC
4. It is also creating division between religions. Eg- Maharashtra govt giving reservation to Marathas in spite of being dominant community while scrapping the same for muslims.

While caste was indeed a prominent reason for historical injustice in india, it could not be the sole decider of backwardness of a class. Instead new practices, methods and yardsticks would have to be continuously evolved moving away from the caste-centric definition of backwardness.

We have to take into consideration the income, poverty levels, HDI of a particular caste so that only deserving members of that caste are given reservation benefits. Good educational opportunities and skill development should be provided. Initiatives like MUDRA etc can help in economic empowerment of backward classes.

Topic: *Development processes and the development industry- the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders*

- 13. It is suggested that the Indian government, like the US, should consider permitting open and registered lobbying by interest groups and NGOs. In the light of recent controversy over funding and functioning of certain NGOs and action against them by the government, critically examine the merits and demerits of the said suggestion. (200 Words)**

Lobbying per se is not illegal in India but it is not recognised or regulated by any legislation like in the US. Various interests groups such as corporate bodies like

FICCI, CII, NGOs and media like Amir Khan's Satya Mev Jayate do lobby the government. There is nothing wrong with petitioning the government to take up issues but it is important that it is done in a transparent and fair manner and is not detrimental to the cause of inclusive development and the rights of the poor.

Merits of registered lobbying:

1. Open and registered lobbying could ensure that no unethical considerations are made to influence policy making like bribe, blackmail etc. registered lobbying groups may result in 'open lobbying' which means greater transparency by allowing for public scrutiny of suggestions of interest groups and their own funding.
2. More participative democracy as various sections of society and all stakeholders will have a chance to interact with legislature or members and present their views, data and information to affect policy making.
3. It is often said that bargaining power of interest groups also define the benefits that they get from lobbying. Better organized and better funded groups with limited objectives are generally more successful. Regulation would allow yet un organized and yet un recognized interest groups to form, for example from civil society and participate in a more democratic and open lobbying.

Demerits:

1. The regulatory body specified in the legislation thereof, if not independent, may restrict the registration of lobbying groups that do not align themselves to the mainstream ideologies while curbing their freedom of speech and expression.
2. The regulatory checks may introduce bureaucratic hurdles that would make lobbying a job only for professional lobbyists.
3. In India the popular perception is that every government dealing is mired with palm greasing and the rich push their agenda through their representatives. It will be difficult to establish quid pro quo and allegations of bribery may fill courts with litigation.
4. Unrepresented groups could be left out and suffer as a consequence. The powerful corporate lobbies could hijack the policy making agenda and the less articulate citizens could be made the scapegoats.

5. Many politicians are themselves seen as lobbyists and issues of conflict of interest is not uncommon to hear about.

In any case, the bottom-line is strengthening of civil society as NGOs are vital for a healthy democracy, not good to silence them in the garb of national development. Rather than pushing its agenda down the throat of the people, the Govt. should generate consensus among the masses regarding development projects to prevent NGOs with vested interests to take advantage. Roles and limitations of NGOs should be clearly defined within law. Foreign NGOs should be allowed to undertake apolitical and development work only. Foreign funding can't be the only criteria for executive uneasiness as most of the political parties (which are also NGOs), too take heavy foreign funding.

Topic: *Government Budgeting;*

14. Compare and contrast budget making process of state governments' with that of union government's. Examine the major objectives of state budgets and their impact on their economies. Also comment why state budgets do not evoke same interest as it is evoked for the union budget. (200 Words)

Differences:

1. Union budget focus on issues of national importance according to its constitutional mandate. Similarly state budget involve issues of state and regional importance according to mandate provided to it under schedule 7 of constitution.
2. States present budget after union budget. Union budget set tune for state budget. This also due to dependence of states on centre for financial resources.
3. Union Include the most of Financial matters like the Taxation policy, Trade and Commerce apart from social heads, state Budget mainly related to the Social Schemes like the health, Education , Drinking water etc.
4. Union budget is also discussed in RS while many states do not have a legislative council.

State budget do not evoke much interest because:

1. Centrally sponsored schemes have also encroached in state area of policy making. They have squeezed fiscal space of states and reduced elbow space for policy making.
2. States dependence for grant in aids on union government

Major objectives of state budget are to maximise revenue collection both in depth and width and best possible expenditure of revenue, to minimise leakage and minimise fiscal deficit.

In last decade the states GDP with receding liabilities and increase in revenue has done much better than the Union. Union budget with cooperative federalism has accepted FFC report has enhanced the share of the states in the central divisible pool from the current 32% to 42% which is the biggest ever increase in vertical tax devolution. On horizontal side Union has increased grants to rural and urban local bodies and a performance grant along with grants for disaster relief. As many important social issue are in State list such as health, environment, education (implementation part), animal welfare, social security more financial autonomy will provide better implementation. With NITI ayog constitution, better coordination is expected to be there between centre and states. Union should play the role of facilitator.

15. Since the beginning of 2015, more than 20 central banks around the world have eased monetary policy leading to what economists say 'currency wars'. It is said that even the US has entered this war. Examine the factors causing currency wars and their impact on world economy. Also examine India's role in it. (200 Words)

Following the economic recession of 2008 and reduced global demands, most of the countries have boosted their economic growths by following a beggar-thy-neighbour policy than boosting domestic production and demand. This is done to ensure economic growth and employment.

The reasons for currency wars

1. Developed countries : like Canada and Australia have depreciated their currency due to falling oil and commodity prices
2. China : devalued currency due to slow growth
3. Greece in EU are devalued their currency by quantitative easing to stabilise their economy and come out of recession impacts.

4. African countries are devaluing to curb high inflation rate. Latin American and South East Asia to fund their development projects.

All these resulted in appreciation of US dollar. Thus even the United States has entered currency wars to shield itself from the effects of other currencies

Impact on global economy:

1. Currency frictions can lead eventually to trade frictions, and currency wars can lead to trade wars. And that could spell trouble for the US as it tries to conclude the mega-regional Trans-Pacific Partnership
2. It leads to a growing tendency where export growth is primarily led by currency manipulation rather than increase in productivity. Thus, the emphasis of countries shifts to using this tool rather than enhancing productivity.
3. It leads to excessive volatility in world economy especially in emerging economies like India which have witnessed excessive volatility in foreign inflows and exchange rate.
4. It can only lead to short-term growth and its utility can be easily exhausted when other countries resort to it as has been the case.
5. Currency wars also lead to diplomatic conflicts as witnessed in case of USA and China.

If all the countries keep on depreciating currencies that will be a zero sum game without achieving any real progress in growth. The world would be better off if most governments pursued policies that boosted growth through domestic demand, rather than beggar-thy-neighbour export measures

While depreciating currency will help India in reducing its current account deficit but it should be used as a short term measure. India should focus on achieving domestic led growth by increasing the competence of its products in international market instead of depreciating its currency because India is still at a nascent stage of its manufacturing sector and cannot afford to currency manipulation.

- 16. The union government is set to launch two insurance schemes, along with one for pension, under the Jan Suraksha Yojana. Examine the objectives, features and viability of these schemes. (200 Words)**

Government has recently launched Jan suraksha Yojana. This is a measure for social security. Under it there are three schemes – two are insurance schemes and one is pension scheme.

1. Suraksha bima yojana – this is accident death insurance scheme.
2. Jiwan jyoti bima scheme – this is life insurance scheme
3. Atal pension scheme – this is new pension scheme.

Objectives of this Jan suraksha yojana

1. To provide social security to people at low cost
2. Financial inclusion
3. Use the money (got from these schemes) for productive use

Features of this yojana:

1. Affordability: through low premium; Rs 12 a year for accident insurance and Rs 330 for life term product; cover of Rs 2 lakh on each; even BPL can buy coverage.
2. Financial inclusion: subscriber must have a bank account; which is linked to an auto-debit facility.
3. Focus on unorganized sector: through Atal pension Yojana; provides fixed minimum pension between Rs 1000 to Rs 5000 per month to start at age of 60 years; depending upon contribution exercised between age of 18-40 years.

Concerns:

1. While these schemes may swell up business volumes due to very low premiums, the pricing may not be sustainable in the long run. In the event, premiums are increased, renewals might not be forthcoming.
2. If the scheme fails to attract large subscriptions, claims settlement and post-policy service handling are expected to face issues
3. While the schemes are mandatory to be offered by public sector insurance companies, it is optional for private insurers. This defeats the purpose of universality of these schemes.
4. over burdened banks: will have to devote additional manpower to take care of claims.

While a welcome step, given the dearth of insurance products for low income individuals, the above concerns about the initiative's viability need to be addressed.

17. It is reported that the government is planning to repeal the Handloom (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act,

1985. Examine why this act was enacted and what would be the consequences of repealing this act. (200 Words)

The handloom act, 1985 was started as a measure to protect the traditional handloom sector from powerlooms and mechanised sector. It provides for reservation of certain articles to be manufactured by handlooms only and it extends over the whole territory of India. In addition to this, Central Assistance is also given to state governments to set up an Enforcement Machinery in the state to ensure that there is no violation of the handlooms act.

Consequences of repealing it:

1. The repealing will result in the unemployment of a large section of population engaged in it, as the sector will be overtaken by the mechanised sector
2. It is a symbol of our heritage and the repeal will make it prone to be lost forever.
3. People are more attracted towards the original handloom produced garments, which also reaps a large revenue for the govt, which will be lost on its repeal
4. It has a low carbon footprint, and the repeal will give an impetus to mechanised sector, which will further increase India's carbon footprint

However, there are certain contrary views to it, which support the amendment:

1. Handlooms dont have economy of scale, so cant compete with modern industry.
2. Handloom materials are costly
3. Labours in it are generally unorganized, which in powerloom big industries will get more security.

Instead of repealing the act and crippling the sector, the govt needs to invest more so as to strengthen its base, while giving more incentives to the workers and encouraging even more innovation in the sector. The demand for handicrafts has only increased in recent times, and hence, obstructing the sector with such amendment would hamper a well grooming economic activity in the economy. In fact, with huge production revenues as well as high employability, this sector is one of the best contenders for the MAKE IN INDIA objective. It can be used by the country as a tool for cultural diplomacy, given there was a time in history when indian handicrafts were one of the favourite among the global community.

Topic: *Functioning of judiciary*

18. India's courts are well known for huge pendency of cases. Critically discuss their magnitude, consequences of this problem and remedies to address this issue. (200 Words)

“Justice delayed is justice denied” - goes the famous adage. Timely justice is therefore an integral part of the fundamental right to justice. However as many studies, including the 245th Law Commission Report, indicate that the Indian judicial system is unable to provide timely justice due to the huge backlog of cases.

Magnitude: Statistics show that as many as 3.20 crore cases continue to remain pending before various courts. Of these as many as 40 lakh cases are pending before the Indian HCs, while close to a crore are pending before the subordinate courts. The main reasons for the pendency of cases include the - chronic administration under-capacity and under-resourced judiciary. This backlog results in the dilution of the right to access timely justice and an erosion of the rule of law. This eventually affects peoples' faith in the judicial system. Further, judicial system is highly costly and not pro-poor despite constitutional arrangements and functioning of bodies like NALSA.

Some recommendations on dealing with this backlog include:

1. Use of technology for introducing standardization in data classification and management in order to be able to understand the nature and extent of the pendency problem
2. Institution of evening and morning courts to deal with petty matter like traffic violations/challans, which account for a bulk of the cases which are pending in the lower courts;
3. Encouraging the concept of plea bargaining;
4. Increasing the judge strength by increasing recruitment as well as the retirement age of judges. Creating an All india judicial service can provide a solution.
5. Setting up of special courts like property courts, commercial courts and e-courts for speedy disposal of cases;
6. Addressing the problem of delay by reforming court procedures - It has been witnessed that there is tendency for litigants to take the cases till Supreme Court, thus making Supreme Court over-burdened
7. Promoting ADR method, fast tracking court processes, and the use of information and technology
8. Focussing on human resource development by filling in vacancies, strengthening judicial academies and training of court functionaries;
9. Improving physical infrastructure of courts to improve efficiency;
10. Promoting research and studies on judicial reforms.
11. Further promoting the concept of Lok Adalat, Court on Wheels, Gram Nyaya Panchayat

12. India has been touted as an over-legislated country with too many laws. We need a constant mechanism which keeps on reviewing laws in terms of their importance and recommends steps for course correction and simplification and repealing of outdated laws.
13. Government is a biggest litigant in India. It should take steps at setting up institutional measures for arbitration and dispute resolution. It should move towards a more responsible-regime while filing cases.

Topic: *India and its neighborhood- relations.*

19. The Union Cabinet on Tuesday cleared a Bill to get the India-Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) ratified by Parliament. What are the salient features of this agreement? How will this agreement affect relationship between India and Bangladesh? Examine. (200 Words)

Features of the bill:

1. The swap will involve handing over 17,000 acres of land to Bangladesh (in return for 7,000 acres in 51 enclaves in Bangladesh) in 111 enclaves in WB, Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya, and was decided under the 1974 LBA
2. It gives the people residing in the Bangladeshi enclaves, their rightful citizenry rights (under Indian Citizenship Act of 1956)

Effect of agreement:

1. It will help in increasing the goodwill image of India among the Bangladesh population
2. Awami league led by Sheikh hasina is a pro-india party. It will also gain more foothold in the country, which is beneficial for India in the long run
3. It will help in ascertaining the border line and increase the security of NE region and put rest to the increased illegal immigration.
4. As India has boundary disputes with majority of its neighbours, this will be a huge step in resolving one of the long standing disputes.
5. Will pave way for clearing the Teesta water sharing accord as the next step
6. Populations will now have access to the development, job opportunities, laws or rights of either the country to which they belong or the one that surrounds them.
7. Provide law and order and security on border areas.
8. Improving its relation with Bangladesh to make it all weather partner for support in forum like BIMSTEC, RIM, SAARC etc

In the present scenario of increasing influence of China in the south east Asia and beyond, India desperately needs more friends in its neighbourhood, for which LBA is a crucial step

20. Why and how did India get into Sri Lanka's LTTE problem during early 1980s. What were its consequences? Critically discuss. (200 Words)

Rajiv Gandhi embarked on an attempt to end ethnic conflict that was raging in Srilanka. The immediate provocation for the conflict was imposition of "Simhalese" as the sole official language of the island nation and with this the demand for inclusion of Tamil went denied, leading to the protests.

LTTE, led by velupalli Prabhakaran, had its aim of separate nation for Tamils in the north and east. LTTE being an armed group started mounting attacks on the Srilankan army which was met with brutal response. LTTE had active help coming from Tamil Nadu, India. With law and order derailed and taking casualties- both military and civilians, then Srilankan President had requested India to mediate the conflict and persuade the LTTE to give up arms. As a result India had sent 48000 Indian Peace keeping Force. The reasons were:

1. The decision to send Indian troops was consistent with India's perception of itself as the "rightful hegemon of South Asia"
2. India thought that if srilankan Tamils got freedom, the Indian Tamils will start a secessionist movement, thus fearing India's integrity .
3. The new country in the hands of extremist LTTe, so it would be a dangerous neighbour for India

Consequences

1. Tamils of both sides wre not satisfied with Indian govt ,resulting in anger , displeasure in tamil nadu. Because, they had thought that Indian govt will come to their rescue.
2. India showed its military power and peace keeping strategy to the world
3. Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated when he was campaigning for general elections in 1989.

21. “India’s ability to be a pivotal power in Asia is contingent on the restoration of the strategic and economic unity of the subcontinent: both to its west with Pakistan and Afghanistan and to its east with Bangladesh and Burma.” Elaborate. (200 Words)

The Indian subcontinent has always been full of activity of trade and commerce with the other kingdoms, like Chinese, Mesopotamian, etc., since ancient times. In the current scenario too, India stands as the largest country, economically and politically, in the Indian subcontinent, which calls for a greater role to be played by it, to upgrade the region and become a pivotal power in Asia. But such endeavour depends on its level of cooperation with the neighbouring countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, etc, which have a huge untapped potential.

1. Between India and Pakistan, only the Indus Sulej treaty remains as the least controversial and least violated treaty till date. The TAPI and IPI pipelines and APTTA initiatives can be the adequate steps for both countries, to show their trust to each other and commence trade with each other. But firstly, the anti Indian elements in Pak and Afghan regions, need to be tackled with, by a joint trilateral initiative.
2. Also, India has proposed an Asian Highway-1 which will pass through NE east India and Myanmar, which can be a huge impetus to the trade and tourism between both countries, and also help to develop India’s NE region.
3. With Bangladesh, the recent step of passage of LBA has reinstated faith of Bangladeshis in India, which has reduced the number of border disputes of India and can also be used to ink various other trade pacts.
4. The SAARC forum also needs to be more active, and India being the largest country, should lead the initiative, by investing in other countries, in exchange for easier trade provisions for its traders.

Such measures will effectively help in tipping the balance of power towards India in the long run and help India in becoming a dominant Asian power in the future.

Topic: transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.

22. Recently the union cabinet approved amendments in the Whistle Blowers Protection Act of 2011 by moving an amendment Bill in Parliament during the Budget Session, 2015. In the light of these new amendments, critically comment on the salient features of the bill. (200 Words)

WBPA of 2011 plans to trace alleged acts of corruption and misuse of power by public servants, along with protecting the people who report such activities.

The recent amendments have been brought about to address concerns relating to national security. It would strengthen the safeguards against disclosures which may prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of the country, security, strategic, scientific or economic interest of the state, relations with a foreign state or leads to incitement of an offence.

The salient features of act include

1. Any public servant or any other person including a non-governmental organization may make such a disclosure to the CVC
2. Every complaint has to include the identity of the complainant.
3. The VC shall not disclose the identity of the complainant except to the head of the department if he deems it necessary. penalizes any person who has disclosed the identity of the complainant.
4. Prescribes penalties for knowingly making false complaints.

Some of the limitations with the act include

1. The power of CVC is limited to making recommendations and does not have any power to impose penalties
2. Non admission of anonymous complaints
3. No provisions for penalties for victimization of complainant

Issues with amendment:

1. The 'national security' related grounds are so broad that a public authority may connect any whistleblower complaint to these interests and prevent competent authorities like the CVC from inquiring into it. empower the Government to frustrate inquiry into a whistleblower complaint at every stage on grounds of 'national security'.
2. It will also lead to a lack of transparency, and some matters like, corruption in the defense sector, may go unnoticed.

To serve the public interest as well as balance the security concerns, the amendments should be re looked into and the “national security” clause should be as precise as possible

Topic: mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections.

23. A study has found that as many as 31 per cent of companies surveyed were not complying with the Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013. Examine the reasons and consequences of such apathy. (200 Words)

Sexual harassment (SH) is a universal but unacknowledged phenomena. The observations of the SC, in *Visakha v. State of Rajasthan*, highlighted this menace. Subsequently, Parliament in 2013, passed the Sexual Harassment Act (SHA), which seeks to provide protection against SH of women at workplace. While the SHA law clearly reflects awareness and understanding of the issue, its application has been far from satisfactory. A recent study conducted by E&Y has observed that corporate India has been rather callous about its commitment SH. It has reported that compliance with the provisions of the SHA, especially those relating to the setting up of an Internal Complaints Committee (ICCs), remain abysmally low. Following are some explanations for the same:

1. Many companies are ignorant about the penal clause for non-compliance with the sexual harassment law.
2. While some have instituted ICCs, they are yet to train their ICC members. Investigations are often technical in nature - Call record details have to be sometimes studied and email trail, chat transcripts and CCTV footage has to be investigated. Also, given the sensitivity of the issues to be handled by the ICC, detailed skill building of its members is a sine qua non for the setting up of these committees.
3. Some organizations are of the opinion that malicious and false complaints increase after the appraisals. This attitude reflects the difficulty companies feel in verifying the legitimacy of complaints. This only pushes them to become tardy in their response to such complaints.
4. Largely unorganized women workforce which is not unable to build pressure on Companies for compliance with the law
5. Insistence of Companies to solve issues of sexual harassment through informal network

6. Most of the companies especially MSMEs view it as an extra expenditure on their already constrained financial sheets

Such non-compliance have grave consequences for women:

1. Leads to the creation of an insecure and hostile work environment;
2. Discourages women's participation in work, thereby affecting their economic empowerment and the goal of inclusive growth;
3. Enforces norms of patriarchy and low status of women
4. Encourages offenders to continue with their activities without any fear of punishment
5. The non-effective implementation of SHA amounts to the violation of India's international obligations under the Convention of Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The alleged instances of sexual harassment at TERI and Tehelka are reflective of the magnitude of this issue. A tick in the box approach to the implementation of SHA will not serve any purpose. The challenges which surround issues of SH call for a more refined thought process and robust mechanism.

24. It is argued that a properly crafted universal pension scheme will increase the coverage of pension without putting stress on government finances. Critically examine the need for such a scheme and feasibility of making it universal. (200 Words)

Need for a universal pension scheme

1. Elderly population is vulnerable section of society. Elder people have health problems related to physical disability, mental unstableness, chronic diseases etc. These health problems have financial implications.
2. Another problem related to old age is feminization of elderly. Female live longer than their male counterparts. Female have even less financial power and face more vulnerability.
3. Currently IGNOAPS, NPS-lite and NPS-swawlamban are some of pension schemes. Most of the pension are for organised sector or are voluntary. These all schemes cover barely 30% elderly population.
4. The demographic profile of India will not last forever and in future, india will have more elderly population
5. Large number of persons work in unorganised sector without any social security

6. Indian society is moving towards nucleated-family structure and senior citizens are facing many problems due to lack of any financial help and lack of family care.
7. The huge requirement of capital to generate infrastructure and productive processes.
8. Low penetration of Health Insurance Schemes
9. Inefficient Public Sector Healthcare. Expensive Private Sector Healthcare
10. Need for financial inclusion

The scheme is highly feasible due to low premium rates and also given the huge population of India will result in increased investment in projects. Gains from these will ensure that there is no strain on fiscal account of govt at the time of payment. Administrative cost will be reduced in case of universal pension scheme. The financial feasibility will be increased by linking the bank accounts and savings with pension schemes. FDI in insurance can also help. Propagating financial literacy is also important to ensure feasibility.

Topic: *issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.*

25. In the last decade, the proliferation of big-ticket Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) has emerged as the key fiscal strategy to transfer grants to States to achieve a certain outcome in a specific sector, especially in health, education, agriculture and rural development. In the light of recent recommendations made by the Fourteenth Finance Commission, critically examine if the existing fund transfer mechanism is suited to achieve the goal of 'cooperative federalism', if not, suggest what needs to be done in this regard. (200 Words)

Fourteenth Finance Commission provided the biggest increase the share of states in tax-devolution. The underlying idea was to strengthen the fiscal capacity of states and thus achieving a new level in cooperative federalism. Other than this recommendation, it also asked the union government to provide enough space to design their own social security schemes by reducing the conditionalities in providing grants and number of centrally sponsored schemes (CSS). CSS are schemes designed to achieve improvement in some sectors like education, health, rural employment, rural infrastructure and cost is shared by centre and state in fixed ratio. These schemes were designed by Union but implemented with help of states.

States had to spend a matching fund to avail grants from Union. Most of fund was tied funds so it always derailed plans of state. Though the rationale behind CSS is not wrong but they bereft states of innovations and funds in other sectors which is required given the regional disparities in various sectors and force states to spend the funds in pre-defined sectors. Kerala for example, does not see any point in Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan as they do not have problem illiteracy.

To solve these problems conditionalities on transfer should be less and flexible and as most of the CSS are based on the subjects under state, their number need to be reduced. Instead states are encouraged to come up with solutions to the problems faced by them.

In the present situation 'one-size-fits-all' process can not be carried out and schemes should be based on the requirements of states. Reducing the number of CSS and restructuring them can provide space to states for their own development to work to achieve an all-India standard in various sectors.

As has been the recommendations of a number of committees [like B K Chaturvedi], there is an urgent need to consolidate the CSS and keep only major ones. Further, the focus should also be to reform the non-finance commission transfers to make the transfer system transparent, efficient and fiscally non-intrusive

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

26. Recently a review committee constituted by the government in 2014 suggested that there is a need for restructuring and reforming the University Grants Commission (UGC). In your opinion, what reforms does UGC require to ensure quality higher education in India? In the light of the committee's recommendations, critically analyse. (200 Words)

The review committee was set up with a view to bring reforms in the Education Sector. Following are some of the recommendations of the Committee (Hari Gautam):

1. Committee has recommended to scrap all 14 high education regulators in the country including UGC and to set up only 1 regulator that is National High Education Authority.
2. It is aimed at bringing discipline and to ensure uniformity on the lines of Corporate Sector since UGC has not been able to deal with complexities.

3. It also recommends to ensure market linkages so that the demographic dividend can be achieved.

However, the recommendations too are not without flaws.

1. Recommendations are to ensure corporatisation of Education which leaves very less space for Innovation and Critical thinking
2. Committee has recommended to focus on English Language to harness demographic dividend, however in reality, very few people understand and use the language across the country.
3. It promotes the monotonous pattern of Education.

In order to ensure quality in education, UGC should focus on harnessing Critical Consciousness among the students rather than giving them monotonous education.