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Topic: Post Independence consolidation; Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Q. Critically comment on the role played by UNO and its agencies in brokering peace and resolving conflicts between India and Pakistan since independence.

The role played by UNO in resolving the India Pakistan conflict has varied depending on the nature of the dispute. It thus deserves a case by case analysis.

a) Kashmir dispute: The most festering among all, the principle of resolution are embedded in the historic miscalculation done by India, firstly by bringing it up to UN and secondly by placing it in Chapter 6 that diluted the chance of considering Pakistan as an aggressor. As a result UN role in this dispute has largely been advisory though it has weathered of late by dexterous diplomatic manoeuvring by India.

b) Indus Agreement: UN played a proactive role that not only helped resolve the water distribution issue but also created a template for resolution of trans boundary water sharing. Its existence for the last 55 years clearly attest its success.

c) Sir and Cori Creek Issue: Despite Pakistan pressing for UN led mediation in ascertaining the boundary, UN has largely sided with India by pushing for a bilateral resolution, thus respecting India's sovereignty.

d) Terrorism: UNSC has frequently declared Pakistan as hotbed of terrorism. Through various resolution various Pakistan outfits like Jamat-ud-Dawa have been banned. Terrorist like Dawood Ibrahim too have been served with Red corner notice.

On the whole it can be said that UN has largely sided with India except in certain instances where we have made certain diplomatic miscalculation. India thus need to tread cautiously so as not to allow any leverage to Pakistan as UN by itself has followed the principle laid down by India.

Topic: Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present- significant events, personalities, issues; World Wars

1) "As the first truly global war, the war undeniably left a legacy for modern India too, whether it is the institutional levers of control, the medical and military infrastructure, alternate ideas of society or the rampant corruption that flourishes today." With reference to the impact of Second World War on India, critically analyse the statement. (200 Words)

The second World War was one of the most events in the history of the world. India also played a major role in the war and contributed militarily, materially and economically to the allied cause and helped them significantly in winning the war. The War also had a major impact on India in the following ways.

1. The fact that India was made an unwilling participant in the war by its colonial masters rankled the Indian Leaders and contributed to the concept of 'Civilian control' over the military which was implemented in the country after independence.

2. The War led to large scale expansion of the military infrastructure in the country. India acted as the garrison for the war in the South East Asian sector and hence had to accommodate large number of allied soldiers.
3. The conduct of the Indian industrialists who exploited the opportunity provided by the war to expand their business interests and earn handsome profits was the precursor of moral bankruptcy of industrialists and laid the foundation for corruption in the society.
4. The war also clearly brought out the stark difference between fascist and liberal ideologies, between dictatorships and democracies and between control and freedom. The soon to be independent India could see with its own eyes the advantages and disadvantages of different systems.
5. The War and its depredations also developed an abhorrence for war among the Indian leaders. It also was a major factor behind the development of the Human Rights movement and its impact on the Fundamental Rights enshrined in our constitution.

The second World War was a monumental event and impacted every country in the world whether it actively participated in the war or not. In India's case, not only did it hasten the Independence, but it also left indelible impact on the nation's psyche and its institutions.

Topic: Regionalism; Distribution of resources

2) It is said that India can learn from the Asian experience of creating a dedicated fund to address the problem of regional disparity in the country. Examine how. (200 Words)

Post independence India developed some growth poles to achieve accelerated growth. It was but natural that while

ensuring growth some disparities also percolated at regional level. To overcome these disparities, on the recommendation of 5th FC, some special category states were created. But the model has outlived its utility without giving tangible returns.

To overcome this problem the experience of ADB's Asian development fund, meant to overcome Asian disparity, can be provide a roadmap.

ADF experience tells that any development fund to address disparity much be a long term fund with low interest rates, but with attached strings of performance commitments. Simultaneously three preconditions must be fulfilled which are:

- a) Maintenance of Law and Order.
- b) Enhancing connectivity of the region.
- c) Local participation to evolve shared vision.

But there is need to make some fine tuning to ADF template to meet local conditions. All Special category states must be integrated with mainland to address their isolation that creates law and order problem. BCIM and CPEC should be utilised to develop economic corridor and bring prosperity. While people first approach should be adopted to evoke the feeling of shared vision among locals.

Committed long term planning rather than the doling will serve their cause.

Topic: Salient features of Indian society; Poverty issues

3) Critically analyse the role of caste as cause and facilitator of poverty in India. And critically comment if de-reservation should be used to address inequality. (200 Words)

If one glances poverty incidence of the nation, one can easily glimpse that the lower caste is the largest hit of the poverty in the nation. It can be proved by simple statics that 8-9% of the tribal population are the largest stakeholder of the poverty in the nation. Many social scientists argued that there is positive relationship between the poverty and marginalized caste system.

Role of caste as a cause and facilitator of poverty-

Many research indicated that the prime cause of the poverty is lack of proper livelihood opportunities. The Indian society still not able to broke the vicious cycle of rigid social stratification. Thus it impact the each and every domain of individuals development. Still the lower caste are consider as untouchable and they are mean for

lower job, such unskilled job, generate lower income which lead to lower standard of living and push them in the beneath of poverty.

Here it should to be also noted that the lower caste also often isolated form the prevailing social order thus such isolation further facilitate the poverty. Thus the lower caste is both cause and facilitator of the poverty.

De-reservation as a measure-

To uplift the vulnerable and lower caste sections government is giving reservation. But it has been noticed that the real benefit of the reservation often garnered by the influential's of that class because of that the condition of the marginalized remain as. Such predicament not only hobbles the real cause of the reservation it also prove to be detrimental for our constitutional obligations and promote the notion of antagonism. Thus many social scientist roundly argued for the de-reservation of those who not remain the marginalized or those who can self-sustain. Such de-reservation is very necessary for the horizontal empowerment of the vulnerables. But such de-reservation should not be done arbitrarily rather than de-reservation should to be rational.

Here should to be noted that the equality is one of the fundamental notion of our democratic framework. So the policies should to be make and re-design in such a manner that it adore the larger national interest.

Topic: Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian subcontinent)

1) Despite discovering many new fields, India could not increase oil and gas production. Examine the causes and measures taken by the government to address this problem. (200 Words)

Despite having huge potential of hydrocarbon and an equally pressing energy security need, India's success in exploration and discovery of new fields is rather unsatisfactory. The main causes for this are:

a) Production sharing model that have inherent incentive to hoard and artificially reduce production causes major fluctuation in output. For e.g. Reliance KG-D6 field controversy.

b) CAG intrusive audits deter private developers as not only their malpractices but also they justified business interest may get exposed or leaked.

c) Administered price mechanism, till recently, was causing huge under recovery thus effecting the profit and in turn the motivation to produce.

d) Lack of finance, technology and managerial and technical ability on the part of government restrict its ability to develop fields on its own.

e) Absence or dispute resolution and settlement mechanism further deters the private players.

Considering the dilapidated state of Hydrocarbon exploration and development affairs government appointed Rangarajan committee. On its recommendations government has taken multiple step to rekindle the sector. These measures are:

a) Shift from PSM to revenue sharing model. This shift not only end the incentives to hoard or hold production but also encourages to continuously increase the production.

b) A New unified exploration and production policy is being developed to club all explorations in a field under one licence rather than having different licences.

c) Shift from administered price mechanism to market linked pricing to make the business profitable.

d) Relaxation of custom duties for export of m/c for exploration and production.

With improved ease in doing business, less government interference and better facilitation due to the paradigm shift, India is at the cusp of a new hydrocarbon revolution that will change the fortunes of the nation in near future.

Topic: Urbanisation – problems and remedies

2) Analyse the the correlation between urbanisation and economic development. Do you think the Smart City initiative in its present form would also help in economic development? Discuss. (200 Words)

There is a two way correlation between urbanisation and economic development, i.e. the both phenomena cause each other to exist.

Economic development has tendencies to generate employments, entrepreneurship, bringing shift from primary economic activity to secondary to tertiary so on and so forth. This causes people to move from places to the centre where economic developments are taking place. Thus urbanisation.

Similarly, when population in a small town or hamlet start to grow beyond a rate, it starts creating certain economic demands. Such as - increased consumption of various sorts of goods and services, better infrastructure, better technological means to support various aspects of daily life. These demands creates favourable condition to expand local market and thus economic development.

Unorganised and haphazard urbanisation comes with evident banes which make life of people worse, to name a few - pollution, slums, non availability of basic services like drinking water, sanitation, electricity.

Smart City Initiative has immense potential to address the need of accommodating burgeoning populations in urban conglomerates and address the problem of haphazard urbanisation. For time being, at least Rs 7000 Cr are allotted in Budget 2015 for Smart City Mission.

Therefore it also has implications on economic development. How?

- development of smart cities comes with plethora of new demands and consequent economic activity, such as - development of novel public transport, basic physical

infrastructure, IT infrastructure, waste management, water management, affordable housing, etc

- superior urban management with uncluttered and tidy road, ample physical and IT infrastructure, skilled labour will attract investment from world over

- to develop smart cities spread over India uniformly and thus distributing the load of aspiring population. Such way economic development would be more uniform and equitable

Topic: Post-independence consolidation

3) “The 1965 war banished the ghosts of 1962, and was a litmus test for India’s capabilities, on and off the battlefield.” Critically examine. (200 Words)

The 1962 war was a big jolt to India and impacted the self respect of the country especially its armed forces. The war was won unambiguously by China. This was followed by the passing away of Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964. Thus, 1965 war was at a very troubled time for India. There was a new political leadership in place, India was still recovering from the shock of the 1962 war.

Pakistani incursions in the Rann of Kutch area in April 1965 and India's measured response to it strengthened Pakistani belief that India was weak and incapable of responding militarily to Pakistani advances. Hence, Pakistan launched 'Operation Gibraltar' in order to wrest Kashmir from India.

However, in contrast to the war of 1962, the Indian political leadership showed purpose and courage and ordered the Indian Army to open up a new front across the international border in Punjab. This was admirably accomplished by the Indian army who fought against the superior american arms of Pakistan. This unnerved Pakistan and derailed its plans for Kashmir.

Even on the diplomatic front, India made its mark. The Prime Minister reacted strongly to UN and US demands for ceasefire showing in great detail the provocations by Pakistan as the cause for the war. Indian delegation led by the

foreign minister also took the unprecedented step of staging a walk out from the Security Council protesting the conduct of Pakistan.

Ultimately India managed to capture nearly 1900 sq kms of Pakistani territory along with strategic passes like the Haji Pir pass. Ultimately India magnanimously restored the captured land to Pakistan according to the Tashkent agreement to show that it had no designs on Pakistani territory. While condemned by hardliners, this decision was universally appreciated and developed a favourable image for India.

The war in 1965 built up the confidence of the Indian armed forces in themselves and also in their political leadership. It also displayed to the world the resolve of India to defend its interests. And hence, even though the war of 1965 is considered a stalemate by historians, its importance and impact on India's psyche cannot be undermined.

Topic: Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian subcontinent)

1) Explain the process of formation of crude oil and natural gas. Examine why there is so much oil in Middle East but less in India. (200 Words)

Crude oil and natural gas are obtained from sedimentary rocks. They were formed from remains of dead plants and animal that were buried under sand and rocks. over millions of year, high pressure and heat, in the absence of air, converted them to oil and gas.

Reasons why crude oil is abundant in middle east then India---

1) sedimentation occurred between 30 degree north and south where temperature was high and organic activity was high.

Middle east lied between these range where India missed it.

2) Middle east was at favorable position during mid cretaceous Global warming, coupled with sea level rise and abundance of plankton

3) 500 million years history of sedimentation on continental margins of Gondwana.

4) though oil is formed in sedimentary rocks but all sedimentary rocks do not contain oil. An oil reservoir must have three pre-requisite conditions--

(A) porosity-to accumulate large amount of oil. (middle east rocks are formed of limestone and dolomite which have high porosity. Indian rocks are hard and not so porous)

(B) Permeability to discharge oil and gas when oil is drilled (dolomite and limestone has high permeability).

(C) porous sand beds, sandstone should be capped by impervious bed so that oil do not dissipate to surrounding rocks.

All these conditions are favorable in middle east and not in India. So India is an energy (petroleum) deficit country

Topic: Salient features of Indian Society

1) Compare and contrast the demographic profile of and demographic change in the Muslim population with that of the Hindu population in India. (200 Words)

Demographic profile is the demographic attributes, i.e. the population characteristic in statistical terms while the demographic change is the temporal variations observed in demographic attributes between the two census.

The census 2011 cleared many myths about the demographic characteristic of Muslim. A case by case comparison with the majority i.e. Hindus presents a fitting argument.

a) Population Growth: Muslims constitute only 14.2% of the total population compared to 79.8% of Hindus. While their population growth rate hovers at around 2.46% much above the national growth rate and that of Hindus (1.99%), the decline in Muslim population growth rate is faster than any other community.

b) Fertility: Muslims have higher fertility rate of 3.2% compared to 2.5% of Hindus. But again the decline in fertility rate is higher in Muslims compared to Hindus.

c) Sex Ratio: Against the myth of disempowered status of Muslim women the Adult and Child sex ratio of Muslims is far ahead of Hindus.

d) Literacy rate: Muslims in India are the least literate among all.

If we look into population growth, fertility and sex ratio with literacy data in mind, Muslims susceptibility to change in line with modern demographic requirement appears far greater despite their poor educational status. Poverty, illiteracy rather than religion is the prime cause of primordial pattern in demographic profile. Hence instead of stigmatising any particular religion, efforts should be made to remove socio-economic causes of population growth i.e. poverty, illiteracy and lack of livelihood opportunities.

Topic: Role of women

2) Write a critical note on the role of women and the challenges they are facing in Indian armed forces. (200 Words)

The recent debate about the induction of women in the armed forces has been highly skewed and shallow. An issue that critically affects the fighting potential of the armed forces has been reduced to 'equality of sexes' and 'women's liberation'.

--Since the time when women began to be inducted in army, their numbers have steadily grown over the years. But they have rarely been seen as equal to male soldiers. Although they are eligible to be posted alongside their male counterparts, it is rarely seen in practice.

--While being the defense forces, women have shown equal zeal in serving the nation, a.c.t. the males, but the norm of short service commission for women has cut short their bright careers, exactly when they were at their peak, without any post-retirement benefits.

--Women as both doctors and soldiers in the armed forces have helped immensely in the working of the armed forces, but still they are viewed with suspicion, whenever the posting is on a difficult terrain, i.e. if they will be able to cope with the situation.

--History lies witness to the bravery shown by the Indian women in battle, with the examples of Rani Lakshmi Bai, Razia Sultan and many more. But the scenario faced by the women recruits in defense forces today, is regrettable.

--The armed forces should give the option of both short and long service commissions to women too, on par with the male counterparts. There should also be gender sensitisation in the armed forces, so as to better accommodate the women recruits.

--When programs like "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" and initiatives for women empowerment are being taken all over the country, the spirit should be extended to the armed forces too, to better show our commitment to the issue.

Topic: Role of women;

1) Critically analyse the social and economic benefits of gender parity in workforce.
(150 Words)

Gender parity in workforce is the measure of status of women in a particular society and serves as a litmus test for women

empowerment. It has multiple socio-economic benefits associated with it.

SOCIAL BENEFITS

Workforce parity creates an atmosphere of equality for women. Their presence in public life ensure that their issues are not neglected and the male dominated society pays due attention to it. Women presence at large give them peer backing and strength to raise voice. This helps break the culture of silence responsible for their oppression. Moreover it sensitises the society towards women. This results in a healthy atmosphere for women to develop to their full potential.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

In terms of abilities and skills women are second to none. Their addition into workforce raises the quality of workforce. It also brings

in competition necessary for efficiency and effectiveness in economic sphere. As a result GDP figure shoot by 5% to 20%. Women participation also need some pre-established infrastructure like roads, transportation facility, electricity and security. All these have direct impact in boosting the economy.

Thus it is not just the moral or the constitutional requirement but also the necessity of time to stop neglecting this tremendous reservoir of potential and assimilate them whole heartily into the socio-economic setup of the nation.

Topic: Distribution of key natural resources across the world (including South Asia and the Indian subcontinent)

2) Critically discuss the problems and prospects of coal sector in India. (200 Words)

Coal is one of the eight basic industries and has an overbearing impact on the entire economy. It is presently suffering from multiple problems that can be categorised into:

SUPPLY SIDE PROBLEMS

- a) The quality of coal is poor with high ash and moisture content.
- b) Coking coal is very scarce.
- c) Coal mining suffers from multiple obstacles like environmental clearance, tribal resistance, Left wing extremism domination etc.
- d) Poor technology is causing excessive wastages.

DEMAND SIDE PROBLEMS

- a) Domestic demand is shrinking as their major buyers i.e. Power companies are suffering losses due to non recovery.
- b) Increase in carbon cess has increased its cost.
- c) With amendment to Coal act there is an oversupply of coal in the market.
- d) RPO under NAPCC has further put a check on the expansion of coal market.

Despite multiple challenges coal sector hold many promising prospects. Discovery of coal bed methane and its extraction is the next big revolution waiting to get unfold. Coal itself can be washed to get coke that has diverse applications. Make in India that aims to boost domestic production will create more demand for coal. Simultaneously advancement in technology like MHD is likely to maintain the demand of coal despite Climate change pressure. Thus the sector, in all possibility, will keep growing in future.

Topic: Important Geophysical phenomena; poverty and developmental issues

3) Examine the non-geographical causes of droughts in India with suitable examples. (150 Words)

Drought is a hydrological condition where the water levels fall below the statistical requirement of water. The statistical

requirement itself tells that there are non geographical factors along with geographical ones causing droughts.

Non Geographical Factors

a) Type of crops: Water intensive crops like sugarcane and rice grown in water scarce areas like Marathwada and Punjab plains invites droughts as the water availability fails to meet the burgeoning requirement of water by these crops.

b) Pollution: Water pollution makes water unsuitable for use. For eg Resident of Pallakad district suffered acute water scarcity due to

pollution caused by Coca Cola bottling plant that was resolved later by its closure.

c) Over-extraction of ground water: It not only reduces the water level, drying wells but also the excessive irrigation makes soil water

logged, saline and alkaline reducing their cropping potential and inviting droughts. For eg: unjab plains are increasingly becoming saline.

d) Accessibility and affordability of food: High inflation, poor connectivity, rotting food grains in FCI godowns and extreme poverty

increase the susceptibility to droughts.

Hence it can be said that the shortsightedness of humans and their intrusions trespassing the nature's limit is emerging as one of the prime cause of droughts.

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

4) The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), passed in 1976 and amended in 2010 has been criticised on many grounds. Critically examine why. (150 Words)

FCRA has been enacted by government to allow organisations to avail funds from foreign donors but this allowance comes with some conditionalities. It is these conditions, NGOs claim, that hinders their working and public welfare at large. Many of the criticisms are centred not on the act itself but its implementation. Some of these criticisms are based on:

1. Govt using FCRA to arm-twist NGO to work according to whims of govt
2. Scarcity of funds is primary challenge to NGOs thus they depend hugely on flexibility on financial mobility and spending but FCRA curbs this
3. It is used to silence voice of dissent
4. Such gagging is detrimental not only to the NGO but also the people whom they serve
5. Ill-defined conditions like NGO should not function prejudicial to "public interest" leaves room for misuse

But such conditions imposed are not all in vain because:

1. Lack on accountability in functioning of NGOs as very few of them have filed returns
2. They are very potent in public opinion to one needs to ensure that dissent doesn't culminate into incitement
3. Since these are powerful tools of development, specially in India, govt needs to ensure that they are not influenced by their parent nation/source of funds to act detrimental to national interest
4. They need to follow the law of the land

Govt should keep in mind that NGOs are independent stakeholders in the society and not agent of govt. So what is required in monitoring with minimum intervention so that both can work in synergy thus optimising their strengths to empower the public at large

Topic: Role of women;

1) At 53 percentage points, India has one of the worst gender gaps in the world when it comes to labour force participation. How this percentage can be improved?

Discuss. (150 Words)

According to the latest census data, women make up almost 50% of the Indian population. Yet, they continue to remain underrepresented in the labour market. Female labor force participation (FLFP) in urban India has remained stagnated around 18%, making India one of the worst performers in terms of labour market participation. It is now a well documented fact that poor FLFP has economic and social repercussions for the nation at large. Therefore, it is imperative that measures be taken to boost India's FLFP. Following are some suggestions in this regard:

Social and educational measures:

(1) One of the main reasons for women to stay at home is to take care of the children, more so with the breakdown of the joint family system in India. Therefore, it is important for the State to step into to provide subsidized childcare facilities.

(2) In the alternative, the government should provide impetus to its existing family planning programmes encouraging more women to plan their children.

(3) At the root cause for most problems faced by women in our society is the patriarchal mindset. While this cannot be changed overnight, long term measures need to be taken to sensitise the future generations about gender issues. We as a society need to learn to look at women beyond mothers and daughters.

Structural measures:

(1) It is noted that one of the major deterrents to women's participation in the labour force is the wage disparity. This continues to be a problem despite the inclusion principle of equal pay for equal work in the DPSPs. The solution lies in the more stringent implementation of the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.

(2) Steps must be taken both the public and private sector to improve the safety and support infrastructure to women at workplace. In this regard, implementation of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act is a welcome step.

(3) Small measures like making separate toilets for women mandatory and opening creche facilities can go a long way in making the work environment more inclusive.

(4) Better physical infrastructure in terms of well connected and well lit roads serviced by a safe public transport system is another measure.

Topic: Salient features of Indian society

1) Who are the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) in India? Examine why they are classified as such and discuss their characteristics and social conditions.

(200 Words)

PVTG are a special class of tribal groups, classified as such by the govt of India, due to their specially low development indices when compared to other local tribes.

--These were classified under the Dhebar Commission (1960-61), so as to better facilitate their growth, on par with other STs on national scale, and help them include in the mainstream development, while using their indigenous knowledge.

--Their characteristics include:

1. Pre agricultural system of existence, i.e. they practice hunting or gathering
2. Zero or negative population growth
3. Extremely low level of literacy
4. Absence of a written language

--Being distributed over the whole country in small groups, their cultural practices vary widely. They have their own traits of governance. Due to such isolated living, their development level varies widely from region to region, along with a high inequality index found in economic and social conditions.

--Even though various schemes have been initiated by the govt to help the tribes develop, the ground level implementation needs attention, due to lack of infrastructure for them. A holistic approach of the govt is needed for preserving their culture, alongwith modernising them, by preparing a long term Conservation cum Development plan, which includes their needs, as well as imparts them vocational knowledge

Topic: Post-independence consolidation

2) Critically examine why the process of preparation of National Register of Citizens in Assam is going on under the direct supervision of the Supreme Court. Also examine the consequences of such an exercise. (200 Words)

National Register of Citizens is a list of all Indian citizens based on census of 1951. The recent process of updating NRC for Assam only under the direct supervision of Supreme Court is being done for the following reasons:

- 1) Violent protests carried out by All Assam Students' Union (AASU) over the question of illegal migrants
- 2) Compliance with Assam Accord signed in 1985 by Rajiv Gandhi and leaders of Assam movement

The consequences of such an exercise could be following:

Positive-

- 1) Violence-free Assam as the question of illegal migrants would be resolved
- 2) Development activities would be carried out smoothly
- 3) Improvement in HDI of Assamese people

Negatives-

- 1) Exclusion and inclusion errors in updating because of doubts over the credibility of 1951 census and the difficulties involved in proving an indigenous citizen could cause injustice to many people
- 2) Similar demands from other states could erupt violence
- 3) India's image in international arena could be tarnished as the status of these citizens would remain unsettled given the fact that India has no deportation treaty with Bangladesh

In view of these arguments, it can be said India should first bring Bangladesh on board before expediting the above said process.

Topic: Role of women

3) A recent World Bank report has found that countries whose laws discriminate against women and do not promote gender equality suffer economically. Critically comment on this finding with special reference to India. (200 Words)

Empowering women and reducing gender bias has implications that go beyond social upliftment of women. Eliminating legislations that discriminate against women and creating laws that are gender-equal generates a spiral of activities which ultimately result in increased economic growth of a country.

The findings of the UN Report on Women, Business and Law, 2016 which highlights the loss in GDP owing to gender bias has significant implications for women in India.

A variety of Indian laws promote gender equality inter alia Domestic Violence Act (2005), Maternity Benefit Act (1961), Equal Remuneration Act (1976), Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (2013), etc.

There are quotas for women in different institutions such as Panchayati Raj.

In spite of laws and regulations in place, according to an IMF report, female labor force participation rate in India is only 33% as compared to the world average of 50%. The participation rates in government jobs, politics, higher management jobs is very low as compared to men. Women continue to face sexual harassment at work, domestic violence at home irrespective of the social status and increasing incidences of rape and acid attacks.

What inhibits gender equality in India is the unwillingness to give the women an equal place in a patriarchal society. An average Indian woman is dominated by her husband, father or brother. She doesn't enjoy the freedom of choice in work, education and marriage. Various villages in Haryana are shadowed by khap panchayats, while highly educated Kerala suffers from child marriage issues. Tackling such deep rooted problems has to be a combined effort of the people, the social workers, the government and the police. Only then will the discrimination against women end and the results will show in an increase in the economic growth.

Topic: factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India)

1) Critically examine the problems and prospects of tea industry in India. (200 Words)

Tea is a major foreign revenue earner for India and has an equally significant role in domestic market. It has a huge potential for India but is marred by some constraints.

Problems with tea industry:

1. Quality Issues: It has been alleged that due to excessive use of pesticides, various compounds have found to be present in tea leaves.
2. Labour issues: It is a labour-intensive industry and so there have been agitations for better pay & working conditions
3. Structural constraints in management by tea board
4. Trade Policy: FTP 2015 has reduced export concessions for tea from 5% to 3% which affects its competitiveness
5. Global constraints: Global price shocks and civil strife in middle-east has adversely affected our exports
6. Low technology implementation and ageing tea bushes are also worrisome issues
7. Monsoon dependence

Prospects for the industry:

1. Increasing global demand for Indian tea has raised the hopes of the industry
2. Venturing into new markets like China, Kazakhstan etc.
3. Recent delegation to Georgia is an excellent initiative to increase depth of markets for Indian tea
4. Implementation of Plant Protection Code will allay all apprehensions about pesticides in tea and boost its sales
5. Favourable export condition and domestic market promotion can also benefit the industry
6. Diversification of tea leave products can open up new avenues

7. Impetus to food processing industry will lead to employment generation helping economic development in NE states

8. Improved supply chain and storage management will enhance shelf life

The industry can prove to be a boon for India, as it generates both employment and economy, if timely steps are taken by govt and Tea board for giving proper boost to the industry in the right direction

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

1) Do you think the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb is rightly vilified by some historians? Critically comment. (200 Words)

For long nationalist historians have liberally tarred Aurangzeb, the last of the great Mughal rulers, with a black brush. He has been for long labelled - a cruel, narrow-minded and fundamentalist Emperor who hated the hindus. Following are some of the accusations that have been levelled against him:

- (1) Fratricide of his own brothers including the more tolerant Dara Shikoh.
- (2) Murder of the Sikh Guru Teg Bahadur
- (3) Humiliating and harassing the hindu hero Shivaji
- (4) Reversal of Akbar's policy of religious tolerance - for e.g., destruction of temples and imposition of jaziya tax on the Hindu inhabitants of his kingdom, which undermined the loyalty of the Hindus to the empire.
- (5) Forbade singing and painting in his court, which lead to the decline of arts under his reign.

There is no doubt that compared to his predecessors, Aurangzeb was more puritanical in his disposition. But to completely ignore the political and socio-economic conditions prevailing at the time of his rule, while analysing his policies, would be unfair.

(A) It is worth noting that when Aurangzeb came to power, the finances of the Mughal state were dwindling on account of the extravagances of his predecessors.

The economy was plagued by stagnating agricultural productivity and the inability of merchant capital to transform itself into industrial capital.

(B) Politically, the hegemony of the Mughal empire faced challenges from the Jats, Sikhs, Rajputs and the Marathas, all of whom happened to be Hindu empires.

(C) Socially, the Hindus were said to have become disloyal during the reign of his predecessors and so it was to send out a strong message to them that he took to destruction of temples and the imposition of jaziya.

Therefore, a number of his unpopular measures were really of a socio-economic character and cannot be said to have based solely on his religious outlook. In this context, it must not be forgotten that the Mughal empire reached its territorial climax under his reign and this wouldn't have been possible without the support of the Hindus, who formed the majority of his people.

Topic: Factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India)

1) Write a note on challenges and prospects of India's business process outsourcing (BPO) in the healthcare sector. (150 Words)

By leveraging the technology and skilled manpower providing the services to the others is a common phenomena in Business outsourcing(BPO).Till now Indian health care BPO has been gaining considerable amount of foreign exchange but it has been marred with some problems in recent times.

Challenges:

1. Stiff competition from the US as it provides large gamut of services and Philippines offers low cost services.
2. Infrastructure challenges such as power and broadband connectivity to provide privacy and secure information.
3. The recent controversies around the drug patents raising cause of concern among global players.
4. Inadequate R&D incentives impinging the out sourcing the R&D services.

5. Inadequate facilities to expand the skilled manpower at demand level.
6. Political and other economical reasons at the global level hindering the prospects of the BPO.

Prospects:

1. English fluency and chief work force may give edge to the India.
2. Changing regulatory mechanism and the timely approval of clinical trials will make India attractive platform.
3. The availability of qualified healthcare professionals would turn the India best choice for the services.
4. Raising prospects in The Ayurvedic field have a added advantage to the India.
5. Digital India, skill India can be utilize to realise the full potential of the sector.

It is not because of lack of resources but lack of management. If these problems are addressed, India can emerge as global leader in Health care BPO.

Topic: Poverty and developmental issues

2) UN experts opine the overall success or failure of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be determined by the results of a single country—India. Critically examine the challenges that India might face in implementing SDGs and possible solutions to these challenges. (200 Words)

Being the second most populous country, India's contribution to global poverty, morbidity, illiteracy etc is equally humongous. This makes India an essential pivot to determine the success or failure of SDG as any achievement by India will have a considerable impact on SDG realisation. To ensure the success of SDG there is thus a need to identify the challenges faced by India.

CHALLENGES

1) Financial: SDG realisation requires huge sum of money. Raising capital especially in present sluggish global economic scenario is quite challenging.

2) Structural Challenge: SDG needs a bottom up strategy with top down monitoring. Panchayats are the focal points but their capabilities are too restricted to achieve tangible results. For top down monitoring, the number of targets i.e. 169 are too many and NITI Ayog assigned with this responsibility is too young. State too are entangled in continuous competitive federalism.

3) Global political climate: In era of climate change, pressure to shift to clean technology is high when we still have masses living on subsistence level. WTO negotiations on Food subsidies too restrict our ability to surge ahead for achieving SDG.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

1) Integrate the SDG goals with the domestic policy initiatives of employment generation like Make in India, Skill Development etc to achieve synergy of efforts.

2) Develop a model for implementation by taking States and local bodies into confidence to evoke shared responsibilities among all stakeholders.

3) Utilise rather than antagonise Civil society and NGOs and define their role in Achievement of SDG.

4) Generate surplus revenue by giving boost to economic activities, so that it can be invested for social capital.

5) Set up a continuous monitoring and troubleshooting body to stay on track.

SDG is not just a legal requirement but also a moral and constitutional duty whose achievement will transform India from a good to a great nation

Topic: Poverty and developmental issues

1) Analyse India's performance in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. (200 Words)

MDGs are the set of development goals charted out by the UN with the aim to reduce extreme poverty by half, universalize primary education, increase gender parity, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat diseases like HIV/AIDS etc, environmental sustainability and achieve global partnership for the above goals.

The countries were needed to achieve the goals between the period 2000-15.

Indian performance in the same is a mixed bag of hits and misses.

1. India has successfully reduced extreme poverty by half (49% in 1990 to 29.5% in 2011).

but extreme poverty targets are low and India is still a home to 300 million poor which is a bigger challenge.

2. Though India has almost universalized primary education, but its more quantitative than qualitative. As per ASER report of an NGO Pratham, 50% of 5th class students fail at English and Maths of 2nd class.

3. Gender equality has improved but still women labour force participation rate is 53% which impacts both social and economic development.

4. Child mortality has come down from 88/1000 in 1990 to 49/1000 in 2012 but it's still very high as it should be 29 by 2015 and ideally zero.

4. Similarly maternal mortality, a measure of maternal health stands at 190/1 lac which was 560/1 lac in 1990. MMR has achieved considerable success but is still very high at target stands at 100/1 lac. Moreover 53% of Indian women are anaemic. Early marriage and pregnancy affects health of both mother and the children.

5. On environment front India has reduced CO₂ emission per dollar of GDP. It was 0.65 kg of CO₂ emission per dollar in 1990 which now is 0.53 kg. However pollution levels are still very high with cities becoming unsustainable and climate change affecting every aspect of life.

6. India has also achieved success to combat AIDS, TB spread through special programmes and awareness. Still Dengue, malaria, cholera etc kills millions of men, women and children.

The data clearly shows that indeed India has come a long way but a lot more has to be covered. The new SDGs should be taken more seriously as India is second most populous country with resources not adequate to meet the challenges, thus the risk it carries is the highest for the times to come.

Topic: Social empowerment; Poverty; Salient features of Indian Society

2) What do you understand by bonded labour? It is said that in India this scourge is still present in many states. Discuss the reasons for its existence and solutions to end the same. (200 Words)

Bonded labour is the closest thing to slavery, present in the modern world. It refers to the practice, where a person does another's bidding, due to the former's pledge of his services to the latter, in return for a debt or obligation.

Its causes include illiteracy, high expenses incurred during marriages and festivals, caste based system, indifference among govt officials regarding the concept and lack of concrete social welfare schemes to counter it. So, we can say that debt bondage mainly originates from social or economic pressures. Some states in India have enacted several laws to counter bonded labour, but no effort was made to strictly implement such laws due to the lax in ground level implementation.

Solutions include:

1. First of all, such cases should be identified expeditiously and should be economically rehabilitated, through imparting skill for labour work and using them in Make in India initiative
2. Also, their children (if any) should be given vocational education to save them from such a fate in future
3. Such processes should be decentralised among Panchayats and NGOs to reduce the workload of the govt and better penetration of remedial measures
4. Various laws like Bonded labour system (Abolition) act, 1976, enacted under Article 23, should be strictly implemented, with regular audit in rural areas, conducted by the local officer.

These all are herculean tasks, but they need to be executed to save the future of the nation

Topic: History of the world – important events and their effect

3) Discuss the events that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the consequences of this event had on Germany. (200 Words)

The Berlin wall was constructed at the peak of the cold war between US and USSR. Post WW2, Germany was divided between East and West Germany. Also the capital Berlin was divided between the 2 blocs leading to formation of East and West Berlin.

West Germany and west Berlin grew leaps and bound due to capitalist economy that focused on development of infrastructure and industrialization. The European Recovery program had provided \$13 billion for development of entire Europe, primarily West Germany.

Whereas the Molotov plan to build east Germany was a failure and as a result many of the east Germans started migrating to west Germany. USSR to prevent this humiliation as having lost to west in terms of development build the Berlin wall in 1961 which divided Berlin.

Events leading to fall of Berlin wall:

USSR's command economy, faulty industrialization pattern, faulty law of state enterprise and corrupt bureaucracy led to a severe economic crisis leading to Gorbachev proposing the Glasnost, perestroika and uskheirn to provide a safety valve to people's anger. Also Gorbachev wanted Helmut Kohl- leader of West Germany to finance USSR out of the economic crisis. Glasnost and perestroika led to venting out of people's anger and led to Soviet breakdown when Poland, Ukraine, Estonia, Czechoslovakia, Russia, Lithuania, Latvia rebelled against soviet and called for dissolution of state union treaty that bound them to USSR and through Almati accord, USSR was declared dissolved. In 1990- after Helmut Kohl's party won elections in east Germany, the Berlin wall was demolished.

Consequences of fall of Berlin wall:

1. East Germany lost all its industries since couldn't compete with industrialised west Germany.
2. Massive unemployment in East Germany due to deindustrialization and EU labour movt worsened conditions.
3. Rise of right wing National Democratic party in former east German states.
4. Increased xenophobia and racial attacks against migrants since it caused unemployment.
5. Dissolution of USSR occurred in 1991 since other nations also demanded freedom from communist rule. End of communism in Germany.

Thus the fall of Berlin wall was one of the historic moments of the 20th century that changed the future course of Germany and from where emerged a powerful Germany which again became the master of Europe.

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

1) Critically analyse the contribution of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to India's struggle for freedom. (200 Words)

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was a revolutionary and in his own words "The ultimate object of revolutionaries is not terrorism but revolution and the purpose of the revolution is to install a national government. In light of this, his contribution can be viewed as below:

1. He left Indian civil services to join the national movement.
2. During non-cooperation movement he organized national schools and colleges and worked for Hindu Muslim Unity. He was appointed the principal of National College in Calcutta.
3. He along with Pd. Jawahar Lal Nehru set up Left wing of congress to spread idea of socialism and communism and advocated radical solutions for socio-economic and political ills.
4. He stressed upon the need to combine nationalism with anti-imperialism and complete independence.
5. He organized underground activities to support the movement.
6. During Simon commission protest, he traveled extensively addressing and presiding conferences giving the protest a militant flavor. It aroused many youth and spread radical ideas.
7. He was a member of Nehru constitution drafting committee, but was dissatisfied with the dominion status proposal in report and hence established Independence of India League for complete independence support.

8. Under his congress presidentship, efforts were taken on planning under National Planning committee.

9. He formed forward bloc and then joined India National Army where he gave the slogan "Tum Mujhe Khoon so, main tumhe Azadi

Doonga"

10. He set up provisional Indian government in Singapore.

11. He also supported worker's union for labour reforms kept close contact with AITUC

His radical ideas and non-flexible attitude could not hold the masses for long. Violent revolution as supported by him needed sacrifices while not everyone is always ready to follow this. Though his enormous contribution has raised a sense of nationalism and pride feelings among people. He is a great inspiration of national spirit.

Topic: Changes in critical geographical features (including waterbodies and ice-caps)

1) Do you think interlinking of rivers, as done in the Krishna-Godavari linking project through the Pattiseema scheme, would benefit people? Critically examine. (150 Words)

Indian river inter-link project is a project of linking two or more rivers through man made canals, civil technologies. This project links water surplus areas of northern India with water deficit area of western India and peninsular India. Linking Krishna-Godavari river through patteseema scheme is the first success of such project. This issue have pros and cos as listed below:---

Pros:---

A) will reduce flood damages and decrease the chances of drought in semi-arid and arid part of the country.

B) Irrigation:--areas like Vidhrabha, Souhrashtra, telengana, which lack irrigation facilities and land is unused land can be used for agriculture purposes and play imp role in food security.

C) Navigation:- facilitate navigation through water which considered cheapest and environment friendly means of transport.

D) Generate electricity :-through building new Dams.

E) Improve rural Livelihood

Cons:--

A)Environmental concerns:--

a)interlinking project may transport river pollution of one river to another.

b)ecological link between ocean and land may be broken.

c)delta may shrunk--due to non availability of sediments and water.

d)Aqua life may come under serious threat.

e)large land area may submerged.

B) social concerns:--displacement of tribal and poor people. we have seen in past such displacement may cause serious problems of security as seen in past--naxalism.

C) economical issues:--

a)river changes its course in 70-100 years after that what..

b)wasting money in interlinking why not in sea distillation projects which are cheaper.

c)fiscal deficit of state and union may go up.

Rather than going for any such project India should focus on rain water harvesting and storage capacities, AS it is below its potential level. Focus on sea water distillation.

Topic: World War-II

1) Critically analyse India's contribution to the World War II. (200 Words)

The Indian contribution to the WW2 has been undermined. It is ironic that India fought with the allied forces against the fascist powers even when India wasn't independent itself. The contribution of India in the world war 2 are as follows :

1. Military - British India sent over two and a half million volunteer soldiers to fight under British commands against the axis power.

Indians fought in the European theaters of Germany and Italy, in African campaigns, defended the south Asian region from Japanese.

2. Economic - Several Indian princely states and capitalists provided economic support to the allied campaigns.

3. Industrial - British diverted a lot of local raw material to assist war efforts. This was the major reason behind Bengal's famine.

4. Strategic base - Strategic position of Orissa and Bengal and even IIT KGP was used by the allied countries to restrict Japan by air and naval strikes.

5. India liberated British colonies like Singapore and Hong Kong after Japan's surrender.

6. Ordinary workers - Chefs, boot makers, coolies played a passive role during the war.

Under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose and several other Indian revolutionaries who were seeking independence from the British, Japan set up an army of Indians known as the Indian National Army. Apart from this, the Indian contribution to Allied forces remained strong. 87000 Indian soldiers (then India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) died in the war.

Topic: Art and culture

2) Discuss the significance of Buddhist Stupas for many Asian countries. (150 Words)

Advent of Buddhism can be traced back from 2nd century BC in India, patronized by emperor Chandra Gupta Maurya in 6th century BC. In later centuries Ashoka made

significant attempt to wide-spread Buddhism religion In south East Asian countries. Significance of Stupa in Asian countries like Srilanka, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Burma can be compiled as follows -

Architectural Significance - Development of Stupa in Asian countries was like addition of cherry on cake in their architectural portfolio.

Historical Significance - Presence of Buddhist Stupa can be considered as conflation of various historical, economical, cultural, ethical values having their own gist of historical events.

Tourism Significance - Astonished architecture of Stupa have the magnificent power to attracts tourism which is having loads of economic value in term of revenue.

Religious Significance - lead to evolution of new set of beliefs and values which is widely accepted by masses of Asian countries specially due to its neutrality in term of inclination towards some blind belief. Buddhism is underlined by fact/logic base knowledge.

In the history of architecture, Buddhism Stupa is considered as a greater milestone of architectural development and also expansion of Buddhism as separate religion.

Topic: Salient features of Indian society; Poverty and developmental issues

1) In your opinion, what do recent anti-reservation movements by people belonging to relatively well-off castes reflect of the Indian society? Critically comment. (200 Words)

The Indian society has been called Paradoxical by western anthropologists and for a good reason. Where we worship women, there are rapes, where there's talk of all men being different parts of God, there is inequitable Varna system, where there's demand for reservation for the purpose of equalisation, the real motto remains preservation of inequality.

The current anti reservation protest must be seen as a sort of counter current to the effects of 65 years of reservation. Now, that a significant number of lower castes have been lifted out of backwardness and are competing for the higher castes for power, the Parochial sentiments of preservation of fiefs and domination of lower castes finds its vent in these protests

SECONDLY, it tells as about the failure of the Market forces to adequately compensate the higher castes and to lift the varying sections of our society above the petty demands for protectionism. That the value of government jobs is still high, only goes on to show that there aren't enough decent private jobs out there.

THIRD, it points towards the MENTALITY of vast majority of Indians, whose core values are still defined by ingroupism, nepotism and grabbing of resources; rather than egalitarianism or individualism. This may be construed as a failure on education front and also the lack of modernisation of our values inspite of outward change.

Lastly, it points to the POLITY of the nation, where the increasing jingoism by shrill minority can get any unreasonable demand through. The lack of rationality in the quest for vote polictitcs seems to inspire people to agitate for any demand, no matter how obscene, for the right numbers can get anything past the gate.

Maybe, this is the time to take a pause and reflect on where we have come and where we should head as a nation

Topic: Salient features of Indian society;

2) Do you think caste consciousness and practice of caste system exists in the Indian diaspora around the world? Critically comment. (150 Words)

Increased development, increased income and exposure to various social and cultural system do have effect on broadening human perspective related to caste system. We tend to see people living in cities and overseas disregarding caste inequalities and there is more bond of common nationality. Economic opportunities in foreign land allows breaking the caste barrier.

Contrary to above beliefs, Indian diaspora still look to marry within caste and endorse caste system. Caste identity has been central to

the ways in which Indians overseas organised their society. Marriages, religious sermons, charity and fundraising drives among the community are conducted by appointed preachers of the caste. Marriages very often are encouraged within the community, dress codes are adhered to, and religious institutions endorse the religiously divided caste/sect system. People change their names and surnames to get away from low-caste identity.

While it is often argued that caste has changed form in the new social and geographical context but it has not been eliminated yet even among Indian diaspora.

Topic: Post-independence consolidation

3) It is said that the War experience of 1965 War against Pakistan helped India win decisively against Pakistan in 1971 War. Critically examine. (150 Words)

The indecisive war of 1965 between India-Pakistan neither brought victory to Pakistan, nor peace to India, but helped India to grow strategically on new warfare of the emerging geopolitical South Asia. India learnt from the mistakes of 1965 and applied its experiences in 1971 in the following way-

1. Understanding the role of technology and defence modernisation in modern war outcomes.
2. Execution of a smooth cohesive war-plan engaging all 3 armed forces towards a common goal.
3. Importance of strategic treaty with major powers like Russia in this case.
4. Better time management and policy formulations.

India also witnessed the bitter consequences of any indecisive war leading to human migration, global instability and security crisis and did a rejig to its defence structure. A better coordination among all armed-forces was the mantra of this success and the people with great trust also cooperated with India.

This is how India fought 1971 war for a decisive outcome with the creation of a new nation Bangladesh and also rebalancing the power-share of south Asia.

Topic: Changes in critical geographical features (including waterbodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes.

1) With suitable examples, illustrate environmental implications of river linking projects that are mooted in India in recent days. (150 Words)

Inter-linking of Rivers has been advocated as a solution to flood control, water deficit, augmenting irrigation and unemployment in certain pockets of India.

However, such an ambitious project comes with environmental implications too:

1. It can damage the ecosystems that are built through millions of years of evolution. Krishna-Godavari river link sucks the water away from Coringa Bay Wildlife Sanctuary that hosts migrant birds from Russia.
2. The insufficient water may reduce self-cleaning capacity of rivers. Eg-Ganga-Cauvery link.
3. Deforestation as there is a need to build huge canals and dams. Eg:Mahanadi-Godavari link can dry up the mangrove forest in the stretch.
4. Water pollution could result in disease spread. Eg: Parbati Kalisindh Chambal Link passes through agri-lands that use heavy fertilizer doses.
5. Accelerating global climate change: If used more pumping power derived from coal and petroleum to facilitate water flow , it releases Green House Gases and changes the region into “Heat Islands” Eg: Srisailam- Pennar Link water needs massive lifting power along the stretch.

It is desirable not to disturb the fragile ecosystems. But, when there is no alternative, make sure there is minimal damage and maximum benefits.

Topic: Changes in critical geographical features (including waterbodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes; Poverty and developmental issues

1) Critically discuss how the poor people around the world will be affected by climate change effects and other natural disasters. What global institutional mechanism do they have to support their cause? Examine. (200 Words)

It is by now quite clear from the available scientific evidence that climate change, in combination with other natural disasters, is likely to have very catastrophic consequences for human life, especially the poor and vulnerable.

Affects on Poor and Vulnerable:

1. The Sea Level Rise (SLR) would make many islands of Low Elevation Coastal Zone (LECZ) and low lying countries prone to submergence. It deprives them of shelter and livelihood triggering mass exodus.

Eg: Bangladesh, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Islands of Micronesia.

2. Frequent Climate extremes (Eg: heat wave-India, unseasonal rainfall-Afghanistan) build more stress. The less- gap between two extremes makes them perennially poor.

3. The climate variability of large scale (Eg: Indian Monsoon-EL Nino-Walker Circulation) where more poor live severely hits the Indian sub-continent, Peruvian coast, East Africa and Australia cause severe drought, disease spread, crop damage, reduced export and import and cause havoc.

4. It nullifies the government efforts to mitigate poverty all over the globe. Degrades ecosystems, hamper economic growth-social protection and water stress.

Institutional Support:

1. The UNFCCC Warsaw Agreement'2013 has recognized the Loss & Damage (L&D) that tries to capture climate extremes and variability.

2. World Bank's Institute (WBI) to enhance finance and cooperation.

3. Individual countries national missions like India's National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).

4. IMF-World Bank-United Nations consistent monitoring of policy actions for support.

However, the negotiations are often stalled over finances sharing (Annex-I countries), L&D make over, technology transfer, limited power to influence domestic policies of member countries and distribution equality.

The upcoming Paris Convention of Parties (CoP) is the hope to widen the scope for more institutional support and comprehensive action on climate change.

Topic: Changes in critical geographical features (including waterbodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes;

1) Write a note on the Ocean Mixing and Monsoons and Air Sea Interactions in the Northern Indian Ocean-Regional Initiative (OMM-ASIRI) project and its significance for India. (200 Words)

OMM ASIRI project is a joint collaboration between India and US to study one of the most complex feature of Indian Ocean: Monsoon.

Goal of OMM-ASIRI project:

- > To study and understand formation of cloud over Bay of Bengal
- > To prepare monsoon modelling
- > To access atmosphere of Indian ocean and find its role in weather phenomenon
- > Based on all studies, it wants to develop Monsoon forecasting system

Significance for India:

- > Indian monsoon is lifeline of rural India and thus its assessment will help them
- > Help India to sustain and adapt to climate changes
- > Will lead to new crop system in tandem with monsoon forecast
- > Help Indian Metrological Department to forecast flood, cyclones and related disasters
- > Help Government of India to plan food security and subsidies
- > Enhance mutual learning and technology exchange between India US

It should be understood that India monsoon and tropical cyclone system are very complex to understand and predict with the existing technologies. Thus it would be for betterment of the mankind in Indian Ocean Region including India, Myanmar, Bangladesh if it can develop better system

Topic: Location of industries; Resources

1) Though separated by geography, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka states are facing similar problems in their sugar industries. Critically examine the nature of these problems and their impact on small farmers. (200 Words)

Though miles apart, UP and Karnataka sugarcane farmers are facing acute poverty due to similar reason of non payment on their sugarcane crop. The reasons include:

1. The mismatch between the high sugarcane prices mandated by the govt and falling the sugarcane price in market, which leaves the mills, with lesser money to pay the farmers.
2. Hesitations to implement the Swaminathan committee to procure sugarcane at higher MSP, which again puts the burden on mill owners to clear the dues
3. Low share given to mill owners, out of the sugarcane sale, which leaves them with even lesser money to clear debts from banks, due to which banks are reluctant to give them any more loans.
4. Large amount of sugarcane crop grown last season, which increased its supply and decreased price

Impact on small farmers:

1. Increasing indebtedness and consequent suicide rate among the farmers
2. Low incentive to grow more sugarcane, despite it being listed in the Essential Commodities Act, which grants it special status
3. Low funds available to prepare for next crop season, which can lead to a chain reaction with low crop in the next season, with lesser money collection.

Such problems need to be evaluated on a holistic basis by the govt. Bankrupt mills should be allowed to close after paying a specified amount to clear a portion of their dues to the farmer, with the govt paying the rest in installments. Restructuring of loans given to mill owners can be done to decrease their burden. Such measures can leave the mill owners with more money to maintain staff and also clear the farmers due, while decreasing their burden, alongwith the govt sharing some responsibility.

Topic: Location of industries; Resources

[2\) Sivakasi's fireworks industry, which once used to cater to 80% of the fireworks market in India is said to be under distress due to variety of domestic and international factors. Critically comment on these factors. \(200 Words\)](#)

Sivakasi fireworks industry located in Tamil Nadu used to cater to nearly 80% of the domestic market has been running into trouble because of a plethora of domestic and international factors.

Domestic factors:

- 1) Growing competition: Fireworks industries that have come up in Northern India are posing a great challenge to the near monopoly of Sivakasi fireworks
- 2) Compliance with guidelines: Industry find itself difficult to adhere to the guidelines of Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organization
- 3) Non-availability of skilled laborers: Fireworks industry requires skills to handle the delicate raw materials but off late there has been a dearth of skilled laborers. The seasonal nature of this industry has further fuelled the non-availability of laborers

- 4)Corruption: Large scale corruption among the inspecting officials has diverted major financial resources to meet the demands of 'babus'
- 5)Reluctance by banks: Banks have remain reluctant to extend loans to the industry because of the bearish outlook of industry
- 6)Absence of guidelines: Export has been falling because of absence of guidelines for shipment from VOC port (tuticorin)

International factors:

- 1)Competition with China: China has a near monopoly over the global market and has also affected India's market because of the low prices that it offers
 - 2)Non-tariff barriers: Sivakasi industry has been criticized for making children work and this has drawn flak from across the globe resulting in falling exports
- Thus, the firework industry needs to be given the proper boost by weeding out corruption and through technology upgradation so that it can acquire its past standards.

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

[1\) Which factors played major role in forcing the British to leave India? Critically examine Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's role in it. \(200 Words\)](#)

India got her independence in the year 1947 due to a number of domestic and international factors.

Domestic factors-

- 1)Efforts of INC: Indian National Congress had been bombarding the British government in India with one movement after the other culminating into Quit India Movement
- 2)Royal Indian Navy Revolts: Revolts led by Royal Navy and later joined by Army and Air Force made British believe that nationalism has begun to enter in ranks of military, one of the instrument of controlling Indian nationalism
- 3)Revolts of Indian National Army: INA led by Subhas Chandra Bose fought against ranks of British army and crippled their situations
- 4)Degeneration in Indian Civil Services: ICS was getting dominated by Indians with British finding them hard to control

International factors-

- 1)World War II: WWII crippled financial situation of British and they found it hard to maintain control over colonies
- 2)Rise of Labor Party: Labor Party won the elections in British and it favored India's demands
- 3)Pressure from UN and America: British got most of her aid from America but US and UN both opposed imperialism and colonialism

Netaji Subhas was one of the leading personalities that were responsible for making India independent. Netaji reorganized INA and led revolts in Karachi, Jabalpur and

Asansol. The Quit India movement and the slogan "Do or Die" had been proposed by Netaji earlier during 1938.

However, Netaji colluded with Japanese forces to achieve his objective. This could have resulted into a situation of India becoming a theatre of war and Japan occupying India after British. This is evident from Gandhi's speech "Leave India in God's hands". Thus, the equation thought by Netaji had the potential to run India into troubles.

Despite all this, it can be said Netaji proved a major decisive factor in making India independent by crippling the British empire.

Topic: Urbanization and issues

2) Analyse the nature of urbanisation in South Asian countries. (200 Words)

Urbanisation has been a fast paced process in south asia. BUt unike some of the developed counter parts , the process has been unplanned and hence has done more harm than good.

The features of urbanization i south asia are-

1. Rapid urbanization with low level of town planning. This has resulted in formation of slums which severely lack basic facilities for dignified living
2. Pressure on land and infrastructure resources. Encroachments, forceful evictions , conflicts have become common. Thus can be attributed to absence of digitized land record maintenance.
3. Failure to institute regulatory bodies or strict implementation of laws by such bodies in case they are instituted. This has led to increase in pollution, sanitation problems, dilapidation of basic infrastructure like roads, schools etc.
4. lack of ability to create jobs. The urban centers of India ha seen decreas in manufacturing growth as com[ared to other urban areas of the world. In fact the growth has come in the outskirts of urban area and not in the core. This has reduced the prospects of development of formal sectors.
5. Urbanization in South Asia has failed to create equal opportunity for male and females in formal or informal sector. The gender gap has only widened.

Thus on an overall level, South Aisan urban centers needs to plan out ways for more holistic, scientifically designed, and inclusive ways for expansion.

Focus of urbanization should be tilted towards better land management, digitized land records, better implementation of law and order, use of ICT to bring good governance.

Women should be equal partners in development.

Baisc issues of health care, housing, water management demads rejuvenated focus.

Govt. has already started scheme like JNNURM, AMRUT to revive the urban centers. Besides this scheme like HRIDAY has been launched to focus on reviving the heritage cities so that their potential to become thriving cosmopolitan center for culture and tourism can be tapped

Topic: Role of women and women's organization

1) The recent strike by large number of women workers at Munnar tea plantations highlights the poor implementation of the Plantation Labour Act and the indifferent attitude of the state and central governments to the plight of the workers. Examine. (200 Words)

In 1951, the Parliament passed the Plantations Labour Act [PLA] which sought to provide for the welfare of labour and to regulate the conditions of workers in plantations. Under this law, the State Governments have been empowered to take all feasible steps to improve the lot of the plantation workers. The passing of PLA brought some improvements in the plantations sector but largely remained a failure. Improvements:

1. It also helped in creating conditions for organising the workers and the rise of trade unions.
2. Employee health was made a responsibility of employer with facilities like drinking water, medical facilities etc
3. It provided for welfare provision like creches, education and housing facilities etc
4. It prescribed for maximum weekly and daily work hours along with intervals, restriction on work at night for women and children etc.
5. Provide for penalties in case of violation by the Employer.

Existing Issues:

1. Long working hours especially for women with abysmally low wages in sub-optimal working condition.
2. Lack of participation in management and decision making.
3. Failure of trade union to act as true representative due to connivance with the management. Female workers plight are not raised due to male dominance.
4. Most of the plantations are located in remote and 'isolated areas. Thus, do not come under the purview of rural development and antipoverty programmes and there is hardly any other employment avenue.
5. Workers are illiterate and migrants with no awareness or information about their rights.

With rising competition from neighboring markets, any dispute between employer and employee will further harm the future prospects of tea industry. Time is ripe for government to step in and bring peace and accord through method of collective bargaining using tripartite mechanism.

Topic: Poverty and Developmental Issues

2) Some argue that poverty is a “cognitive tax” suffered because people are incapable of taking advantage of the opportunities that are open to them. Do you agree with such assessment? Critically comment. (200 Words)

Poverty as a "cognitive tax" is a concept put forward in the 2015 World Development Report brought out by the World Bank. It sums up the nature of poverty "as not a shortfall of money, but the constant, day-to-day, hard choices which tax the individual's mental resources, leading her to make decisions which perpetuate her poverty."

This is a misguided notion for the following reasons-

- 1) If we say that poverty causes individuals to make bad economic decisions that increase their poverty, then it means that we are holding the individuals responsible for their own plight, and absolving the state and society from all responsibility. In fact, the change required is not in the behaviour of poor people, but a structural transformation of society that provides better access to goods and services. We must not overlook the injustices of the development paradigm.
- 2) It is not just poor people who make irrational decisions, but all human beings, regardless of wealth status. By saying that only "poverty" levies a cognitive tax, we are blaming the poor people for their condition, while completely overlooking the role of the financial elite in creating an unequal society.
- 3) By focusing solely on the "cognitive tax" of poverty, we ignore the cognitive tax of wealth, that makes the financial elite exploit the world's resources while at the same time not taking responsibility for what they owe the rest of society.

The danger of accepting the "cognitive tax" assessment is that it wants the poor to change their behaviour, while the societal norms that gave rise to inequality in the first place remain unchanged, such as environmental damage, forceful land acquisition, inadequate wage rates, poor education and healthcare access etc. The neoliberal agenda of finding economic solutions to socio-economic problems means that the elites and the state can continue with their exploitative, pro-market policies, and tell the poor that their poverty is their own fault

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

[3\) Critically assess contribution of Lal Bahadur Shastri to post-Independent India's consolidation. \(200 Words\)](#)

It was only a leader of Lal Bahadur shashtri's stature who could keep the congress party united after the demise of Nehru. The achievements of Prime Minister Shastri in his tenure, cut short by a mysterious death set up the base for India to grow as a world power.

1. Prime minister realized that our food security needs were to be given primary interest after the continuous droughts. Hence he promoted the green revolution with great fervour and put the nation on the track of self sustenance in food.
2. His display of military prowess, was evident in his dealing of the surprise attack of Pakistan on kashmir. His successful handling of the 1965 war, gave India a proper

military framework and established India's military intelligence to be much more competent, compared to 1962. This set the base for a quick and decisive war in 1971.

3. By not approaching the UNSC for intervention, he helped reiterate to the world, that Kashmir was a bilateral issue, and did not need involvement of world powers.

This set the stage for India's diplomatic stance in world politics, as firm and uncompromising.

4. His unifying call of "Jai Jawan Jai Kisan" was greatly helpful in unifying the nation behind the true saviors of the nation, the farmers and the soldiers and rallied all the citizens of India to support them.

5. He helped solve the language crisis in southern states by making sure the government continues to use English as a language and not imposing Hindi on them. His biggest critique till date has often been his inability to come out with a more firm agreement from Tashkent in dealing with our belligerent neighbour. But historians have claimed that, it too was a diplomatic victory that portrayed India's military escapade in Pakistan only as a defensive measure. Hence Prime Minister Shastri, has contributed to the nation immensely in his short tenure.

Topic: Population and associated issues,

[1\) Is large-scale labour migration good or bad for global economic welfare? Discuss with suitable examples. \(200 Words\)](#)

Large-scale labour migration is a phenomenon which is happening on a large scale and in all parts of the world these days. It has both good and bad effects;

Good;

1-

It promotes development of industrial clusters in various parts of the world. Examples are Shenzhen in China and Mumbai in India.

2-

Large scale migration helps fuel infrastructural development due to cheap availability of labour. Construction boom in Dubai is a prime example

3-

It also helps boost trade as migrant workers are absorbed into the economy in the industrial clusters and production invariably increases. All of China's SEZs are thriving on this principle.

4-

Migrant workers also remit much needed hard currency back home, either locally or internationally and that becomes a valuable economic transaction. Indian workers in the Gulf are main examples of this.

But, large scale labour migration also has a flip-side;

1-

Large-scale migration could induce tensions amongst the local populace and may lead to agitations. Like the migration of eastern European labourers into Britain is causing issues.

2-

It could lead to lowering of working wage and have an adverse effect on the standard of living of the people. Nepalese labourers willing to work for lesser than the Indian labourers.

3-

Also, migration of labourers could put an undue strain on the infrastructure of the cities and could lead to slum-creation and related spike in diseases. Slums of any major urban city
Large-scale labour migration is both a good and a bad thing, and a dispassionate study should be done before any policy regarding it is framed.

Topic: Changes in critical geographical features (including waterbodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes

[2\) It is argued that the root cause of recent dengue outbreak in Delhi is climate change, lack of governmental policy and action. Critically examine. \(200 Words\)](#)

The recent outbreak of dengue has taken a toll on lives of people. Its occurrence can be attributed to climate change and lack of governmental policy and action.

Climate change-

1) Higher temperature, rainfall and humidity are food for vector-borne disease i.e. dengue being caused by mosquito

2) Higher temperature results in increased reproduction by the female mosquitoes

Lack of governmental policy and action-

1) Low spending on healthcare has resulted in a mismatch between demand and supply of medical infrastructure

2) Government-funded hospitals have not proliferated thus forcing the people to opt for private hospitals which are costly

3) Poor state of information and management systems has resulted in a situation whereby existing funds are not properly utilized

In order to change this sad state of affairs, following measures can be taken:

1) Emphasize upon proper implementation of 'swachh Bharat Abhiyan' with greater focus on behavioral changes

2) Stepping up the spending on healthcare systems

3) Improve awareness among citizens about dengue disease

4) Weed out corruption and red-tape to ensure that there is a commensurate increase in facilities along with increase in funding

Dengue disease can take a hit at the demographic dividend currently being experienced by the country and thus needs to be tackled at earliest through appropriate policy decisions

Topic: Poverty and developmental issues

1) Is it better for the poor to access a bit of the Internet for free with a few strings attached rather than have no access to it at all? In the light of debate on internet.org (Free Basics) initiative, critically comment. (200 Words)

In today's digital age, it is understood that the person who is more connected to the outside world, will have more opportunities a.c.t those who don't have any such facility, for example, in rural areas, where the people are mostly unaware of the technological

developments which can alter their lifestyle forever.

--Such situation being rampant in India, it is good if the poor rural people can get access to a few free sites on the internet, which will not only help in increasing the human resource capital of the country, but also help the rural people on a local level, in improvising their primary activities, reducing the digital divide.

--With the decreasing prices of mobile phones, only the separate data pack for accessing internet remains a hurdle for the rural people. If initiatives like [internet.org](#), Airtel zero, etc. are able to provide such services, it will connect a large number of people to internet.

--On the other hand, such services can also turn harmful in the long run, as they contain only a selected few sites, which will be available free of cost. When they expand their market, the other new sites may not be able to compete, as customers will prefer free sites only.

--We should remember that initiative like Facebook, Flipkart, etc. were only successful due to an unrestricted internet and such initiatives can stifle any such future endeavours of entrepreneurs.

--So, such plans should only be a temporary method to kick start the digital India plan of the country, until India can itself connect majority of population to internet, through its own initiatives, so as to maintain the sanctity of freely and equally accessible internet.

For best answer, refer

<http://www.insightsonindia.com/2015/09/29/1-is-it-better-for-the-poor-to-access-a-bit-of-the-internet-for-free-with-a-few-strings-attached-rather-than-have-no-access-to-it-at-all-in-the-light-of-debate-on-internet-org-free-basics-initiati/#comment-2279575017>

Topic: World Physical Geography

2) Explain different types of tides and their causes. Examine how will Supermoon impact tides around the world and especially in India. (200 Words)

The rise and fall of seawater because of the gravitational pull of moon and sun is called as tides. There are many types of tides like:

1) Spring tide: Spring tides are produced when sun, moon and earth are in a straight line. Height of spring tide is 20% greater than normal tide and they occur twice every month during full moon and new moon

2) Neap tide: Neap tides are produced when sun, moon and earth are in such a position so as to form a right angle. Height of neap tide is 20% lower than normal tide and they occur thrice or four times during a month

3) Tropical and equatorial tide: Just like sun, moon also moves northward and southward in relation to equator. When moon moves northward and faces tropic of cancer or it moves southward and face tropic of Capricorn, such incidents are called as tropical tides. On the other hand, when moon faces equator, it is called equatorial tide

4) Apogean and perigean tide: Closest position of moon to earth causes the formation of perigean tide while farthest position of moon causes the formation of apogean tide. Recently, condition of perigee (closest position of moon to earth) has coincided with full moon thus having the potential to cause a "Supermoon tide" because of the very high tides it creates. This phenomenon has the potential to impact the globe in following ways:

1) Inundation of low lying islands like Maldives, Solomon islands and coastal regions e.g. the coastal regions of Britain, South Florida and in India along coasts of Kerala, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep etc

2) Storm surges could wreak havoc on the sanitation and drainage systems thus causing floods and providing fodder for vector borne diseases

3) Fisheries and plantation of seaweeds could be affected. E.g. in Mandapam district of Tamil Nadu

4) Impact on livelihoods and food security of people

Thus, adaptation and mitigation through appropriate measure and decisions should be the way forward to deal with the situation.

Topic: Role of women

1) India is in a situation where women labour force participation is declining with rising income. What measures need to be taken to arrest this trend and improve their participation? Discuss. (200 Words)

Reasons of Women Labor force declining:

1. The economy is moving from an agrarian to a manufacturing and service oriented one.

2. Lack of sensitization among society about the need of allowing women to be a part of workforce.
3. Low education and skill capacity of women to create a demand in the job market.
4. Political apathy towards women with low participation in position of power, policy making & implementation.

Measures to arrest this trend and improve participation need to be taken at both the level of government and private sector:

By Government:

1. There is need to make women the owner of capital, be it land given under government rehabilitation policy, loan given at subsidised rates, bank account created under Jan Dhan Yojana etc.
2. Make in India initiative should promote women participation to ensure manufacturing growth coincide with women's growth.
3. Skill India Mission goal should center around women, vocational training etc.
4. Government should promote women led MSMEs through the MUDRA scheme, granting entrepreneurial loans at concessional rate.
5. Self help groups and mahila gram sabha should be made a part of Digital India mission, providing e-literacy.

By Private Sector:

1. More women should be promoted to managerial roles giving them opportunity to lead and participate in decision making.
 2. Provision of Companies Act, making one women member mandatory in company's board is step in right direction.
 3. Provide safe and healthy environment at workplace promoting gender equity.
- Time has come for India to achieve gender equality to counter the problem of rising Income Inequality.

Topic: Role of women

[2\) How can collectives or groups of women who interact on a regular basis such as in Self Help Groups can empower them? Examine. \(200 Words\)](#)

Self help groups and other collectives like JLG, VSLA(village saving and loan associations) where women interact with each other on a regular basis can help empower them since:

- 1) Common problems/common solutions: the common problems that women face like economic dependence, domestic violence, marital rape, family feuds, marital efforts etc can be easily dealt by interacting with other women. It empowers women to leave in an abusive relationship and raise public awareness about intimate partner violence. Thus helps in building a social capital through exchange of ideas.
- 2) Financial independence: collectives can utilize skills and start enterprise that would lead to financial independence increasing their participation in decision

making of family also leading to her social empowerment. Eg: A collective supplying food under MDMS helps in achieving financial independence.

3) Credit availability: Women coming together find it easier to avail microfinance facilities as any default leads to social ostracisation. Thus credit availability helps in creating self employment.

4) Popular support: any injustice to any one women would lead to a popular support of the collective giving birth to a just society. Mahila mukti morcha, AIDWA protesting against women atrocities like rape of nepali servants by Saudi officials.

5) Pressure group: Such collectives lead to emergence of pressure groups that help in making legislative and administrative changes that support women and lead to their political empowerment.

Thus regular meetings help in woman's social, political and economic empowerment and such platforms should be promoted through mohalla sabhas, town hall committees etc to achieve a gender sensitive India.