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Topic: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests79

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Topic: Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these; Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive81

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Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health,; Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; 88

3) Do you think welfare schemes have played their role in improving the health of population in India? Critically analyse in the light of preliminary results of the National Family Health Survey-4. (200 Words) 88

Topic: Indian constitution – significant provisions; Functioning of judiciary 89

4) Contempt of court is one of the explicitly spelled out restrictions to the guaranteed right to freedom of speech under the Constitution. Do you think speech in criticism of the courts should be allowed without punishment in democracy like India? Critically comment. (200 Words) 89

Topic: Functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary 90

5) "As long as parties pursue their own political interests rather than abide by the Constitution, it will be left to the courts to uphold federal norms." In the light of recent controversial instances of imposition of President's rule in certain states based on Governor's recommendations and the manner of appointing Governors, critically comment on the statement. (200 Words) 90

General Studies - 2

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

2) Critically discuss the role of business and businessmen in improving relations between India and other countries. (200 Words)

The Relation between Business and Diplomacy has not been new. Business Can Play a very Important role in Diplomatic

What Role Business can Play :-

- 1) Can act as Intermediary:--Ex. David Rockefeller between America and China or Russian or German Businessmen between Putin and Merkel.
- 2) Altruistic Roles:- If a business Firm/Individual Invests in the development of some other nations then it ultimately strengthens the relations and ties at diplomatic level.
- 3) By Promoting its own business interest , Economic relations are a very crucial part of Political Relations.
- 4) Can Lobby for India's Cause :- Example During India-US Civil Nuclear Agreement, Many Influential business houses lobbied with congressmen and women.
- 5) Business Firms/Individuals know how to keep Secret and hence can act as better non-official interlocutors than other professionals.
- 6) Some of the Business Firms/Leaders are much more influential than that of Ambassadors so they can act as better diplomatic agents in that case.
- 7) Hyundai Played a very imp. role during Kuwait war of 1990 due to its business image only, which shows the importance of Business Firms in Global arena.

Problems:-

- 1) Govt. are blamed of cronyism.
- 2) Much of Business-Political Nexus leads to corruption.
- 3) Increases the Rich Poor Divide and Promotes the idea of Capitalism ahead of Welfare state.

4) May also lead to conflict of interests and hence may harm the relations instead of strengthening.

Thus a balance has to be maintained, There is no harm in using Business Firms as diplomatic agents to promote the national interest. But this should be limited to National Interest only.

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

3) Child slavery continues to exist in countries like India despite efforts by countries and NGOs to stop it. Which policies in India strive to end this practice? What are their weaknesses and what needs to be done to stop child slavery in India? Discuss. (200 Words)

Article 23 calls for the right against exploitation and Article 24 talks about protection to child rights-- one of the provision of which is no child below the age of 14 years shall be employed in factories. The policies in India that work for this :

- 1) In Protection of Child Rights Act 2005, National/State Commission for Protection of Child Rights and Children courts have established for speedy trial of offences against children or of violation of child rights.
- 2) The Right to education act which has a provision of to provide free and compulsory education for children till the age of 14.
- 3) The Mines Act 1952 and the Factories Act 1948 prohibit the employment of children in hazardous factories and mines below 18 and 14 years respectively.
- 4) The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act of 1986: which prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 years in hazardous occupations identified in a list by the law.

The weaknesses :

- 1) Lacunae in implementation of the laws.
- 2) Some families having low income have no other option but to send their children to work.
- 3) The distance of school in some cases from a vulnerable child is far away and thus he cannot afford to go there.
- 4) Trafficking of children had been a common thing in the present and FIR's even if registered, the concerned authorities have a snail speed for recovery.

5) Lack of Awareness of these laws have also been a major deterrent in its implementation of ground level.

6) Some genuine NGO's who were working for this, after the FCRA the funds have been regulated which poses problems for them to spread awareness and act accordingly.

The most basic things that needs to be done is spread awareness among the people about the laws present and education be provided to every child by filling all the gaps. This may include increasing proximity to nearest schools. Further, proper surveillance on the human trafficking incidences and inspection of the work being done by National commissions is the need of the hour.

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

4) Discuss why another multilateral development bank is needed such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) needed and how the AIIB will be different from the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank. (200 Words)

Two multilateral development banks have been formed recently. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank(AIIB) and New Development Bank(NDB) . The reasons for formation of these, inspite of having old Bretton Wood Institutes and Japan lead ADB are as follows:

1. Quota rules : In both WB and ADB lending and decisions are based not the quota allocated to the countries. Quota is allocated based on contributions that county makes.
2. Terms and conditions : Development projects, infrastructures projects sponsored by them comes with their conditions. Often undermines the sovereignty and economic policies are imposed.
3. Vested interested : Loans from ADB usually follows, free trade and market access to Japan.
4. Governance : Developed countries have major say in decisions making.
5. Environment aspect and equity : Recent decision of WB to stop funding coal based projects is a setback for LDC's and developing countries.
6. US influence : US Asia Pivot policy and its growing influence in Indo-Pacific region.

Critics have attributed AIIB formation to Chinese vested interests, It want to project it benevolent character. It will help China in One Belt One Road project. However,

increasing competition among MDBs is a boon for developing countries to strengthen their infrastructure and economy. More third world countries could be lifted up. India did a right move by joining AIIB and thus made a neutralising move.

Additional Points:

-Huge forex reserve by China: want to earn interest on loan via Infrastructure finance

-Asia needs 800 billion\$ every year till 2020. beyond World bank's capacity

-Subprime crisis, Fed Tapering => Dollar volatility affecting import/export of BRICS. So they want to Reduce dollar domination, loans with less conditions.

-Recently China's Yuan joins SDR 's basket so they want more penetration via loan - >reduce dollar domination

how both are different..

WB purpose: Poverty reduction to 3% by 2030,Soft loans for development projects,Promoting foreign investment and international trade

AIIB purpose:will finance rail-road-ports infrastructure along the ancient silk route.

Topic:Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests,

2) In your opinion, whose interests will China's 'one belt, one road' initiative serve better – China's or participating countries'? What will India gain from this initiative? Critically examine. (200 Words)

CHINA'S ONE BELT ONE ROAD INITIATIVE:

China's New Silk Road economic belt and 21st century Maritime Silk Road together called the 'ONE BELT ONE ROAD' (OBOR) seeks to connect China with the Middle East, Africa and Europe through its landlocked neighbours in Central Asia and the littoral states of Southeast Asia and South Asia. China intends to build a 'community of interest' through diplomatic coordination, standardized trade, free trade zones, people-to-people cultural ties and educational initiatives.

ACTUAL BENEFICIARY OF OBOR:

Though China calls it a 'win-win' situation for all, many in the West consider it akin to 'Marshall Plan' of USA as it would undoubtedly make China the regional powerhouse. Still, it has following benefits for the developing countries :

- 1) It would plug the annual infrastructure gap in Asia play a constructive role in regional economic architecture.
- 2) Bring Stability in the region through sustainable and inclusive growth. It would help in strengthen political institutions and reduce incentives for terrorist movements.
- 3) Address Capital needs given that China follows 'No String Attached Policies' on loans.
- 4) Boost regional trade and commerce.

CONCERNS FOR INDIA

- 1) Increased presence of China in the Indian Ocean + Uncertainty of China's intentions
- 2) India is uncertain how the maritime silk route will be implemented.
- 3) There is concern in India that Maritime Silk route is nothing but an economic disguise for the 'Strings of Pearls' theory which concerns the build up of Chinese commercial and Military facilities in the Indian Ocean.
- 4) India sees itself as the regional power in South Asia. But with increased interest of China in its neighbours India stands to lose its position.

BENEFITS FOR INDIA

- 1) Increased Connectivity and Port Facilities-> India would be able to carry on trade activities with central asia and middle east
- 2) Developed Pakistan = regional stability
- 3) India is a founding member of AIIB = profit
- 4) Prime Location of India->India could gain a lot from being an active partner to the initiative + further Act East policy

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

3) Some argue that India has a young pension industry and it needs to deepen pension coverage. Discuss why pension needs to be deepened, challenges facing the existing pension schemes and measures to be taken by government to deepen pension coverage and address pension challenges. (200 Words)

The factors which necessitate the need for deepening the pension industry are –

1. Structural changes in Indian society which is moving away from the Joint Family system
2. Large number of unorganized sector workers remain outside pension coverage
3. With increasing number of retirees, burden on public pension companies is increasing
4. Low product-diversity due to low private-sector penetration

Challenges faced by existing pension Schemes –

1. Civil Servants Pension – These pensions are often higher than private sector pensions and are accused of adding to fiscal pressure
2. Mandatory programmes by Employees' Provident Fund Organization – Issues with account movement during job-transfers
3. Unorganized sector pension schemes under National Social Assistance Programme – Low awareness about various pension schemes and issues with migration

Steps which the government can take to deepen financial coverage –

1. Accept Bajpai Committee recommendation of lowering Minimum Annual Subscription for NPS
2. Make recent schemes like APY, PMSBY, PMJJBY etc. more attractive by increasing pension compensation
3. Provide online portals and ensuring smooth pension account transfers

Steps for addressing pension challenges –

1. Unifying regulators as per FSLRC recommendation such as PFRDA and IRDA which often deal with similar product buckets
2. Develop schemes which specifically aim for post-retirement pension instead of the long-term savings scheme currently followed in EPF, PPF etc.
3. Introduction of Universal Pension Scheme which is being lobbied for by organizations like HelpAge India

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

4) “The New Education Policy on the anvil should encourage academic talent and innovation to make the system of higher education more responsive to the needs of various stakeholders instead of just attempting to create a uniform standardised structure.” Who are the various stakeholders mentioned in the statement? What are the demerits of creating a uniform standardised structure in higher education? Critically discuss. (200 Words)

It is obvious that stakeholders in the higher education system include the students, teaching faculty, management authorities and in the long term, the society at large.

Uniform standards seem appealing as they are expected to lead to uniformity of syllabi, exam pattern and teaching norms across country. This then leads to ease of comparison and also ensure a basic minimum standard of education across the country.

Issues

Students:

-Cannot cater to individual diversity and preference for learning and learning methods

-Heavy syllabi burden in premier Institutions like IIT leaves no scope for democratic questioning and

of content

-There is replication of knowledge and rote learning leading to stifling of innovation.

Teachers

-The compulsion to ‘complete syllabus’ allows little scope to experiment with teaching methods

-Syllabi is often not revised frequently. Teachers are forced to teach the static and out dated content and students remain out of touch from latest developments
indiscipline.

Management

-Institutions, in the face of inadequate autonomy, often succumb to mediocrity.

-Our needs as a society are diverse and each institution can be moulded to respond a different set of needs. However a top down approach means the management fails to respond to changing needs and preferences.

It is clear that mindless borrowing of ideas from Western Universities will bring limited gains. The instance of introducing semester system across institutions is a

case in point. The change was effected shabbily with illogical splitting of syllabi. The fate of the Four Year Undergrad Programme in Delhi University is another case in point

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

5) It is said that the Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) adopted an approach that contributes to building “trust” between three layers of government—union, state and local by stating in its report that the rewards of placing trust would far exceed the costs of administering the conditionalities. How does this trust factor work? Examine the merits and demerits of FFC’s new approach. (200 Words)

The FFC has given importance to the trust factor in this which is expected to work in the following manner –

1. States –

(i) The FFC did away with the requirement for Fiscal discipline which was prevailing in the TFC recommendations thus placing trust in States’ prudence

(ii) Sector-specific grants were revoked giving States more freedom

(iii) Freedom to States in distributing ‘Performance grants’ to local bodies based on local conditions

2. Local bodies –

(i) Based recommendations on SFC reports for devolving funds to local bodies unlike previous FCs thus preventing centralization of formulation

(ii) Unspent performance grants would be automatically disbursed to local bodies enhancing State’s accountability

(iii) Recommended several tax and non-tax revenues to local-bodies so that they can raise their own revenues

Merits –

(i) States are now free to fund sectors which are beneficial for them without restriction

(ii) Greater voice to SFCs inspite of their poor conditions

(iii) Basic grants would be spent on basic services allowing States to access performance grants, inaccessibility being a criticism of TFC recommendations

Demerits –

- (i) No financial compulsion upon States to comply with fiscal-prudence targets
- (ii) Unreliability of SFC recommendations due to lack of manpower, resources etc.
- (iii) TFC initiated reforms on property tax, local body ombudsman etc. may not be pursued as they are not part of FFC recommendations

Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations

6) In a major bid to facilitate cross-border transportation and trade, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal signed the landmark Motor Vehicle Agreement in June 2015. Is this agreement capable of unlocking the huge trade potential of these countries and deepening regional integration in a region known to be the least integrated in the world? Examine. (200 Words)

The Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) between Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) paves for feature like

1. There will be no need for people and trucks to be unloaded and checked everytime at the border point
2. The trade vehicles will be no longer have a limit on the maximum distance they can travel in a foreign country

Benefits

1. More liberal border and motor vehicle regulation will save time and increase efficiency boosting trade between the BBIN nations
2. The sub regional trade between the South Asian nations will pick up from a current paltry 6%. Customers will benefit by cheaper textile exports from Bangladesh, handicrafts from Bhutan, etc
2. Ports - India and Bangladesh will have access to each other ports like Kolkata & Chittagong, allowing them to maximise the use of each others resources
- 3 The BBIN MVA can act as a learning lesson for the creation of a much wider SAFTA (South Asia Free Trade Agreement) on the lines of the European Union, also integrating countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan in the process
4. North East connectivity - MVA will allow a shorter path to the North East states via Bangladesh, speeding up their development and pan- Indian integration
- 5.The land locked nations of Bhutan and Nepal can have a more diversified trade via the ports

6. The MVA agreement could be extended to the countries like Myanmar and Thailand uplifting the South Asian and South East Asian trade creation .

Although, the MVA is a win-win for all, it also needs to be matched some vigilance to check smuggling, illegal immigration and terrorism at the border points

Topic: Indian Constitution-features

3) Do you think defamation in India should be decriminalised? Is defamation and contempt law anachronistic? Justify with suitable examples. (200 Words)

Defamation has been criminalized through section 499 and 500 of the Indian Penal Code. However, recently there have been demands to decriminalize as it has increasingly become a ploy in hands of politicians to silence dissenting voices.

Defamation should be decriminalized on following grounds:

- 1) Present structure of law imposes arbitrary restrictions instead of reasonable restrictions and thus there will be regular arrests even for criticizing government
- 2) Acts can be misused to settle political scores and thwart others' freedom of speech
- 3) Structure of section 499/500 dates back to 1860 and thus the law is not in tune with the present trends of promoting free speech

Defamation and contempt doesn't suit the modern trends of promoting free speech as is evident from repeal of section 66A of IT Act by Supreme Court and dismissal of sedition charges against cartoonist Assem Trivedi by the Bombay HC. Defamation does more harm than good as it gives a chilling effect on free speech. Defamation and criticism provides conduits for improvement as concerns of people are heard and corrective actions are taken. It also an important element of democracy and allow the people to put forward their views.

Thus, it can be said that criminalizing defamation should be done away with and instead suitable amendments be made to allow the authorities to frame charges as civil offence in case there is a malafide intention behind such defamatory acts.

Also refer to this link,

<http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/01/04/3-think-defamation-india-decriminalised-defamation-contempt-law-anachronistic-justify-suitable-examples/#comment-2438557105>

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

4) “Uniform civil code needed for gender justice.” Critically comment. (200 Words)

What is Uniform Civil Code?

Uniform civil Code in India is a proposal to have a generic set of governing laws for every citizen without taking into consideration the religion.

Currently, there are personal laws based on the scriptures and customs of each major religious community. They are separate from the public law and are applied on issues like-

- marriage
- divorce
- inheritance
- adoption and maintenance

Personal Laws have been Discriminatory Against Women, whether Hindu Law or Muslim Law. Ex. :- Polygamy before 1955, Stridhana issue, Inheritance laws, Shah Bano Case etc.

How Uniform Civil Code Will Bring Gender Justice:-:

- 1) The Demand of UCC is only because of various Discrimination done against women in different religions, so obviously when UCC will be framed, it will keep in mind that no women should be left deprived.
- 2) Solving issues of Marriage, divorce, Property rights for women are pressing needs in Various religions, hence UCC may help in solving all these and thus empowering Women.
- 3) One is always more efficient, as we have seen in case of Uniform Criminal Code in India, which is able to balance out and bring more Integration in the Society, which will ultimately lead to better integration of Women in the society.

Why Implementation of UCC is Debatable :

- 1) India being a secular country guarantees its minorities the right to follow their own religion, culture and customs under Article 29 and 30. But implementing a Uniform Code will hamper India's secularism.
- 2) Patriarchal mindset has so much ingrained in the minds of people that alone UCC might not be an effective measure.

Change in attitude is needed.

Article 44 explicitly demands for an Uniform Civil Code but since its a DPSP, is not enforceable, but looking at the discrimination in the Civil Cases under religious Umbrella, it needs to be addressed, There is no denying the fact that we need a UCC but that should come after proper debates and deliberations with all the stakeholders.

Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations

5) Discuss how can India and China play a constructive role in rebuilding Afghanistan politically and economically. (200 Words)

After withdrawal of US forces, Afghanistan is placed in a fragile condition because of presence of Talibani elements and the weak economy. In this regard, India and China can help rebuilding Afghanistan in the following ways:

India-

Politically:

- 1)India can share her expertise in conducting elections peacefully in disturbed regions e.g. India successfully conducts elections in Kashmir Valley
- 2)India can play the role of mediator in resolving conflicts of Afghanistan with Taliban

Economically:

- 1)India can continue to finance infrastructure projects in Afghanistan
- 2)The realization of TAPI pipeline can act as source of realties from India
- 3)Recent induction of Afghanistan in WTO helps India to boost trade

China-

Politically:

- 1)China can extend full membership of Shanghai Cooperation Organization to avoid Afghanistan becoming a ploy in foreign powers

Economically:

- 1)China can make Afghanistan a member in the Economic Corridor with Pakistan and the Silk Road Belt
- 2)China can help finance infrastructure projects

Thus, India and China have a great role to play in the rebuilding process of Afghanistan and a strong Afghanistan can give boost to regional integration.

Topic: India and its neighbours

2) During last few decades, India has re-engaged Islamabad after previous terrorist attacks emanating from it with no appreciable gains to show for it. Do you see any flaws in India's Pakistan policy? What corrections should India make? Critically discuss. (200 Words)

"The best way to ensure peace, is to prepare for war" - Latin author Vegetius.

The attack on the Pathankot air force base and the loss of 7 Indian lives, in spite of credible intelligence that such an attack was imminent, lays bare the shortcomings in the Indian security policy towards Pakistan. Briefly, these are:

1. Lack of a robust internal response mechanism to credible intelligence about terror attacks
2. Ad hoc-ism in the diplomatic response due to the lack of a well-defined national security doctrine
3. Inability to elicit a stronger response from the international community to Pakistan-sponsored terror

Consequently our Pakistan policy needs to evolve as follows:

1. Concerted and coordinated action by the security establishment -
 - Rapid sharing of information and personnel between the military, paramilitary, state police, and intelligence
 - Better coordination between the Centre and States
 - Special training for combat against non-state actors
2. Continuity in our National Security Doctrine ("NSD")-
 - Our NSD needs to be crafted with cross-party consensus to ensure continuity
 - It needs to be a written doctrine to avoid ad hoc responses
 - There is a need for a Security Council with experts from the military, intelligence and diplomatic communities
3. Dialogue with Pakistan and the International Community ("IC")

- The Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue should continue; Kashmir needs to be a part along the Shimla Agreement lines
- The IC needs to be pressed to bring pressure on Pakistan to reign in terror - importantly the US. India's strategic role in the region should be used as a leverage
- Relationship on the economic front should continue - social and cultural ties (soft power) should be strengthened

To sum up: talk softly, but carry a big stick at all times.

Topic: India and its neighbours

3) It is said that the current state system in the Indian sub-continent is not cast in stone and there are many forces reshaping the subcontinent's economic and political architecture towards regional integration. Do you agree with this view? Critically examine. (200 Words)

More than 6 decades after the partition, the idea of a politically unified Indian subcontinent is again gaining ground .

How is the subcontinent coming together ?

1. Politically- SAARC created in 1985, as a union of all South Asian nations, is enabling nations to cooperate, collaborate in each other's welfare and shed differences.
2. Economically - The creation of a free trade area called SAFTA on the lines of the European union is under talks
3. Bilateral attempts- In 2015, India, Bangladesh ratified the Land Boundary Agreement to remove the biggest thorn in relations. Similar thaws have been seen in India- Sri Lanka, India- Bhutan relations
4. Transportation- Recent Motor Vehicles Agreement between Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indian and Nepal (BBIN) , the BCIM corridor in the NE facilitate trade and tourist flow
5. Energy -Ongoing TAPI pipeline, proposed Myanmar Bangladesh India pipeline will further cement the relations

Challenges

1. India and Pakistan, the two biggest South Asian nations remain firm rivals. Even more solvable issues like Sir Creek Border agreement, granting of MFN by Pakistan to India remain in limbo

2. Relations have deteriorated between India and Nepal over the Madhesi representation issue
3. Even now, economically, the inter regional trade constitutes only a paltry 6%
4. Local political opposition acts as a big deterrent in closing ties as witnessed by the opposition to the Teesta Agreement

Neighbours will remain neighbours forever. It is the duty of the govt therefore to shed differences, so that Article 51 of the constitution aiming to promote world peace can truly be lived upon

Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector

4) Even though it is mandatory to implement the Section 135 of the Companies Act 2013, the desired result is not seen on the ground. In your opinion how the provisions of this Section can be implemented effectively? Critically discuss. (200 Words)

Section 135 of companies act 2013 deals with Corporate social responsibility (CSR). According to this every company having minimum net worth of 500 crore,turnover of 1000 crore or a net profit of 5 crore rupees will have to spend 2% of their net profit on CSR activities.

Certain problems encountered in CSR implementation are:

- Lack of clarity about what constitutes CSR
- Lack of enabling environment
- Lack of synergy between different stakeholders involved
- Regulatory and compliance lapse
- "Forced " rather than "Voluntary" approach is seen by corporates as unwanted interference, hence problem of mindset and attitudes.

Measures to improve effectiveness of Section 135:

-Clarity over definition of CSR. The new initiatives like Make in India, skill India, Namami Ganga, Digital India etc have many critical subcomponents which can be considered under CSR. Government need to identify such areas and declare for CSR purpose. For example, building STP plants along polluted cities can be considered under CSR etc.Similarly "Make in universities" as suggested by Tarun Khanna committee can seek corporate collaboration which also form CSR.

-Enabling environment to be created by government by tax rebates and easing red Tapism

- Stakeholders to identify common areas and work together

-Stricter SEBI regulations, in exceptional cases CAG auditing services can be resorted to.

-Civil society and community oversight (Social audit, social accountability).

All these measures won't be effective until corporates show interests in CSR activities. For that reforming corporate governance is also essential.

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

5) It is argued that in recent years India has shifted from non-alignment to multi-alignment. Discuss the reasons for this shift and its benefit for India. (200 Words)

Reasons for shift of India's policy from Non-Aligned to Multi Aligned

1) Changing Global scenario from Unipolar to a Multi-Polar world with rising Asian economies (End of Cold War age)

2) India's growing needs for Infrastructure and Energy requirements.

3) Need for upgradation of India's Defense technology to protect border from hostile neighbors

4) Rising global terrorism threat to India's national security.

India' changed foreign policy is reflected by :

1) Indo-USA Partnership on "High Technology" under Defence Technology and Trade Agreement

2) Indian –Russia Nuclear,Space, Energy and Defence Cooperation

3) Indo Japan Nuclear, Defence, Technology and Foreign Policy collaboration

Benefits for India:

1) Boost to India's growth, attracting FDI , boost to India's Make in India Initiative

2) Creation of employment opportunities and tapping India's huge demographic Dividend

3) Infrastructure boost. Recent Indo-Japan agreement on high speed train.

- 4) India's strategic Interests in Indian-Ocean region and Maritime Security.
- 5) India's bid for Permanent Membership in UNSC will be strengthened.

India's current foreign policy, Act east link west, Project Mausam, Indian Ocean overreach, Neighbourhood First policy, SCO, BRICS etc. are steps in right direction which will be beneficial for India.

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

4) It is argued that India should exit BRICS as it has nothing to gain from the forum. Do you agree? Examine why such argument is made and justify your stance. (200 Words)

The arguments in favour of India exiting BRICS are as follows –

1. All BRICS countries other than India are facing an economic crisis
2. Slow progress of decision-making in BRICS – creation of the BRICS bank was mired in issues of quantum of individual-investments, location of headquarters etc.
3. Opposition from USA regarding the formation of a Contingency Fund which threatens India's relations with it
4. China and Russia have faced heavy criticism for military adventurism in South China Sea and Ukraine respectively
5. Threat of formation of an Eastern bloc which might rekindle Cold War-era tensions

However, leaving BRICS is not in India interests due to the following reasons –

1. Economic –
 - (i) The BRICS Bank and the Contingency Fund can assist India to finance its infrastructure projects without any riders as opposed to IMF loans
 - (ii) Potential of sharing of resources and technology among BRICS members e.g. extension of the Russia-China gas pipeline to India
 - (iii) Yuan has been granted Reserve Currency Status in IMF, providing an alternative to dollar in international transactions
2. Political –

- (i) Russia and China are permanent members of UNSC while India and Brazil are members of G4
- (ii) Russia, China and India are important stakeholders in Afghanistan's stability
- (iii) China, India and South Africa have jointly called for expeditious agreement on Doha Development agenda

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

2) It is argued that internet is hardening the divide that already exists between the literate and the illiterate. Do you agree with this view? Critically comment. (200 Words)

There has always been a debate on whether internet as a whole has been a bane or a boon. Prior to the invention of the internet, people to people contact was confined to the movement from one corner to the other. The coming of the virtual world made sure this interaction became more prominent and also that a lot of information was shared online making sure of accountability and transparency in some processes too. But apparently, it has also resulted in the gap between the literate and the illiterate :

- 1) There is a big dividend that doesn't have access to basic education. Working on the internet seems a distant dream.
- 2) The literate uses this as an opportunity and cases of cyber theft, like unethically using the information of illiterate card holders to commit cyber theft has been prominent.
- 3) Income difference of the different section has further augmented the gap. Due to lower income levels, poor neighborhoods lack the infrastructure available in affluent areas.
- 4) The digital divide continues to widen along very specific racial lines. For example : In the African-American community, it was observed that African-Americans, historically, have had negative encounters with technological innovations.

But everything isn't that bad :

- 1) It has helped to increase the number of start-up's dependent on internet, which increases purchasing power parity through employment opportunities. This increased opportunities in turn can fill the lacuna between the varied income groups.
- 2) Digital literacy has been on the rise. Comparatively lesser number of people are now unknown to use internet then back in the 90's. It means digital literacy is "ever-rising".

3) OECD reports have made it clear that merely getting a digital classroom equipped with internet doesn't guarantee better literacy and analytical skills.

4) It has been a booster of the varied differences within the society. People have become more aware and hence have given up prejudices.

The only way out is looking towards the positive side of it and accept this ever increasing internet literacy accordingly.

Topic: Role of civil services in democracy

3) It is said that good administrators may not always turn out to be good policymakers and there is need to professionalise the bureaucracy for efficient governance. How can professionalism be brought in bureaucracy? Discuss. (200 Words)

Art 309 - 311 of constitution provides adequate power, privileges and protection for administrators for achieving an efficient, effective and responsive governance. However, critics argue that good administrators may not be good policy makers because

1. While administration requires adherence to laws and procedures, policy making involves innovative and proactive approach
2. While administration requires generalists, policy making requires specialists.
3. Lack of autonomy due to political interference
4. Corruption due to administration, business and political nexus results in vested policies

Thus, professionalism is required in bureaucracy, which can be brought by

1. providing flexibility in decision making
2. rewarding merit and performance alongside seniority, Ex: 360 degree feedback and Result Framework document
3. provide autonomy and reduce political interference. Ex: setting up civil services board to handle postings and transfers
4. Capacity building through training and organisation development including e-governance initiatives
5. Promote Lateral entry of domain experts. Ex: Nandan Nilekani in Aadhar Project

5. Reduce corruption by upholding rule of law and timely disposal of such cases . Ex : Lokpal bill

6. Promote transparency and accountability in decision making . Ex : Citizen charter

ARC and Hota committee recommendations in adherence with above reforms should be carried . Being a continuous evolving process , administrators must adapt to changing realities , to provide good governance

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

2) Do you think only tribals and other forest dwellers should have rights to manage their forests under Forest Rights Act or should state also have stakes in it? Critically discuss. (200 Words)

Management of forests and rights of forest dweller/tribals has been a contentious issue since independence. whether the state or the indigenous population should be given the right to manage the forest is a difficult case to evaluate. Both sides seem to have a reasonable ground to claim.

Arguments for Tribals:

1. They are indigenous people and hence have organic knowledge of the forests which have been passed on from generations.

2. No/ less any use of modern technology by the indigenous groups also ensures safety of the environment.

3. Scale of exploitation of the forest are kept under sustainable levels.

4. Depriving the tribals of their rights causes dissatisfaction which often expresses itself in the form of extremist forces such as present day naxalism or the santhal rebellion in the british era.

Arguments in favour of the state:

Even though the tribals should be given the right to their land, there may be instances where state intervention may be necessary to safeguard national interests.

1. Resources which are rare such special medicinal plants or species of immense economic potential might need special treatment. eg. Tendu leaves, sandalwood, bamboo.

2. The indigenous populations may not always have the technical know-how to protect certain resources.

3. The government also needs to keep track of negative forces such as terrorism etc who use forests as their hiding ground.

In short, the state and the forest dwellers need to work in consonance. The concept of the interference by the state should not be totally discarded but kept at minimal levels. In all such cases where the state feels an intervention is required, it should consult the concerned ministry and avoid taking any arbitrary steps.

Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests,

3) A plunge in Chinese stock markets and its weakening economy have affected economies worldwide. How is India affected and why? Examine. (200 Words)

China is World's second largest economy, a slowdown is expected to have negative repercussion in World economy.

China is largest contributor to world GDP (35%), it is also India's top trading partner. India's is not as isolated from slowdown in China as our policymakers think.

How China slowdown is bad for India

1. Dumping of steel, tires and electronics from china is bad for Indian companies.

2. Lower demand of our Exports.

3. Iron ore export and Automobile producers will be worse affected. India is China's biggest iron ore exporter.

How it is good -

1. India's stock market can gain from slowdown.

2. Cheaper commodities could help in India's infrastructural need (Smart cities)
3. Oil prices would further see fall with reduce demand from China.
4. Electronics like mobiles will get cheaper.
5. Gold prices will fall with fall in demand from china

what India should do-

1. increase anti-dumping duty on steel and other commodities.
2. Invest in infrastructure - roads, railways etc
3. Reforms to improve business condition in India

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

3) The Alma Ata Declaration on Universal Healthcare (WHO 1978) was a clarion call for nations to focus on health for all their peoples. In this regard, critically examine the problems in primary healthcare in India with special reference to mental health care. (200 Words)

The Alma Ata declaration was surely a clarion call for nations to improve their overall healthcare. It also led to initiation of many pilot projects in various parts of the world. However, as of now, much lacunae exists in its actual realisation.

Examination of primary health care with respect to mental health:

Issues-

Economic:

1. Infrastructure: Lack of proper investment in the primary health health infrastructure has curbed the modernisation of public hospitals.
2. Human capital: proliferation of seats in medical and healthcare institutes are a need of hour. while various health issues can be dealt with secondary mediums such as ASHA workers, mental health care, however, requires the approach of a consultant which cannot be provided but by a qualified doctor.
3. Employment: Lack of employment opportunities causes poverty leading to depression and anxiety.

Social:

- 1) Gender Inequality : Leads to deterioration of mental health of women.
- 2) Social stigma associated with mental illness prevents people from seeking help.

3) Globalisation has led to people aspiring for more. When these aspirations fail to materialise, they lead to depression and suicidal tendencies. The popular sociologist Emile Durkheim has found in his research that better off countries have a higher rate of suicides.

Technical:

Lack of techniques and processes to demarcate mental illness from normal human distress.

What can be done-

1. Better implementation of programmes such as National Mental Health Programme to upgrade psychiatric wings of the GOvt. Med colleges and modernisation of hospitals.
2. Adopting The mental health care bill 2013 which deals with the various rights of the mentally ill.
3. More training institutes for psychiatrists. 20% of the Indian population suffers from mental illness but only about 3500 psychiatrists in the country.
4. Investments in sanitation, housing, immunisation, nutrition through SBM, AMRUT, Mission Indradhanush and R&D in agriculture should be made for long term gains.
5. Relaxation of FDI norms to improve quality of infrastructure in various sectors and development of education and employment.

Present situation primary health suggests the state needs to allocate more funds to health. Also, with regard to mental health, awareness campaigns need to run to break the taboo associated with mental illness. Technical input to integrate mental healthcare into primary health care will also be needed.

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

4) "Panchsheel was promoted by China and India as an instrument for advancing their respective national interests in the mid-1950s." Discuss. (200 Words)

The five principles of peaceful coexistence (Panchsheel) were first propounded as the guiding principles for the **newly formed nation of Indonesia** in 1945. Taking the hint, Chinese premier Zhou Enlai and Indian PM Nehru came up with their own interpretations for guiding bilateral diplomacy.

The principles were formalised into a treaty in 1954 and included: **mutual self respect, non-interference, non-aggression, mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence**. However, both countries approached these principles from their differing perspectives.

China's Perspective

1. China hoped India would refrain from interfering in the Tibet issue (non-interference)
2. China hoped India would cede any territories that it got from the British Raj
3. China hoped to contain Indian intervention in regional disputes (but this did not happen ex. Bangladesh '71, Sri Lanka '87 and Nepal continuing)
4. China hoped to correct its image in the region as a peaceful country after indulging in Korean and Vietnam wars
5. China wanted to wean off local powers from US support

India's Perspective

1. India was a young nation with an overbearing neighbour like China, it was natural to take this preemptive step towards peace
2. India sought to further consolidate its position as a Non Aligned Nation by making Panchsheel doctrine a cornerstone of its foreign policy
3. India assumed a treaty citing mutual-respect would keep China from claiming Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh
4. By concluding the treaty, India hoped to ward off US intervention for peace in the region.

The Panchsheel was more of China's idea as a peace offensive and remains central in the history of bilateral relations. Its relevance however, has faded in the light of new globalised world order.

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

4) Recent India renewed its partnership with GAVI, the global vaccine alliance. Discuss the significance of this partnership, role of GAVI in immunising India and challenges ahead. (200 Words)

GAVI, the global vaccine alliance, which aims to Save children's lives and protecting people's health by increasing access to immunisation (new and underused vaccines) in poor countries.

Significance and Role of GAVI in immunising India:

- Reports claim that in 2011-2015 period, GAVI have successfully achieved goals of immunising 250 mn children and preventing 3.9 mn deaths.
- Around 16 companies are participating in the program and hence vaccine availability have increased and costs have reduced significantly in recent years.
- India is leading supplier of vaccines even for other poor countries, way ahead of big economies like USA, China etc.
- GAVI and the GoI can work together to help create a more sustainable global and domestic vaccine manufacturing base within India.

Examples:

- Introduction of modern, highly-efficacious vaccines, will help protecting children against the leading causes of disease, including pneumonia and severe diarrhoea.
- Introduction of *human papillomavirus vaccine* will help protect women against cervical cancer and so on.
- *SMS-based monitoring system* and *Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network* programme have improved vaccine supply chains considerably.

Challenges:

- Some key challenges are health systems weaknesses and the issue of equal access.
- Infrastructure issues like modernising the cold-chain equipment and information systems, in managing vaccine supply chains is still a huge challenge.
- Even though India is a leading supplier for outside world but it's own child population lacks full access, so it puts a challenge to come up with effective implementation of goals in coming years.

Focus on innovation and programs like *Make in India* or *Digital India* could be quite helpful in realizing the health goals of country. With the success of recent partnership, it will be a huge advantage for India to continue the partnership in achieving domestic and international immunisation goals.

Topic: Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies; Dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions

5) What do you understand by the new commercial courts system? Critically examine the significance of the Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts Act, 2015 for the Indian economy and judiciary, and the challenges in implementation of this Act. (200 Words)

The Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts Act, 2015 ("the Act") provides for the creation of commercial courts at the district level and a commercial division at state level in the high courts for providing a dispute redressal mechanism to ensure speedy disposal of high value 'commercial disputes' above 1 crore worth..

Significance of the Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts Act, 2015 for the Indian economy :

1. Increased 'Ease of Doing Business' ranking.
2. Building Investor confidence
3. Will encourage emerging Entrepreneurial class.
4. Reduced Mental pressure via speedy disposals increasing focused development.
5. Will attract foreign companies with increased business engagement providing FDI & FII sources.
6. Fast track resolution would reduce the bank NPAs

Significance of the Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts Act, 2015 for the Indian judiciary:

1. Will Reduce the burden on Civil Courts .
2. Speedy Disposal rate.
3. Specialised courts will provide more efficient decision making.
4. Reduced Pendency rate
5. Fulfillment of vacant seats in Judiciary.(creating employment as well).
6. Increased financial resources at court's disposal (via fees, penalties etc.)

Challenges in implementation of this Act:

1. Institutional requirement (as infrastructure will be required)

2. Accountability issues.(high profile cases with crores involved can lure the judicial officers)
3. Enforceability problems.(present enforcement rate is low which creates a little hope for this)
4. Pendency can increase.(if not disposed efficiently in time bound manner further adding to the problems)
5. Corruption.(Lobbying in corporate- politics sector is very apparent in the light of recent scams)
6. Time bound decisions (depends on judge's efficiency & sense of judgement)
7. Jurisdiction issues.(cases in civil courts at present may shift here)
8. No appropriate manpower (judicial posts are already vacant in most states for JMICS, ADAs etc.)
9. Financial allocation must be pragmatic. (state-centre balance)
10. No specific provision of funding to states puts onus on state
11. Broad coverage of 20 areas can reduces its efficacy.
12. Low threshold limit of 1 crore.

So, this can be considered as a good step by the Government for the creation of a business friendly environment taking into account the commercial cases discouraging the foreign & domestic investors & hindering the economic progress of our country.

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

6) “The inclusion of CSR spending in the Companies Act suggests a basic misunderstanding of the role of corporate activity in an economy.” What do you understand by this statement? In the light of recent data on CSR spending by companies, elaborate the statement. (200 Words)

The companies act 2013 stipulates the CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY under section 135 of the act which mandates the corporates having a minimum net worth of 500 crore or turnover of 1000 crore or a net profit of 5 crore to spend minimum 2% towards CSR.

Although the companies seems to be in line with the CSR pertaining to sec135 but the role of the CSR has been grossly misunderstood because of the following reasons:

- 1.The interpretation of the CSR as an alternative mechanism for the developmental works.
- 2.The attitude of the corporates towards CSR as an end in itself.
- 3.Confinement of the CSR projects to the ambit of their operations.
- 4.Tendency to view CSR as the strategic need for reshaping their image.
5. Utilizing CSR as a chest thumping and advertising platform.

The CSR spending is no doubt a noble idea for the development of society with a hand in hand approach but given the deep penetration of government and its schemes the CSR is no match and should be regarded as only a "Drop in the Ocean".

Misinterpretation of data:

The data suggests a 75% increase in the social spending by corporates in 2014-15 but Institutional Investor Advisory Services (IIAS), suggests that the rather looking healthy number of approximately 5000 crore is 26% lower than what actually supposed to be according to the law.

A way forward:

The democratically chosen government cannot abrogate its responsibilities and leaving the fate of development on the corporates which are more or less a profit seeking entities.

A better policy framework, Improved tax regime(GST) & Direct tax code, deeper penetration of social welfare schemes are some of the long term solution and ultimate panacea for a developing country like india.

Topic: Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections

2) Recently the Supreme Court asked Parliament to enact a separate law providing for harsh punishment to criminals raping infants and children below 10 years. Critically analyse if existing laws are not sufficient to stop crimes like this and there is a need for separate law. (200 Words)

Rising number of victims of rape under 10 years is a cause of serious concern. The penalty for rape under the present law is seven years but may extend to imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine. In aggravated situations, punishment will be rigorous imprisonment for 10 years or may be for life along with a fine. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses Act(POSCO) also provides for criminalising pornography involving children, fast trial process for rape cases etc.

The supreme court recently asked the parliament to enact a separate law to provide harsher punishment to criminals raping children below 10 years of age. Though it is a progressive move, it may not ensure safety of the minor. Here is why-

1. Rape on an infant and children below 10 is a product of an excessive brutal perversion. These individuals are unlikely to be affected by a harsher law if present laws do not serve the purpose of deterrence for them.
2. Recently the Law commission in its report stated that it is not severity of punishment that serves the purpose of deterrence but it is certainty of punishment that does so. Most people committing crimes believe they can get away with it.
3. A harsher law also means more potential for its abuse. There have been cases where many women used rape as a weapon to blackmail men.

Therefore, I believe, it is not that the laws are inadequate but it is its implementation that is.

What could be the probable solutions.-

- 1) Certainty of punishment needs to be ensured hence focus should be on better prosecuting mechanisms and training of law enforcing agencies. Maximising the extent of CCTV coverage can be one such move. This must be incorporated in the upcoming Smart cities Scheme.
- 2) Community participation : We can take the example of Singapore where Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is implemented which encourages mutual care and help among neighbours, through residents keeping an eye out for each other's premises.
- 3) School Security Committees (SSCs) can be setup.
- 4) better implementation of POSCO ACT.

In the long run focussing on education to build a society of no criminals should be the goal. The ultimate role of law should be to reform the society and not to take revenge.

Topic: Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.

3) Why is it said that money bills have a special place in our Constitution? Do you think the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Bill, 2015 recently introduced in Lok Sabha fits the definition of money bill? Critically examine. (200 Words)

Since India is a parliamentary democracy, Direct representatives of people i.e. Lok Sabha have an upper hand when it comes to money bills. As per Art 110, Money bills are those that contain provisions dealing with imposition, abolition, regulation etc. of any tax; regulation of borrowings by GoI; and regulation of Consolidated Fund of India. They are special to Lok sabha as -

- 1) Don't have majority in RS
- 2) recommendations of RS relating to money bill are not mandatory
- 3) President can't return money bill once passed by LS with majority

Decision whether a bill is money bill or not solely is that of the Speaker and it can't be questioned.

Recently the bankruptcy code was introduced in parliament as a money bill, which analysts claim was a constitutional trick-so that it can't be stalled by Rajya Sabha (the ruling part doesn't have a majority in RS).

REASONS WHY IT IS A MONEY BILL

- 1) It proposes to establish an 'insolvency and bankruptcy fund' through grants from central govt
- 2) Amends laws : central excise + income tax + customs

REASONS WHY IT IS NOT A MONEY BILL

- 1) Grants made by central govt to insolvency and bankruptcy fund can't amount to appropriation of money out of CFI. Moreover the bill cannot be certified as money bill if it is apparent that the primary purpose of the new charge is not purely financial.
- 2) Amendments of the aforementioned laws do not fall under the category of 'imposition, alteration, regulation of any tax' as they seek to safeguard priority rights of creditors only.

In my opinion its provisions are not enough for it to be classified as a money bill. Parliament houses and political parties should work on resolving their differences rather than getting into indefinite deadlock that pushes the ruling party to pass disguised bills.

Topic: Transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.

2) Are weaker anti-corruption institutions to blame for corruption in India? In your opinion, what needs to be done to strengthen anti-corruption systems and processes? Discuss. (200 Words)

Corruption is a result of institutional failure and moral degradation. Former supports later. A look at anti- corruption institutions will help in understand the phenomenon

Major Anti corruption institutions are:

- Lokpal and Lokayukta(former yet to be formed at centre)
- CVC
- CBI
- CAG
- Departmental vigilance cell

Apart from these other institutions and measures are there to prevent corruption: citizens charters,grievances redressal system etc.

These institutions are marred by political intervention, bureau pathology, weaker implementation. This promotes moral degradation as officials are not afraid anymore. Hence to fight corruption strong anti-corruption system is needed.

The existing system can be strengthened by:

- Use of e-governance and ICT platform.
- IEC drive to educate and empower citizens about their rights and claims
- Neutralising political intervention and political interference by constituting civil services board.
- Implementing a code of ethics in words and spirit both for bureaucrats and politicians.

In this regard 2nd ARC has made many recommendations in its 4th report which needs to be implemented. At the same time civil services reforms must be pursued along with focus on new public management giving due attention to efficiency,accountability and performance.

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

3) Why was the Mudra Yojana launched despite the presence of similar schemes? How different is this scheme? Critically examine. (200 Words)

Lack of credit facility to unorganized sector has led government to devise policies which can help them in securing credits. Priority Sector Lending (PSL), SIDBI banks and most recent Mudra banks are few of the examples.

Why Mudra needed despite of presence of such schemes?

-> Most of the credit facilities were through banks which didn't take it positively (due to high NPAs and vulnerability of such credits)

-> Banks have options of diverting PSL quota to SIDBI and NABARD which motivated them to avoid high risk lendings

-> Mudra will act as umbrella for all the schemes and support them to achieve convergence

-> Lack of awareness and effectiveness prompted government to restructure and rejuvenate such schemes

-> Other schemes failed to provide loan to most vulnerable and landless sections who can gain significantly from such schemes

How is it different from other schemes?

-> Focuses on vulnerable section of society and provides loan even without collateral and easy procedures (with help of ICT)

-> Targeted and more streamlined with 3 categories of loans: Shishu, Kishore and Tarun (depending on loan amount)

-> Provides interest on daily basis account which is tailored for unorganized sector and saves on interests to be paid

-> Provides debit card for withdrawal of loan which prevents them from visiting banks and withdrawing full amount

But scheme may be rebranding of earlier schemes as most of the funding is through diversion of similar schemes to Mudra. However it should be applauded that such scheme has created awareness and mass interest which is very much needed for success.

Topic: Important aspects of governance,

4) What are the important issues that you think must be addressed by the government to promote good governance in India? Analyse. (200 Words)

Characteristics of Good Governance: 1)Accountability 2)Transparency, 3)Responsiveness 4)Inclusiveness 5)Equity 6)Effectiveness 7)Promotes rule of Law 8)No abuse of power etc .The list is not exhaustive rather illustrative.

Issues that needs to be Addressed to Promote Good Governance:-

1) Issue of Transparency, Accountability and Credibility :- Many of the institutions of Govt. and their processes are happening behind a black Curtain which is not in line with the philosophy of Good Governance as it Promotes Transparency.

Solution: Strengthening the RTI act, bringing more institutions and processes under RTI will surely help. A start can be by bringing Political parties under the ambit of RTI. 2) Proper review mechanism should be derived and ratings should be provided.

2)Issue of Bypassing the Institutions and Processes:- Good Governance Promotes the Rule of Law, Govt.'s to fulfill some petty political agenda tend to by-pass the Process. Ex. We saw many Ordinances being passed again and again when consensus was not formed(this was an abuse of Power).

Solution: A common ground should be achieved by Deliberations and Discussions ,Interest of the Nation and its people should be foremost, Strong Political will is needed.

Issue of Policy Paralysis and Effectiveness: Our institutions are suffering because of poor Decision making or no decision making at all. Policies are either not formed or if formed are not implemented properly.

Solution:Use of BIG DATA technology to gather and analyse as much data as possible, since information is the first and the most imp. part of any decision making process.

Issues of Bureaucracy: What we have seen from time immemorial is that there is a gap between the bureaucrats and the common masses, which is detrimental for coordination and Good Governance.

Solution: Promotion of Barefoot Bureaucracy which promotes Bureaucrats to act as the first among equals, so that people feel like being a part of the system and Governance.

Issue of Static attitude:- The world has become very dynamic and in such a dynamic atmosphere , the processes,the methods and the rules needs constant monitoring and change.But what we see that most Govt. wants to maintain the old order and very reluctantly accept the new changes.

Solution: Promoting Scientific Temper, adoption of reliable Technology and new methods, taking examples from developed nations.

Good Governance is the most important Solution of Every problem that the Country is Facing. Govt. by all means should try to work on the issues and think of solutions to address these in order to achieve Goodness of Both nation and its citizens.

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

2) A recent World Bank report has found that rather than the poor, the more affluent sections have garnered a disproportionate share of the benefits of rapid digital expansion. Why do you think this has happened and what measures should be taken to address this anomaly? Discuss. (200 Words)

Though digital service have expanded since past two decades, but due to following reasons there have been disproportionate digital expansion:

1. Linguistic barrier: as internet carry more than 60% of content in 'English', it becomes harder for poor to fetch the benefits of digitalisation.
2. Affordability: due to high cost of infrastructure development to penetrate the services to the remotest areas, has led to lack of purchasing power by the poor.
3. Digital illiteracy: poor lacks knowledge and education to work with upgrading technology, leading to slow adaptably.
4. Lack of Physical infrastructure: In India, more households own a mobile phone than have access to electricity or clean water.
5. It is also evident that the reach of digital economy has not penetrated at a similar pace in rural areas than in urban regions.

Measures:

1. Inclusion of private sector, to vigorously pursue the expansion of broadband and IT infrastructure throughout the country. It would be imperative that a PPP model is built to implement NOFN.
2. Encouraging entrepreneurs, NGOs in expanding digital literacy and to convert the content in different languages.
3. Gram Panchayats should be encouraged to disseminate the benefits of digitalisation.
4. Digital empowerment of citizens, especially poor; by making universal digital literacy. Schemes like Digital India will boost this.

5. Establishing special booths for public internet located in remote areas, which gives services at a subsidised rate; encouraging poor to adapt new technology.

Since digital technologies have over the past decades succeeded in bringing the excluded sections of society into the formal system; it would be beneficial that schemes like Digital India, National Rural Internet Mission etc. are implemented at a faster pace.

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

3) Discuss the objectives and design of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana and examine how will this scheme benefit farmers. (200 Words)

Objective of PMFBY: With Successive two Drought Years, in order to Provide easy and cheap Crop Insurance facilities so as to enable more farmers avail insurance cover against crop loss on account of natural calamities.

Design:

1) Premium has been kept at a maximum of 2 per cent for foodgrains and oilseeds and up to 5 per cent for horticulture/cotton crops.

2) Bottom Up Design

3) Centre - State will share the Subsidy Burden equally (50% both)

4) To assess crop damage for early settlement of the claims, the government will adopt modern technology.

5) Farmers will get claim against full sum insured without any reduction.

6) Smart phones will be used to capture and upload data of crop cutting to reduce the delays in claim payment to farmers.

How will the scheme Benefit Farmers:

1) With Low Premium rates and Total Coverage of Insurance of Crops, Farmers will benefit financially.

2) Widening of the term Disaster (like Flooding of Crops and Damage after Harvest), will widen the Protection base and hence beneficial to farmers.

3) Post Harvest Losses are also Included, So it will provide safety and confidence to the Farmers.

4) Time Bound Payment of Losses will prevent delays and further worsening of Farmers's Distress.

5) Will Reduce Farmers' Suicide (Since Crop Failure and Financial Distress earlier was undressed but now ensured).

6) Easy usage of technology like mobile phone, quick assessment of damage and disbursement within a timeframe.

The Scheme is a Laudable measure taken by Govt., as it is focussing more on Crop Insurance which is the most vulnerable part of agriculture. The scheme is Inclusive and will surely help the farmers of our country at the time of distress

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

2) Critically analyse how India's stand on various issues in WTO has changed since 2001 to recent negotiations. (200 Words)

As a founder member of the WTO, India realises its potential to expand India's trade and commerce and attain economic prosperity.

Following stands of India remains unchanged

1. Differentiating between developing and developed countries- India and G33s demand has forever been to provide justice and protection to the developing countries

2. Protection from cheap agricultural imports- India has sought a protection right from the beginning. It was only recently, in the Nairobi declarations, did India manage to seek WTO

permission to impose Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) to protect its farmers

3. Opposition against more concealed developed countries subsidies

4. Allowing permanent exemption from agricultural stockholding limits in order to help feed the poor

5. As seen in the Nairobi declaration, India still desires to progress on the Doha Round of talks which began in 2001

Yet, India's stand seem to have vacillated on certain other issues

1. India today desires lesser tariff protection to help India's exports grow. During the early days, she wanted more tariffs to protect the domestic industry

2. Having realised the difficulty of consensus building in WTO, we are gearing more towards Regional Trade Agreements like RCEP to bypass the WTO deadlock

Change symbolises adjustments with time, and is a regular phenomenon that each institution and nation shows.

India's behavior is therefore not abnormal

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

3) Write a critical note on South China Sea dispute and examine the purpose and consequences of India's joint naval exercises with Japan and USA near the South China Sea region. (200 Words)

South China Sea Dispute

1. It is a dispute over territory and sovereignty of two island chains – **the Paracels and the Spratlys** – claimed in whole or in part by a number of countries, especially China.
2. Alongside the fully fledged islands, there are dozens of rocky outcrops, atolls, sandbanks and reefs, such as the **Scarborough Shoal**.
3. Although largely uninhabited, the Paracels and the Spratlys are said to have **reserves of natural resources** around them.
4. The sea is also a major shipping route and home to fishing grounds that supply the livelihoods of people across the region.

Claims:

1. China claims by far the largest portion of territory - an area defined by the "**nine-dash line**" which stretches hundreds of miles south and east from its most southerly province of Hainan.
2. Vietnam and Taiwan totally condemned China's historical account. Contrastingly, Vietnam claimed that the islands were ruled by their rulers.
3. Apart from these rivalries, Philippines too claimed Spratly Islands due to its geographical proximity.
4. Both the Philippines and China lay claim to the Scarborough Shoal (known as Huangyan Island in China).
5. As per **UNCLOS**, Malaysia and Brunei also lay claim to territory in the Sea that falls within their **economic exclusion zones**.

The dispute took a drastic look when China started building artificial islands in the Sea to house its military bases. This increased tensions and led to intervention of the USA.

To support its allies, US launched naval operations in order to demonstrate the right to navigate in the area, which the United Nations has designated as shared, international waters.

Purpose of India's Joint Naval Exercises:

1. With the recent conclusion of "Malabar Exercise" being carried out in South China Sea, is indirectly a signal to pressurise China to halt its' land reclamation activities and to create a peaceful treaty with other claimants.
2. This exercise has also roped India into the scene, so as to keep a check on China's assertiveness in South China Sea.

Consequences of Joint Naval Exercise:

1. It may lead to distressful relations with China, but may give impetus to India's "Look East Policy" through better ties with southeast asian countries.
2. Since China is biggest importer of Indian goods like iron ore etc., it may also bring repercussive effect on bilateral trade.

Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora

4) "The rapid rise in the number of expatriate Indian technologists in USA comes in the decade when India—concerned about 'brain-drain'—has launched a plethora of schemes to attract highly-qualified scientists back to India." Why do you think USA continues to attract best brains from India? Is it a good trend? Critically discuss. (200 Words)

Brain Drain(aka Human Capital Flight): Exodus of highly educated and skilled workers from developing countries to more advanced industrialised nations

Reasons for US attracting India's best brains:

1. High standards of living with high salaries
2. Industrialization: More lucrative job opportunities
3. Escape from extreme terrorism,religious persecution, political instability,economic turmoil,civil conflict
4. Favourable Migration Policy: eg. Labour Mobility Partnership with India

5. Availability of best Infrastructure: equipments and labs required for engineering and scientific experiments.

6. Low Demographic dividend: high demand for Indian trained youth.

Advantages of this trend:

1. Knowledge flow

2. Global cooperation-better international relation

3. High remittances to sending country (India has largest)

4. Exchange of management experience-due to international mobility

4. Brain Gain for sending country: if people return they can make significant contributions to India

Disadvantages:

1. Talent loss

-Devastating Technological loss (main requirement for India is Technology)

- Loss of skills, ideas and innovations

- Loss of critical services in Health and Education sectors

2. Economic Loss:

-Loss of Nation's investment in education

-Loss of Nation's tax revenues

3. Social :

-Brain overflow: misuse and downgrading of immigrants in host country

-Regional Inequalities: relatively higher migration from 1 place

-Strain on Families: emotional impact and schooling of children

However since last decade (esp. After 2008's global crisis) there has been 'Reverse Brain Drain' and Govt. is also taking many initiatives to attract the best brains back, some of which are:

1. Ramanujam Fellowship Program: For Indian brilliant scientists and engineers all over world

2. CP-STIO (Collaborative Projects with Scientists and Technologists of Indian Origin Abroad)

3. Senior Research Associates Program (by CSIR)

4. Welcome Trust Fellowship Program, etc.

With reversal of Brain Drain, India will again become a reservoir of Brain, that will be the best Brain Gain for India.

Topic: Features of constitution;

5) Do you think the Article 26(b) of the Indian constitution which grants to religious denominations the right to manage their own affairs in the matter of religion is antagonistic to other fundamental rights enshrined in it? Critically analyse. (200 Words)

Article

26(b) grants religious authorities the right to manage their own affairs without state intervention. This separates the State from religion and secures India's secularism. But it has been seen that religious authorities are misusing this law in the name of 'culture'. Hence this is coming in conflict with fundamental rights mentioned below –

1. Article 14 – Right to equality before law. Ex- in case of Sabarimala case where Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship Rules prohibit the entry of women in the temple and Article 26(b) is being misused by the temple authorities to endorse this archaic law

2. Article 15 – No discrimination on grounds of sex

3. Article 25(1) – which provides freedom to practise any religion.

Not only are these fundamental rights being affected, courts are also not free to take judgements

as they are not allowed to intervene in religious matters and give a fair adjudication.

But article 25(b) itself is a fundamental right of religious authorities and if used in the right spirit

can be used to protect the culture and tradition of India.

Article 25(2) gives the State the right to intervene and reform archaic religious practices for social

welfare. But here too, the State first has to prove that either the archaic rule is not the 'essential practice' of the religion or the prohibited practice has a 'specific religious significance' thus, complicating the procedure.

What must be realized by all stakeholders is laws were made for the welfare of the society. There may be loopholes but these loopholes should not be misused in the name of 'culture'. Hence, Article 26 (b) in essence is correct but the definitions of the word "culture" need to be reformed to deter injustice.

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

2) Critically analyse India's deepening strategic relationship with Israel and its benefits for both the countries. (200 Words)

Even though historical differences over certain issues including establishment of Israel on religious lines, India and Israel have maintained cordial relationship ranging from defence, space to even agriculture.

Engagements and benefits for both Israel and India:

-> Transfer of Technology: India has only handful of nations who are comfortable with transfer of technology and Israel is one among them (which is necessary for Make in India campaign)

-> Mossad and RAW: Both can work in tandem to overcome rising radicalization in West Asia.

-> Defence & Space cooperation: World knows Israel' technological capability and India can develop low cost technology. Both the nations together can capture fair share of market (recent jointly developed Barak missile, RISAT 2)

-> Agriculture, irrigation management, climate change: Israel has already overcome problems of salinity, climate change, water management which India is facing now with the help of technological advancements. India can gain such technologies and save her agriculture from current distress (Recent Olive tree plantation in Rajasthan with help of Israel is one such example)

-> Entrepreneurship Ecosystem: Both can have level of engagement for entrepreneurship (along Start up India)

-> Cultural and educational ties: Both the countries enjoy immense people to people connection (students, residents)

Looking at flip side of Indo-Israel relations:

-> Israel enjoys hostility from major blocs of West Asia (Iran and Saudi Arabia) which is not in India's interests

-> Relationship with Israel is a matter of regime change in India which has traditionally being more favorable to Palestine is concern for both the nations (not sustainable relationship)

In addition, India can benefit many inputs from Israel for her Namami Ganga project, high speed rail etc but India should also keep in mind her traditional partners like Iran, Palestine and have balanced relationship.

Also see:

<http://a.disquscdn.com/uploads/mediaembed/images/3070/3550/original.jpg>

<http://a.disquscdn.com/uploads/mediaembed/images/3070/3552/original.jpg>

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

3) The growing focus on climate policy in India requires effective institutions that are needed for the design, coordination and implementation of environment related policies. Critically examine formation and functioning of such institutions in India. (200 Words)

India's commitment to implement transparent and ambitious policy framework with respect to climate change is reflected in its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions. The institutions involved are particular ministries, new research institutions and agencies of government at national and state level.

Benefits of Formation and Functioning of such institutions are:-

1. Coordination- Ministry of Environment, Finance , External Affairs , NITI aayog , Power, Water Resources and Urban development can provide resourceful input, information at all stages to such institution.
2. Awareness and Implementation- The institutions involve public participation in and researchers, scholars to create synergy among state's effort and building public support for it.
3. Jurisdiction and simplification- Given the multidisciplinary challenges of climate management , a single umbrella institution can able to prevent overlapping of policies and lead to simple procedures.
4. Issues and challenges would be discussed and promoting transparent upstream as well as downstream functions. Also, knowledge creation among stakeholders.

However, their are significant challenges facing it:-

1. Lack of Continuity- Proper government support and funding is major hurdle. Including, political uncertainty and complicated administration.\
2. The formation of such institutions has been ad-hoc and short term which breakdown
the sustained and consistent policy impact.
3. Capacity within government structure is limited. It represents lack of vision and clarity in efforts to management of climate change.
4. Coordination across government departments has been uneven and slow. It results in delays and implementation of policies , it takes years rather than completing within a stipulated time frame.

Thus, role of such institutions is crucial for the evolution of balanced, equitable and efficient strategies to promote sustainable development.

Topic: Indian Constitution-features

2) “In India, court rulings have furthered the reformist agenda of the Indian state at the expense of religious freedom and neutrality.” Critically analyse. (200 Words)

Indian Judiciary has always played a crucial role in dispensing justice and upholding the core principles of our Constitution. Judicial activism which has been popular recently in matters of religion, e.g. court’s ruling in Santhara ritual, regarding appointment of priests in temple and women entry in temples, among others has raised few questions

How court’s ruling have furthered the reformist agenda of the Indian state:

- 1) SC taking up the cause of gender equality in temple entry undermining the age old discriminatory traditions.
- 2) Judiciary enjoys greater respect and credibility in public and also provides non-partisan decisions which are progressive in nature.

How it is at the expense of religious freedom and neutrality:

- 1) In a democratic society change should come from
within i.e. Bottom-Up approach and not Top-Down
- 2) Despite SC ruling regarding temple entry of women, they may still not follow it owing to their age old customs and their conservative mentalities.

3) Interpretation of “essential practices” doctrine of religions in arbitrary manner.

4) Courts rulings are progressive, but still people’s

participation lies in democratically elected legislature and not the Judiciary.

India is a Secular state which is not completely separated from religion and maintains a principled distance, so people’s sentiments for their customs should be respected and their examination should be done neutrally. Ultimately change in mindset has to come to progress as a modern society.

Topic:Constitution features; Devolution; RPA

3) Recently the Supreme Court upheld the legality of a Haryana law which disqualifies as candidates for panchayat seats those without requisite educational qualifications among other similar criterion. What implications do you think this decision has on democracy? Critically analyse. (200 Words)

The fundamental undercurrent of democracy stands out as for the people, of the people & by the people. In this wake, while the recently passed Panchayat law by Haryana govt, stands at confrontations with democratic ideals, it do have some ground as far as the concept of modern nation-state is concerned.

Positive effects :

1) Able leadership: Qualified candidates obviously deliver well when compared to unqualified ones. This move will bring better leaders at the forefront , with good practical knowledge to cater to everyday problems.

2) One of the impediments to proper functioning of democracy is the wrong practices prevalent which not only undermines human dignity but also the liberty required to develop oneself. Better candidates with understanding of societal framework can interrogate various inhibitory beliefs and customs like child marriage, temple restrictions.

3) They will replace those who often cite their low educational level and ignorance of laws as excuses for committing corruption, embezzlement and forgery, wouldn’t have strong arguments to defend themselves.

4) They can prove to be role model for rural masses owing to criteria of maintaining sanitation, reduce open defecation(having a functional toilet), promote spirit of education.

After all, one can understand the value of something better, if he has one-on-one experience with that. This applies to everything -education, sanitation, traditions and customs.

Negative effects:

- 1) Isolation of female strata: Owing to burgeoned rate of illiteracy among females, especially in rural areas, this move will isolate them more. This limit their participation in the institutions of governance. This is highly undemocratic.
- 2) Democracy is to present equal opportunities to all. The current law does not do so. It filters out the qualified ones from the unqualified lot.
- 3) This can lead to malpractices of obtaining bogus degrees and qualifications which will serve as a powder keg-type foundation for these local institution- will weaken democracy further.
- 4) Due to prevalent trend of migration to urban areas, qualified /educated candidates may migrate to cities. In this case, there can be no one who stands qualified. In the dream of strengthening democracy and developing smart-villages, we may end up paralysing it, if these schemes and laws does not fulfill the prerequisites of a strong rural infra, skill development, literacy growth and gender equality.

Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests,

- 2) Recently, economic sanctions against Iran were lifted following IAEA's confirmation of Iran fulfilling its obligations under an agreement last summer to limit its nuclear programme. What implications this will have on India? Critically examine. (200 Words)

The lifting of sanctions against Iran as the latter had met its commitments to roll back its nuclear programme would have major implications for India.

The benefits include

- 1) India would take advantage of low oil prices by reducing its Current Account Deficit. The prices are expected to decrease further with addition of Iranian oil in the global supply.
- 2) Indian fertiliser production plants would be revived in Iran, thus providing gas under long-term contracts
- 3) Construction companies in India would benefit as it may bag many contracts. India is already building the Chabahar port
- 4) Investments in Iran would become easy. Direct banking relations would reduce financial costs of business, bilateral trade and retail transactions.
- 5) Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline could now be revived in the absence of US pressure

6) Commercial deals with Iran would be easier as payments would no longer be an issue.

7) Iran could be a potential market for Indian goods such as auto-components, machine tools, pharmaceuticals, capital goods equipment and commodities like rice and tea. This could help accelerate Indian growth

However, India might have to face many challenges such as

1) The Iranian oil was preferred by Indian refiners because of various sops which may now not be available

2) the quality of crude would be a crucial issue, if India imports Iranian oil as it has high sulphur content.

3) Indian companies has surrendered many projects due to US pressure. This includes Farzad-B block in the Farsi field. It may be difficult to get it back. Iran has already put it for fresh bidding

4) While India reduced the importation of Iranian oil and diversified its sources, mainly due to US pressure, China stood by Iran and became its largest importer. Iran may now prefer China to India in energy trade.

4) India's relations with Israel (its major defence partner) and Saudi Arabia (important for India's look West Policy) may get sour.

5) Establishing direct banking relations will require time. In the short run, India would resort to dollar-denominated transactions with Iran for which trained personnel and technology is required at American branches.

6) Euro depreciation aids its companies to bid for construction and engineering contracts to counter their recession.

Lifting of sanctions on Iran holds huge potential for India to accelerate its economy by bagging construction contracts or importing low-priced crude oil. It needs to exploit these opportunities and at the same time address the challenges that may arise

Also see:

<http://a.disquscdn.com/uploads/mediaembed/images/3083/1505/original.jpg>

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

3) "To secure India's vast and vital interests in the Middle East and to prevent the fires there enveloping the subcontinent, Delhi needs to liberate its policy from narrow domestic political considerations, look beyond oil and diaspora, and embark on a substantive strategic engagement with the region." Discuss. (200 Words)

Indian Middle east policy is currently driven mainly by 2 considerations

1. Ensuring sustained supply of oil from Middle east
2. Safety and well beng of the Indian diaspora

However, Indian policy also needs to expand the strategic engagements because

1. Protecting Trade route - Major chunk of India's trade passes through the Gulf of Aden, which faces threats from pirate activities. Pan regional alliance is needed to protect this route
2. China - China is building a naval base in Djibouti , to increase its hegemony. Strategic partnership is therefore utmost important to counter this
3. Terrorism - Most of the terrorist organisation originate in the middle east region. Joint information sharing, technology cooperation, etc is needed to tackle the menace
4. Similarities - India & Saudi Arabia are the 2 largest defence importers. Co-development of weapons, sharing of platforms can be used to tide against burgeoning defence costs
5. Cold War - The tensions between Saudi- led Sunni faction and Iran-led Shia faction can potentially erupt into a world war, which could also engulf India. Therefore, she needs to engage her good relations with both sides to bring peace.
6. Israel - Israel is fast developing into one of India's most trusted defence partners. Strategic engagement is required to cement this relation and develop more weapons together like the recently tested Barak-8 missiles

Moreover, middle east is one of India's largest trade partners. PM's "look west" policy highlights the growing need for engagement with the region. The more we do, the more secure and prosperous, we all can be

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

4) Briefly examine the aims of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), the International Renewable Energy Agency, Renewable Energy Policy Network, Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership and Global Green Growth Institute. Also examine India's role in these institutions. (200 Words)

1. ISA(International Solar Alliance)

Aims :

- create a collaborative platform for increased deployment of solar energy technologies to enhance energy security & sustainable development;
- improve access to energy and opportunities for better livelihoods in rural and remote areas and to increase the standard of living.

India's role:

India Launched ISA with France on the first day of the COP21 climate negotiations in Paris, it set the stage for India's proactive and forward-looking leadership on climate change and the transition to a less carbon-intensive growth trajectory. Although other countries have more solar power deployed currently, India will be one of the largest markets and its domestic policy (to build 100 gigawatts) has sent signals to developers and financiers.

2.International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) is an intergovernmental organization

Aim:

- Provide practical advice and support for both industrialised and developing countries, help them improve their regulatory frameworks and build capacity.
- Facilitate access to all relevant information including reliable data on the potential of renewable energy, best practices, effective financial mechanisms and state-of-the-art technological expertise

India's role:

- 9% of renewable generation capacity (excluding hydropower)
- Accelerated depreciation tax benefit: (depreciate the assets in a manner that greater deductions are allowed in the first few years. Accelerated depreciation can reduce costs during a company's start up year.It is used as an incentive to lessen the burden of tax.

3. Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21), is a global renewable energy multi-stakeholder policy network that provides international leadership for the rapid transition to renewable energy

Aim:

- Provides international leadership for the rapid transition to renewable energy.
- Brings together governments, non governmental organisations, research and academic institutions, international organisations and industry to learn from one another and build on successes that advance renewable energy.

India's role:

- India prominently features with being in the top five category several technologies such as hydro, CSP, wind and solar heating capacity
- In total capacities also India features quite prominently.

4. Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP) is a Vienna-based non-profit, non-governmental organisation

Aim: To accelerate the marketplace for renewable energy and energy efficiency with a particular emphasis on the emerging markets and developing countries. Its primary focus is the scaling up of clean energy business models.

India's role:

- Empowerment through a women's clean energy co-operative in Bihar, India
- Business model for clean drinking water using solar RO in Indian industrial belt
- CTI PFAN network expansion and scale-up in southern India
- Setting up innovative jute processing using biomass based electricity in India
- Affordable energy services to improve income generation in rural India

5. Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) is a treaty-based international organization headquartered in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

Aim:

To produce three major outcomes:

- adoption and implementation of green growth plans (economic growth that uses natural resources in a sustainable manner)I.e poverty reduction, job creation and social inclusion, along with mitigation of climate change , biodiversity loss, etc

- provision of research and stakeholder for policymakers especially in developing countries;

- private sector engagement in the implementation of the national green growth plans.

India's role:

With GGGI ,India is making efforts to strengthen water sustainability in India, and completed project work to ensure that the ever increasing social and economic growth of Indian cities takes place inclusively and sustainably

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

2) Analyse the finding of the first phase of the latest national family health survey (NFHS-4). (200 Words)

The findings of the first phase of National Family Health survey portray a mixed picture.

Improvements :

- 1) Both Female and Male literacy have shown an improvement, thus showing progress in primary school enrollment.

- 2) Lesser number of infant deaths as number of institutional deliveries has gone up and access to ante-natal care has expanded. This reflects the considerable success of ICDS , Mother and Child Tracking System, New Born Action Plan and Janani Suraksha Yojana.

- 3) Rates of anaemia have declined although it is still widespread, thus exhibiting the partial success of Weekly Iron folic Supplementation Programme (WIFS).

- 4) Number of child marriages have also declined. However, state like Kerala with an otherwise high HDI exhibit a high number of child marriages thus remaining a cause of concern.

Poor Performance:

- 1) Decline in Sex ratio in 9 out of 11 states, including the worst performing states such as Haryana, thus exhibiting that the programmes such as “Beti Bachao Beti Padhao” are yet to show results.

2) While other reports such as Global Nutrition Report 2015 highlight the high number of stunted and undernourished children in India, the NFHS shows that over nutrition and obesity have emerged as a cause of concern, thus highlighting the gross inequality across the country.

3) Total Fertility rates have not reduced to replacement level in high population growth rate states of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

The above findings reveal that discrimination against females should be dealt with much greater vigor, by improving access to education, changing societal attitudes and financial empowerment and greater stress must be laid on family planning and birth control in high fertility states.

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

3) Maternity entitlements are an important policy tool for encouraging better maternal health. In this regard, critically examine if the provisions of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and the Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY) are sufficient in ensuring better maternal health. Examine shortcomings of these schemes and government's role in better implementation of these schemes. (200 Words)

The National Food Security Act, 2013, maternity entitlement is a combination of three elements viz. the right to “a meal, free of charge the right to breastfeeding counseling and the right to “maternity benefit of not less than rupees six thousand The IGMSY provides partial wage compensation to pregnant and lactating women in order to promote rest and healthy feeding practices, as well as increase utilisation of healthcare services. The scheme is conditional on timely registration, complete vaccination, attending counselling sessions and exclusive breastfeeding of the child India's relatively high maternal mortality rate manifests shortcomings of these schemes:

(A) Lack of awareness among women regarding their entitlements and also among the frontline workers on the criteria for eligibility.

(B) lack of adequate supply of healthcare services, medication, staff and healthcare centres.

(C) Cash entitlements under the scheme are to be transferred to the beneficiaries bank account. the absence of universal financial inclusion, What exacerbates this issue in undue delay in transferring the benefits.

(D) The idea behind the scheme IGMSY is to compensate women for the wage losses during and after pregnancy . Given that the wage rate for unskilled agricultural labour is around Rs 200, the amount of Rs. 6000 compensates women for a measly

30 days. This amount falls way short of the make, considering that the scheme seeks to encourage 6 months of exclusive breast feeding.

Though these schemes have helped in reducing MMR and improving nutrition levels, there is a lot more work to be done to achieve global standards in terms of education, spreading financial literacy through financial inclusion, influencing change in societal attitudes through NGOs, enhancing availability of personnel, infrastructure at PHC to meet the constitutional obligation under article 42 which provides for maternity relief as directive to state policy

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

4) To address some of the pressing socio-economic problems, it is necessary for government to work together with civil society and NGOs. Do you think this partnership is working well in India? If no, what needs to be done by both to work together efficiently and transparently? Discuss. (200 Words)

Civil Society and CSIs like NGOs act as a bridge between the government machinery which is characterised by rules, procedures, hierarchy etc. and the general public who are informal and value-driven.

CSIs derive strength from Art 19(1)(c), which grants Indian citizens with the fundamental right to form associations and the National Policy on Voluntary Sector. This partnership has seen both successes and failures as seen below –

1. Successes –

(i) Operation Flood, which was a collaboration between National Dairy Development Board and Amul was a resounding success

(ii) SHGs have been at the forefront of facilitating institutional credit to rural poor alongwith NABARD

2. Failures –

(i) Acharya Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan and JPN's Gramdan movement was not backed up by effective land reform legislations

(ii) Various CSI oriented provisions such as RTI, Citizens' Charter, Social Audit etc. are afflicted by problems of corruption, bureaucratic red-tapism etc.

Various measures to enhance government-CSI relationship can be –

1. The 2nd ARC had recommended setting up a National Accreditation Council to devise an accreditation system for voluntary organizations obtaining funds from government
2. Encouraging the extension of SHG movement to urban and peri-urban areas
3. To improve women groups's financing, the operations and capital of the Rashtriya Mahila Kosh should be enhanced
4. Encouraging CSI participation in Self-regulatory Authorities such as UGC, BCI, MCI etc.

Hence, govt. should act as a facilitator to CSI rather than regulators in their objective of enhancing India's social capital.

Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests,

5) It is said that persistently low crude oil prices will impact India in several positive ways. How should India capitalise on persisting low crude oil prices? Comment. (200 Words)

The various advantages which India can accrue of due to falling crude prices can be seen under the following heads –

1. Economic –

(i) Reduced import bill may lead to lower fiscal deficit and hence the government should attempt to achieve its obligations (3% of GDP) under the FRBM Act

(ii) Accelerate the completion of critical infrastructural projects since the energy costs for completing the project will be significantly lower

2. Strategic –

(i) Expedite the building up of Strategic Oil Reserves

(ii) Enter into futures-prices contracts with Oil exporting countries for long durations

3. Social –

(i) Deregulate the prices of kerosene and gas to revoke the entrenched subsidy culture

(ii) Use the low gas prices to enhance low-cost fertilizer production which could immensely benefit farmers

4. Environmental –

(i) Low crude prices will ease pressure on coal plants and can be used to modernize coal-plants to ensure minimum environmental safeguards

(ii) Impose the ‘Special fuel upgradation Cess’ on petrol and diesel to upgrade India’s oil refineries to Bharat Stage 4 and 5 as recommended by Saumitra Chaudhri Committee

5. Policy-making –

(i) The Integrated Energy Policy 2006 should be restructured to allow considerations of using Strategic Oil reserves during high-crude price phase

(ii) Expedite domestic oil exploration and non-crude energy development to prevent shocks from political trouble in West Asia

These measures could allow the government to fully utilize the benefits of low-crude price phase to allow Indian economy to enter into higher growth trajectories.

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

2) The latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS) data has revealed that the number of people suffering from hypertension in rural India is, in many cases, higher than in urban parts. What are the possible reasons for this change? Critically examine. (200 Words)

A healthy nation lies in the hands of healthy citizens. Apart from the maladies of malnourishment and stunted growth of children, the recent NFHS observed growing new trends of health disorders like hypertension and obesity, not only in urban areas but also in rural areas.

Reasons:

1) Changing lifestyles and gradual accustoming to faulty diet practices.

2) High level stress existing in rural areas due to low incomes, low agricultural productivity and their instability.

- 3) Uncontrolled food inflation in the economy has led to consumption of non-nutritious food, especially in rural areas.
- 4) Changed cropping patterns led to the low availability of cereals and grains like raagi, jowar etc., and are causing micro-hunger (deficiency in micro nutrients like iron, zinc etc.)
- 5) Consumption of low potassium foods due to high costs of fruits and vegetables.
- 6) Poor income levels due to lack of fair employment opportunities and rural-urban migrations.
- 7) Mechanization agriculture and lifestyles reduced physical effort.

It is the need of the hour for the government to control food inflation by widening resource base, establishing national agricultural market, liberalising APMC Act, encouraging diversified cropping, shoot-up illegal cartelling and sound PDS system with low cost logistic systems. These are very essential to ensure food security in India. In addition, conducting awareness programmes on balanced diet and leading healthy lifestyles in schools, colleges and community centres by encouraging NGOs and civil society is the need of the hour.

Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations.

3) In recent years, Pakistan has tried to deal with terrorists, especially with Pakistan Taliban, more sternly. Yet, terrorist attacks on its cities haven't come down. What are the reasons for this? Examine the implications of further inaction by Pakistan on regional security. (200 Words)

Although Pakistan delivered stern and belligerent response to massacre involving terrorist activity in peshawar military school, yet lack of comprehensive anti-terrorism strategy witnessed terrorist attack on another educational institution.

Various factors have been responsible for failure of pakistan in this respect-

-it has dealt with countering terrorist infrastructure rather than its policy.

-it failed to counter radicalisation of youth

-lack of multi-pronged strategy such as attacking their financial base and cyber network.

-time and again army's encouragement to haqqani network, afghani taliban and other anti-india terrorist factions.

Implications shall be-

-it might further dilute international cooperation and trust with pakistan in its anti-terrorist stand

-weaken projects like TAPI thus putting energy interests at stake

-encourage militancy in afghanistan.

- add to further complications to kashmir issue.

-weaken democratic governance system in pakistan

Thus, it is high time that pakistan evolve holistic action plan on terrorism by shedding of its dubious stand, fostering institutional coordination with India to prevent massacre of innocent civilians on both the sides and thereby ensure stabilised and secured region..

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

3) “Across the world, prisons are increasingly used as instruments of social control. With its huge undertrial population in jails, India is headed in the same direction.” Do you agree? Critically comment on the issue of undertrials in India and suggest what needs to be done to address this issue. (200 Words)

From the dawn of human civilization prison has been used to incarcerate a segment of people who are not deemed worthy for the society. Only in last one decade prison has been also seen as reformatory institution. However plight of under trials especially in India tells a different story. Chhattisgarh with 93-98% under trial prison, Jharkhand close to 80% under trial points out to the following factors for such menace

Poor socioeconomic profile(Dalit and st constitute 39% population and over 70% undertrials), slow judicial process resulting massive over pending cases, prejudice amongst sc st minorities during investigation, inadequate expensive and complex legal services, bail in norm and jail an exception not followed by indian court. In Bheem singh vs UOI trial court Supreme Court has allowed self bail however it seems like a dead letter

Overcrowded prison(chattisgarh having 260% average occupancy rate), made to work like bonded labor as no remuneration, no segregation of juveniles, often put in same cell with hardened criminals, lack of sanitation health and poor nutrition, prison violence, solitary confinement, harsh punishment is way of life for under trial in prison.

Need to explicitly follow model code provided by home minister in 2003 NHRC has also suggested ways to humanize prison ,adequate funding, surprise inspection, ramping up NALSA clinic inside prison,fast track courts, implementing Bheem singh verdict, more prudence need by court and investigation agency, skill being provided only in big prison like Tihar need to expanded to other parts of country, literacy mission again tihar campus placement can be emulated , special care for women and minorities under trials as they are often shunned by community and family, jail audits to find the actual numbers like bihar prison report 2015 is way forward.

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

4) It is imperative that the data coming out of NFHS-4 lead to the charting of a new policy course that makes access to nutrition and health a right for all. In this regard, what needs to be done? Discuss. (200 Words)

After long delay the National Family Health Survey is out and it talks about how India needs to improve on lot of parameters, given that 34% of children under age of five remain underweight, over half the women (between age 15 and 49) are anaemic.

What needs to be done

Strengthening of ICDS (Integrated Child Development Scheme) – the focus should be more on first three years as these are the crucial years for a child

Provide access to ante-natal care, reduction of anaemia among women and immunisation – Eg: Schemes like Indradhanush

More frequent assessment of health of citizens – and identification of areas to be improved

More awareness and wider reach of SABLA scheme – as malnutrition can be traced to adolescent girls and it's a cycle.

How it can be done

Incentivize local governments for improving their healthcare system and awards to panchayats, blocks and or districts that achieve nutritional targets.

Foster innovation to solve key health and development problems – eg the grand challenge initiative by Bill and Melinda Gates foundation works in this regard to experiment – innovate-make an impact

Use of ICT (Information Communication Technology) – for eg, sending videos/text information related to health schemes directly onto citizens mobile phones – eg (Indian Academy Paediatrics in public-private partnership send messages to women on how to take care in pregnancy, breastfeeding, other)

We have great schemes like Udisha – to train child care workers across country; Kishori Shakti Yojana, Mid-day meal scheme and more. *What is needed is proper implementation of such schemes by identifying the correct beneficiaries.*

Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

3) The official start of the lifting of crushing Western sanctions on the Iranian economy is generally said to benefit India. But some commentators argue that it also throws various challenges to India's relationship with Iran. Examine. (200 Words)

The historic lifting of ban on Iran after decades is expected to have an instrumental effect on Indo-Iran relations. India has been connected to for more than 4 millenniums & both have been one of the oldest civilizations the world has ever seen.

This move can be beneficial for India as:

- 1) Gas swap deal between India, Iran & Turkmenistan.
- 2) India's large Shia population can become an effective bridge by pursuing Track II diplomacy.
- 3) Chabahar port will connect India to Afghanistan directly bypassing Pakistan.
- 4) Progress in Oman-Iran-India pipeline.

The benefits of lifting of sanctions will be manifold, but there are few fears of cautions:

- 1) India's negative vote against Iran in IAEA is not a long lost memory.
- 2) India's deepening engagement with Israel, Saudi Arabia & other GCC nations.
- 3) China occupying the position of Iran's top trading partner with more than 100 Chinese firms creating grounds.

4) Pakistan's relations with Iran have been thawing due to active involvement like a mediator of former's efforts in stabilizing Afghanistan.

5) Stiff competition from other Western nations which are technologically much more advanced than India.

India can take several steps to counter these fears:

1) IPI pipeline should get started.

2) Finalization on South Asia Gas Enterprise (SAGE) pipeline project.

3) India's presence must be enhanced by "Connect Central Asia Policy"

Iran has made a new beginning after almost 4 decades, and this is time India needs to prove its diplomacy & glimpses of being a regional superpower. Iran is the gateway to Central & West Asia & considering its large oil & gas reserve, it can prove to be a vital partner for India in years to come.

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

4) Discuss the nature of relation between India and the Arab League and challenges both need to address together to bring peace in the Arab region. (200 Words)

(200 Words) Discussing nature of relations between India and Arab nations :

1- Diplomatic : Arab Nation's support for India's UNSC permanent membership shows their faith in India's ability to lead the world.

2- Political : India is also focussing on increasing bilateral ties. Indian PM's UAE visit was the first by any Indian PM since 2004.

3- Diaspora : one of the highest concentration of presence of India diaspora in Arab countries & sending almost half of total remittances received by India.

4- Cultural : India being the 4th largest muslim populous country, India also enjoys religious ties with these nations.

5- Diversifying relationship : With increase in interest of Arab Countries in field of Science and technology, Space - nature of relationship is becoming diversified.

6- Economic : Traditionally, India's Energy security has been dependent on this region. Recent 75 bn USD investment deal between India and UAE reflects the confidence in Indian business environment.

Challenges facing both India and Arab nations relating to peace :

1- Terrorism : India and Arab nations both are suffering from the terror attacks sponsored and funded by other state and non-state actors.

2- Religious Extremism : Devastation and havock created by ISIS in the name of religion is the challenge for both in order to prevent their youth from joining ISIS.

3- Arab- Israel conflict : It has always been a challenge before India to balance between Arab and Israel.

4- Intra-Arab conflicts : New challenge has been raised before India to stabilise between two regional powers- Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Suggestions:

1- Terrorism : India-Arab cooperation on eliminating sourcing and funding the terrors is a pathbreaking step.

2- Religious extremism : De-link religion and terrorism on the basis of faith in humanity. This should be inculcate in every muslim youth so that he/she must not deter from path of humanity or peace.

3- Regional conflict : With US's role is limiting in the west asia after failed intervention in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya ; India is perhaps the only nation who enjoys cordial relations with almost all of the countries in west asia. So India can become the major mediator and facilitator to establish peace and stability in the region.

Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations

5) India recently welcomed the first round of amendments of the new Nepal Constitution. Examine these amendments and discuss what they mean to India's relationship with Nepal. (200 Word

The promulgation of new Constitution in Nepal has led to birth of indifferences between India and Nepal as the provisions enshrined in it are biased towards majority sections of the society, rather than inclusive. Moreover, the approach followed in preparing new Constitution is also criticised for isolated approach keeping aside the interests of minorities. However, the recent process of amending Constitution to include minority interests is a welcome step.

Positives:

1) Upgraded Article 42 to ensure more inclusive social justice.

2) Amended Article 84 to create an inclusive House of Representatives.

3) Modified Article 286 to create a new process of constituency delimitation, helping the Madhesi groups.

All these amendment processes were part of a deal between the government of Nepal, its mainstream politics and rebel Madhesi political formations. However, they have implications as well for not creating separate states for Madhesis in the southern vicinity where Madhesi are in high number, and felt injustice in delimitation process also.

Impact on India-Nepal relationship:

- 1) The recent disturbance in the relationship due to Madhesi unrest and India's voice for inclusive Constitution has been misunderstood as interference in internal affairs and supporting Madhesi agitations. This stand would be diluted.
- 2) Indifferences led to halt of trade vehicles near the borders and induced volatility in the availability of essential commodities.
- 3) India imposed trade and services sanctions over Nepal for injustice done to Madhesi groups who have strong cultural and physical ties with northern regions of UP and Bihar. These sanctions crippled the Nepalese economy and caused distrust in the relationship. This would set right in the near future.

Moreover, this amendment is the first step towards refinement of the Nepalese Constitution and in the near future it would inculcate interests of various stakeholders and made out a comprehensive one.

Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations

6) It is said that India may have to find a way to initiate dialogue not only with the civilian government of Pakistan but also with the armed forces to establish between two of them and end terrorism. Were such attempts made previously? Is it possible to make such attempts now? How? Critically examine. (200 Words)

Is it possible for India to attack Russia or Iran, assuming it is geographically possible. The answer is plain no, because the public opinion in India is in favour of these countries. The same way in Pakistan, it is the army which shapes the public opinion, hence it is important for India to engage with Army as well.

Were such attempts made previously?

Engaging with army is not a novel step, in 2007, the then Inter-Services Intelligence chief, Lt. General Ahmed Shuja Pasha, did convey his interest to talk with Indian government.

Is it possible to make such attempts now?

In a limited degree, India is engaging with army at NSA level talks, as Pakistani NSA was a retired military officer. There is scope to further this engagement, as the youth of Pakistan needs job for which they need stability. Beijing would also encourage to better relation, so that its economic corridor would fructify and endure.

How?

A package of engagement should be declared at multiple levels. So that the media glare won't stick to army level engagement. The package should include NSA level (done), foreign secretary level (to be done), chief of army level.

By engaging with army, India would be giving legitimacy to army holding state power in Pakistan. This will go against India's interest of a strong civilian govt in Pakistan. So army level engagement should only be used as an initial confidence building measure, to garner public support in Pakistan towards peace process.

Topic:Functioning of the Judiciary

2) "Unrestrained judicial activism in India, unmoored in sound principles, doing a disservice to governance in the country and damaging its economic growth prospects." Do you agree with statement? Are we witnessing judicial hyper-activism which is harming India? If yes, how to restrain judiciary? Critically comment. (200 Words)

Judiciary keeps a restraint on legislative and executive misadventures through the idea of 'judicial activism'. Positive examples of judicial activism include the ruling on 2G scam, commonwealth scam and drafting Vishaka guidelines.

However, in the recent past, the line between judicial activism and judicial hyper-activism (or overreach) is thinning down as evident by the following cases:

- Order to double the tax on diesel vehicles entering Delhi would hamper free movement and hamper the economic growth
- Striking down the National Judicial Appointment Commission Act that could have brought efficiency in the court system and expedited governance

- Reserving premium seats at five times the normal prices in Delhi Metro for car users affected by Odd-even system

Such kind of instances have the potential to hamper India's growth and governance system as unnecessary taking up the cases without due introspection sets a precedent whereby people are motivated to approach courts even in irrelevant instances. The court remains burdened and stay orders issued by court doesn't allow the executive to move forward on taking some growth-propelling measures.

In order to deal with this negative phenomenon in the otherwise "good" judiciary, following steps should be taken:

- Drafting guidelines for "Special Leave Petition" that allows litigants to challenge any order issued by other court/tribunal
- Establishing a Division Bench in courts to decide PIL/SLP for inspecting them before admission
- Accountability mechanism for court whereby people can move to court against the court for frivolous judgments that hampered economic growth

In my opinion, the judiciary has not wholly crossed the limits imposed by constitution and it is the right that some corrective measures be put in the system to keep the judiciary "good" in spirit for the benefit of everyone.

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

3) France has emerged, steadily since the 1990s, as India's most trusted international partner. But has this goodwill resulted in economic and strategic benefits to India? Critically examine. (200 Words)

Indo-France relationships have rarely seen conflicts and has been of multi-dimensional character. Since early 1990s this relationship has grown as can be seen under –

1. Techno-economic –

(i) Signing of Nuclear Cooperation deal and agreement for building reactors in Jaitapur

(ii) Recent declaration for cooperation in off-shore tax evasion

(iii) Launching of Indian satellites through Ariane space agency of France which India's current launcher PSLV is incapable of

2. Strategic –

(i) France being a major historic naval player in the IOR, the naval exercises Varuna are significant

(ii) India's procurement of Mirage aircrafts and the advanced nuclear Scorpene submarine from France

(iii) Support for India's inclusion in NSG to ensure uninterrupted Uranium supply

However, this relationship has not been able to achieve its full potential due to various structural and procedural reasons –

1. Structural –

(i) India's nuclear liability bill and Areva's financial issues have delayed the Jaitapur plant

(ii) India's complex business and labour laws which has discouraged French investments

2. Procedural –

(i) The agreement over the purchase of Rafale aircrafts has seen numerous alterations, preventing the deals finalizing

(ii) Low growth in bilateral trade which has rendered the Indo-France relationship primarily based on geopolitical issues

However, India-France relations have been largely positive and inspite of minor issues, remain the model for other bilateral relationships of India.

Topic: Powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

4) Evaluate the role played by the Indian Election Commission in increasing voter base and voters' participation in elections. (200 Words)

The steady increasing electoral participation points out to the positive interventions made by Election Commission of India to secure the same. Free and fair elections attract more voters. The measures taken by ECI to attract voters include:

- Employing “Awareness Observer” across the country in order to compile a report on voting numbers and reasons behind low or high participation in each constituency so that ECI can work upon the hurdles
- Introducing Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) to make voting process interactive by showing the details of their votes
- Introducing Short Message Service and Toll Free Numbers so that people can ask details regarding enrolment process and address of polling station
- Live Monitoring of Sensitive Areas to ensure that no mischievous activities are carried at the polling station
- Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) to increase awareness and education about the electoral process
- Replacing ballot papers through electronic voting machine to make the voting process easier
- Organizing National Voters’ Day, Voter Fest and employing school children and renowned personalities as ambassadors to persuade people to cast their votes

Topic: Features of Constitution; Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education;

2) “In India a religious minority is debarred from establishing a university inasmuch as a university can only be established by a legislature.” Do you agree with this statement? Justify. (200 Words)

A University is an educational institution which can only be established by the legislature by passing a statute. Article 30 (1) of the Constitution gives a fundamental right to the religious and linguistic minorities to establish and administer an educational institution of their choice. However, a confusion arises as to whether an 'educational institution' under this article includes a University as a University cannot be established by a private person or body, but can only be established by a statute.

In the 1967 case of *Azeez Basha v. Union of India*, the Supreme Court held that religious or linguistic minorities cannot establish Universities. This limited the scope of Article 30 (1) in as much as such minorities can only establish, at the most, a deemed University. Limiting the fundamental right this way curtails the right to preserve culture and traditions of a minority community. In fact, the Article uses the

word "of their choice" implying that it is the community's choice of what kind of institution it wants to establish.

The debate is regarding whether the secular ideals of our Constitution could permit an educational institution established by Parliament for particular community. It is important that this right be allowed as our Constitution follows the scheme of substantive equality which aims to empower the minority communities. A statute establishing a University should merely be seen as a recognition of such institution as a University. The Parliament had amended the Aligarh Muslim University Act in 1981 to reflect the same. This should be adopted as a trend and minority communities should be given the right to establish Universities. Not doing so would be restricting the scope of Article 30.

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

3) Despite the findings of the fourth National Food Health Survey (NFHS-4) that has given India plenty of reasons to cheer, it is said that many concerns remain for India. Critically examine what these concerns are and how they should be addressed. (200 Words)

The recently revealed first phase of NFHS-4 has given the nation reasons to cheer due to decline in IMR, Uner5 mortality, rates of anaemia, total fertility with increase in nutrition levels, institutional deliveries, health insurance. However, the picture is not entirely rosy as the absolute number of people suffering from anaemia, the number of deaths especially in children due to preventable diseases are large. RSOC has pointed out that around 40% of India's children under the age of five are stunted (low height-for-age), nearly 15% are wasted (low weight-for-height) and 30% are underweight (low weight-for-age)

MAJOR CONCERNS: Nutrition levels, hidden hunger especially among children, women, deaths due to preventable diseases pointing towards expansion of immunisation, sanitation, clean water, increasing BP, Obesity among rural and urban areas respectively pointing towards unhealthy lifestyle habits.

measures to be taken;

STRUCTURAL :FUNDS: enhancing fund allocation which today stands at meagre 1% of GDP along with measures to enhance efficiency of funds allocated

FUNCTIONARIES: increasing doctor:patient ratio, primary health care workers, enhancing capacity building

INFRASTRUCTURE: preparing a comprehensive localised information regarding health care facilities ranging from number of doctors to beds available and measures to enhance infrastructure

OPERATIONAL: the existing schemes to address malnutrition like ICDS, MDM etc need to be monitored strictly considering outsourcing to private players along with regulation of quality of food through labs and fortification to remove hidden hunger

All these steps shall go along way in meeting our global obligations under SDG and constitutional obligation of improved standards of living to people

Topic: Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these; Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive

4) Discuss various situations in which proclamation of President's Rule is made, the constitutional and legislative provisions to be met before proclaiming such Rule. (200 Words)

Article 356 empowers the president to issue a proclamation of President's rule in the state in case of 'failure of constitutional machinery' in the state. Such a failure includes the following circumstances:

1. Elections cannot be held as scheduled for any reason
2. Elections were held but the assembly is hung, no party secures clear majority
3. Party that secured a majority is unwilling to form ministry and a coalition cannot be formed
4. Ministries resigned after suffering a vote of no confidence and no clear political successor emerges
5. Internal subversion where govt. is deliberately not doing its duty
6. Failure to comply with centre's constitutional directives
7. Wilful refusal to discharge constitutional duty.

As Declared by SC in the Bommai case, the president's rule should be used sparingly, and BEFORE(?) declarations, the following provisions need to be met:

1. Centre should ensure that relevant material exists to justify the imposition of president's rule because the burden of proof is on centre.
2. Satisfaction of the president must be based on relevant material

3. President may only SUSPEND the assembly until both houses approve to the proclamation (within 2 months)
4. Governor must give a chance to the party in question to prove majority on the floor
5. Governor must probe the possibility of forming new govt if existing ministries have resigned.
6. Govt of state be given prior warning to rectify itself and do its constitutional duty (barring extreme cases)

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

5) "Russia may be India's oldest and biggest military supplier, the U.S. India's newest close defence partner, and China India's biggest trading partner, but it is France that was India's first strategic partner." Elaborate. (200 Words)

A strategic partnership is a long-term interaction between two countries based on political, economic, social and historical factors. While India today has strategic partnership with over 30 nations, France stands completely on a different pedestal in this regard, being the oldest and most trusted one.

1. Political : France has always supported India's bid for a permanent UNSC seat, has always sided in favour of India in conflicts with neighbors like China and France. Both countries have shared political values, and a clear vision to fight against global terrorism. France is also important for India to promote a balance on Eurasian landmass.
2. Economic : Was the first to start to limit sanctions after 1998 Pokhran incident and begin nuclear trade with India, signed nuclear cooperation agreement with India. Engagement in space collaboration has manifested to a long extent between ISRO and CNES. Engagement has also increased in infra sector, particularly in Rail and Road sector. India has decided to purchase 36 Rafael jets. Bilateral trade, though a little slow is expected to increase. France, has become one of the biggest source of FDI in India.
3. Social and historical - Indian culture enjoys a wide audience in France, ranging from India Art, Music, dance etc. Cultural Exchange programme was signed in 2013, and has been extended for 2016 -2018. ICCR regularly sponsors Indian artists visits to France. French Army's participation on Rajpath and engagement under the Shakti Banner will surely improve social ties, besides defence collaboration. Educational and technical cooperation has also increased in recent times.

While with other nations, there are definite impediments in one area or the other.

America : Though has come out to be the newest defence and maritime partner, has vacillated between supporting Pak and India. Also TPP and strict patent regime of US may emerge as roadblocks in future.

Russia : Though India's oldest military partner, but engagement has decreased since then, be it the trade or the military. Also, Russian economy is on a slowdown, and Russia's closeness with Pak and China has also increased in recent years.

China : One cannot be sure of China's intentions, given both India and China have had border disputes in the recent past. Concluding of CPEC, China's growing prowess in IOR, and trade balance tilted towards China, are some definite concerns.

Relations with France multi faceted, extremely close and special . Moreover, France is a more credible partner (than US or China) for India in constructing a more equitable world order through a new concert of major powers.

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

2) It is found that there has been increase in tobacco consumption level by children below 18 years of age in India. What multipronged approach is necessary to keep the young ones away from tobacco? Discuss. (200 Words)

Tobacco consumption level has proliferated amongst the children below 18 yrs age. This calls for a strict and multi-faceted approach to tackle this problem, given the harmful effects of this life taking drug.

1. Legal approach :

(i)The earlier penalties for selling tobacco to children had been a very meager sum, which has been addressed to a long extent by Juvenile Justice Act , 2015 by providing for Rs 100000 penalty or even imprisonment.

(ii)Taxation on tobacco products need to be increased.

(iii)Pictorial warnings covering almost the entire packets must be introduced.

(iv)Ban on tobacco and advertisements within school proximity must be enforced

(v)School curriculum may be modified to bring awareness from the start.

2. Awareness :

State must engage with volunteers, NGOs in spreading awareness thorough campaigns . Effective programmes (slogans, logos) that resonate with the local

population must be started. Posters near informal vendor shops, in schools, coaching areas, fitness centres will help in spreading awareness.

3. Education :

(i) Schools must conduct monthly awareness programmes, with effective inputs from health experts ,counselors,parents.

(ii) Parents have the responsibility of teaching their children, the ill effects of tobacco. Since they are the first ones to sense any wrong action by their kids , they must take the child to health expert at the earliest.

An unhealthy mind cannot think and act creatively. The importance of health is clearly emphasized in our constitution by Right to health , and DPSP of prohibiting drugs. Thus, the efforts must complement the vision of the constitution makers of a healthy India.

Topic: Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these; Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive

3) In the light of the European Council's Convention 108, discuss the concept and importance of data privacy, the measures needed to ensure privacy in this digital age. (200 Words)

Convention 108 is the first legally binding international treaty that protects right to privacy of individuals.Data privacy is defined as appropriate use of data.It is the relationship between collection of data,technology,the public expectation of privacy and the legal and political issues surrounding them.Thus,data privacy implies data security

IMPORTANCE-

1.Data privacy gains important in the wake of Fourth Industrial Revolution which is marked by velocity,scope and system impacts where transfer of even minutest data at speed of light across globe is possible.

2.It is important to protect the right of privacy of a person who has reposed immense faith upon an organisation/govt.

3.Its importance further lies in the budding of cyber threats and terrorism where defaulter can be an individual/country/or any organisation.

4. Ethically, data privacy tests the character of an organisation which try to win the trust of public.

MEASURES REQUIRED-

1. make right to privacy fundamental right and at international level include it in Universal declaration of human rights.
2. All policy documents at national and international level should deal with security and privacy standards.
3. Educate the users about their choices and importance of data privacy.
4. Strict laws and measures to punish the defaulters at national and international level and make organisations responsible for the breaching of data privacy
5. In India, Implement the recommendations of AP Shah committee including choice, notice, consent, openness and accountability etc, recognising multiple dimensions of privacy and technology and amend IT Act 2002
6. Using data encryption standard can also help

Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation; Aspects of Governance

4) The challenge of efficiently delivering government benefits to the large mass of poor farmers and the working population in rural areas is crucial to the revival of the rural economy at a time when it is clearly in stress. How should government deliver efficiently? Discuss. (200 Words)

Efficient delivery of government services to poor farmers and rural areas is necessary to improve rural demand and address the issue of poverty. Efficient delivery of services can be achieved through the following ways –

1. Universalization of PDS – The Chhattisgarh and TN model of PDS show that universal PDS lead to lower leakages as grain-traders get no benefit from hoarding
2. Enhancement of social capital – SHG-Bank linkage model with a mentor Self-Help Promoter Institution (SHPI) should be encouraged as the preferred mode for financial intermediation and bringing cooperatives under a single law (currently regulated by various State laws) to improve their functioning as recommended by 2nd ARC
3. Convergence of schemes – To prevent multiple-targeting and overlapping of schemes which ultimately end up benefiting rich farmers, an integrated credit-cum-crop-livestock-human health insurance package can be developed as suggested by MS Swaminathan Commission

4. Use of technology – Measure such as JAM, mKisan app etc. can reduce leakages in agro-subsidies and enhance information dissemination to ensure that there is sufficient demand for govt. schemes

5. Institutional revamping – Various State governments need to address issues of cartelization in APMCs to ensure that farmers' post-harvest losses are minimal and government services are not mis-utilized

Hence, a multi-pronged strategy needs to be adopted to ensure that government services effectively address the issues of rural poor.

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

3) Write a note on the Zika virus outbreak, its causes, consequences and the role of international agencies in dealing with this outbreak. (200 Words)

Zika virus is a mosquito transmitted infection related to Dengue, Yellow fever, Nile Virus and Chikungunya. It was discovered in the forests of Uganda where it was first identified in rhesus monkey in 1947.

Cause of outbreak:

1. Very few people have immunity against this virus
2. No medicines yet! In fact there is no specific treatment or vaccine for Zika which is related to Dengue – scientists have struggled to develop a dengue vaccine with no effective shot so far
3. Spread by mosquito vector which are geographically widespread

Symptoms:

1. Fever, rash, joint pain or conjunctivitis
2. Abnormally small heads in babies (microcephaly) – causing brain damages in children
3. Women who are (or could become) pregnant– they develop a temporary form of paralysis

Consequences:

1. [on society] it places a heart-breaking burden on families and communities

2. With Olympics around in Brazil there is certainty of pandemic and with spread across the globe this shall soon turn into an epidemic

International organizations should:

1. Issue advisories and specific measure in affected countries
2. WHO [World Health Organization] should declare an international emergency since the virus has already spread to more than 20 countries
3. Set up advanced laboratory in its regional centres to detect the virus through molecular testing
4. Global mosquito eradication effort – especially war on Aedes species of mosquitoes

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

4) Critically analyse the impact of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) on rural economy. (200 Words)

The MGNREGA guarantees 'Right to work' for at least a person in the family for 100 days every year, 150 days in case of SC/ST, during non-agriculture seasons. Employment would be provided within 15 days of enrollment, failing which the government would contribute unemployment allowance for the work seeker.

Impact on rural economy:

- 1) There is serious distress in agriculture and rural economy due to poor agricultural productivity and small land holding sizes. This increases wages for the rural poor and provides for better livelihood opportunities.
- 2) As agriculture sector in India is suffering with disguised unemployment, it provides opportunities for rural poor to take up other alternative works and makes the agriculture remunerative for the existing farmers.
- 3) As MGNREGA works primarily target on infrastructure development works like digging irrigation channels, tanks etc., in the rural areas, it builds base for further progress of rural areas.
- 4) Helps in increasing the irrigated area under cultivation from the low 55% at present ratios.
- 5) Relieves rural distress, provides employment and livelihood opportunities and reduces rural migrations.

6) Increases disposable income to a certain extent with the poor as the schemes focus is on unskilled works.

7) Builds a theme of equal wages in the society and causes for empowerment of women and other backward sections.

8) Controls seasonal unemployment patterns.

Some negatives:

1) Some critics argue that this scheme has increased labour costs and deficiency of agricultural labour in rural areas and burdens the big farmers due to increased input costs. But it not true completely as works under MGNREGA would be provided in non-agricultural season.

2) Some criticise that the infrastructure build under this scheme is not qualitative and does not suit for betterment of the rural areas.

3) Leakages, corruption and inordinate delays in payments. But this has also controlled with DBT and social auditing.

In any case, MGNREGA can be said as the most successful scheme for the welfare of the rural people. Its positive impacts are measurable with their bettered livelihood.

Topic:Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests,

5) Some argue that the international community and stakeholders including India should make peace with Taliban that is holding highly objectionable religious and political views. Do you support this? Shouldn't efforts be aimed at ensuring that the Taliban are defeated, both militarily and ideologically? Critically comment. (200 Words)

The Taliban is a group which demands governance in Afghanistan using violent means. The people of Afghanistan, USA, Pakistan, and India have been victims of their terrorist activities. However, in the recently conducted Doha Dialogue by the Pugwash Conferences, Taliban representatives have stated that they will be willing to give up arms and provide rights to women and children if they are made partners along with the Afghanistan Government in governing the country. India or any other country has no claims in the domestic issues of Afghanistan. However, as a regional power and as a victim of Taliban attacks, it is imperative that India takes part in the developments.

India needs to look at this issue in a statesmen-like manner. Taliban may not have any legitimacy to govern the area they have committed violence on. Hence, the only remedy could be to curb their activities and dismantle their organisation. But this has proved to be very difficult. NATO troops led by the USA were deployed for over a decade in Afghanistan and have failed to eliminate the Taliban. It is due to this reason that Taliban could be given a seat at the table for negotiations. Their demands need to be heard and further actions need to be taken. But, preconditions should be set that for such negotiations to happen, Taliban will completely give up violent means to harm their own countrymen or people of other countries.

Dealing with terror outfits is not a rare occurrence. India has had talks with various militancy organisations operating in the North-East to bring peace to the region. One example could be the Bodo Liberation Tigers surrendering their terrorist activities and forming the Bodo People's Progressive Front, a political party which takes part in democratic elections. Similarly, Taliban can also be transformed and when it cannot be eliminated, this is a safer way out to bring in peace in Afghanistan and its neighbourhood.

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

6) Do you think China is better placed than any other power including India in a post-sanctions Iran? Analyse. (200 Words)

The lifting of nuclear sanctions on Iran is being seen as an opportunity where China can play greater role in dealing with Iran than any other country because:

- China proposed modification in Arak nuclear reactor of Iran in order to resolve the deadlock between P5+1 and Iran
- China continued to engage with Iran in economic terms despite the sanctions imposed by western powers e.g. trade in oil, arms, nuclear technology transfer
- China has regarded Iran as an important player in One Belt-One Road initiative and there are plan to construct a railway line to link China and Tehran
- India acceded to US and reduced the level of engagement with Iran during the sanction era thus giving an upper hand to China in dealing with Iran
- China's image in Middle East is quite clean with no history of misadventures unlike US and Russia

However, there are certain counters to this argument-

- Post-sanctions Iran is free to negotiate with any country according to the cost-benefit ratio of every deal and thus can engage with any country
- European companies are also keen to do business with Iran that can sideline China

Thus, it can be said that even though China stood along with Iran during the tough time, a free Iran may decide the priorities on its own and actual events will unfold with progress of time.

Topic: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability,

2) “The Lodha Committee report has the power to become the lodestone through which India’s substandard sports governance can be reined in.” Discuss. (200 Words)

Sports governance in India today suffers from the following problems

1. Corruption in fund management
2. Collusion, nepotism in players selection
3. Rampant betting
4. Centrality of money making than performance in the game

How Lodha's committee recommendation on BCCI reforms can help change things

1. To reduce corruption,
 - a) it recommends bringing BCCI under RTI.
 - b) Creation of an ombudsman's office like Lokpal has been recommended
2. To reduce corruption and collusion
 - a) Each state has been given an equal voting right
 - b) Players selection will be done by a body of former players
3. To reduce political control and crony capitalism, it has been recommended to keep ministers and bureaucrats out of the governing bodies
4. In order to check illegal betting and match fixing, betting is proposed to be legalised so that it can be kept under better monitoring

Nonetheless, it needs to be remembered that these are only recommendations & may not be implemented. In order to bring further reforms, further steps are necessary such as

1. International collaboration required to check corruption at the highest levels such as the one found out in FIFA recently.
2. Public needs to voice its opinion to keep their game free from unethical practises
3. Sportsperson have better internal knowledge and command respect and popularity. Their forum should come out and highlight the corruptions

Topic:Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health,; Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes;

3) Do you think welfare schemes have played their role in improving the health of population in India? Critically analyse in the light of preliminary results of the National Family Health Survey-4. (200 Words)

The results of the NFHS-4 have been mixed. The impact social-welfare schemes have had on the health of population can be seen under the following heads –

1. Positives –

(i) Rise in increase of institutional deliveries – Can be attributed to JSY and JSSY which focused upon free and cashless delivery for pregnant women

(ii) Improvement in IMR and malnutrition rates of children – Can be attributed to the success of ICDS, Pulse-Polio programme, MDM Scheme which focused upon improving mother-child nutrition levels

(iii) Decline in women with low BMI – Can be attributed to schemes like MNGREGA which have mandatory requirement of 33% women's participation

(iv) Increase in full immunisation coverage – Result of increased awareness especially due to rising literacy levels among women as was found by NFHS-4

2. Negatives –

(i) Rising Out-of-pocket expenditures – Due to lower coverage of health insurance schemes like RSBY, low compensation under insurance schemes like IGOAPS etc.

(ii) State-wide variations in health and nutrition – Can be attributed to factors like shortages in ASHA workers, lower prevalence of PHC etc.

(iii) Rising obesity of women – Changing consumption patterns due to increasing income levels in rural areas as a result of MGNREGA, promotion of SHGs etc.

(iv) Rising hypertension of women – Increased financial independence has not synchronized well with gender sensitization programmes like National Mission of Empowerment of Women

Topic: Indian constitution – significant provisions; Functioning of judiciary

4) Contempt of court is one of the explicitly spelled out restrictions to the guaranteed right to freedom of speech under the Constitution. Do you think speech in criticism of the courts should be allowed without punishment in democracy like India? Critically comment. (200 Words)

Article 19 empowers us with the power of free speech and expression. But the same article limits our freedom on various grounds, which includes contempt of court.

Why this restriction is needed?

-Judiciary is the guarantor and protector of citizens rights. Contempt of court is against our own protector.

-Contempt of court may even lead to chaos and anarchy, as it may lead even to non implementation of judicial verdicts.

-Judiciary keeps checks and balances over both executive and legislature. So if contempt of court becomes a right, there is a chance that executives and legislatures may become uncontrollable.

-Citizens will lose their belief in judiciary system if contempt of court is encouraged.

Why the ambit of free speech should be increased even to the contempt of courts?

-Even judiciary system is not free within the holds of corruption and nepotism. Criticism of courts will probably help to maintain a check on corruptions in judiciary.

-In a democratic country like India, every citizen should have the complete right to criticize each and every machinery under which he/she is governed.

-Various acts like Contempt of courts Act 1971, are seen to be misused by the judiciary to shut the mouth of the public who tries to criticise the judicial system.

eg: Contempt of court case against Ms: Arundathi Roy

So, criticizing the judicial system has both positives and negatives. Honourable judicial system should understand that not every criticism is against our constitution. They should be able to differentiate between positive criticisms and actual contempt of court. And it is also our responsibility as citizens to respect our judiciary system as it is our protector of all our fundamental rights.

Topic: Functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

5) “As long as parties pursue their own political interests rather than abide by the Constitution, it will be left to the courts to uphold federal norms.” In the light of recent controversial instances of imposition of President’s rule in certain states based on Governor’s recommendations and the manner of appointing Governors, critically comment on the statement. (200 Words)

President's rule imposition in the states and manner of appointing the governor has been under scrutiny for long. There are some specific reasons for this :

Appointment of governor :

1. The constitution requires governor to be appointed by the president (on advice of COMs) , rather than being elected. This has led to the ruling party making misuse of the power to appoint their favorites to the position.
2. Persons which are appointed as governors often happen to be closely related to active politics, rather some eminent personality` ,as it should be, thus questioning the legitimacy and integrity of the office.

President's rule and related :

1. The governor has been accused of creating situations for dismantling the state government if it happens to be different party which is at the center, and thus calling for imposition of president's rule (Art 355 & 356). This, action militates against the spirit of federalism , and strives towards a unitary form of govt. Eg : Recent controversy in Arunachal Pradesh
2. Governors are accused of going beyond their discretionary powers, and stalling the welfare process of the state govt. This hinders the development process. Eg : Delhi CM-Lt.Governor controversy.

Though , this misrule is visible in today's era of rise of regional parties, but this is more of an exception rather being a rule. After the Bommai vs Union Judgement, regarding the judicial review, and honorable SC guidelines stating the conditions for president's rule, the cases of it have reduced drastically, and govt's both at the centre and state tend to work with cooperation and collaboration. The situation of

completely eliminating the misrule can be created by agreeing to Sarkaria commission's recommendation of appointing some eminent personality as a governor, instead of him being from the political circles.