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4) “The Right to Education, as an Act that vows to promote children’s right to education is itself potentially violating the same. It is also violating fee-paying children’s right to attend a school of their choice.” Critically comment. (200 Words)

2) In the light of the frequent violation of the right of innocent people to associate, assemble and give expression to dissent by the state agencies such as police, it is strongly argued that reforming the police is an urgent necessity. Critically comment. (200 Words)

3) Recently, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) barred telecom service providers from charging differential rates for data services. Discuss the implication of this ruling on consumers, tech companies and telecom operators. (200 Words)

2) In the light of Pakistan’s active participation in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), TAPI gas pipeline, its improved relations with Iran and its role in Afghanistan peace process, it is argued that India is being bypassed in the region. Do you agree? What should be India’s approach to these regional issues? Critically comment. (200 Words)

3) “Unless the Supreme Court completes its unfinished agenda of limiting the scope for partisan federalism through the strong enforcement of neutral constitutional rules on the appointment of Governors and the exercise of their powers, there is little possibility that cooperative federalism can define Centre-State relations in India.” What do you understand by this statement? Explain. (200 Words)

4) Recently the Finance Ministry withdrew customs duty exemptions for 76 life-saving drugs. How will this decision affect patients and pharma companies in India? Examine. (200 Words)

2) Over the years the scope of the public interest litigation (PIL) has expanded to include matters that affect collective rights. Critics argue that the scope of PIL should be limited to its original constituents. Critically examine how PIL has increased its scope, the issues this has given rise to and the need for limiting it to its original constituents. (200 Words)
3) In the light of recent controversy over Free Basics, it is argued that the efforts to improve the access of poor people to knowledge need to be directly targeted to poor groups, rather than relying on prevailing processes of knowledge diffusion, which may simply reflect, and reinforce, existing inequities. Do you agree with this argument? Substantiate. (200 Words)

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

2) It is said that over a year on, NITI Aayog’s usefulness and purpose remain unfortunately unclear. Do you agree? Comment. (200 Words)

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

3) In your opinion, how’s India’s improving relations with UAE benefiting it? Critically examine. (200 Words)

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

3) In recent years, the issue of regulation of doctors and private hospitals has become important for the citizens. In this regard, critically examine the major issues and suggest what needs to be done to prevent and address the malpractices and abuses that are widely prevalent in the country. (200 Words)

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

4) Discuss why China’s relations with Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have grown enormously in recent years whereas India lags in its approach to the region. Also examine why engaging deeply with LAC is important for India. (200 Words)

**Topic:** Issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure; Functioning of the Executive

5) Critically analyse the role of the President of India in promulgating Article 356 of the Indian Constitution. In the light of frequent violations in using Article 356, do you think it should be repealed? Justify. (200 Words)

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

3) Critically evaluate the objectives and implementation of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act. (200 Words)

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

4) “The attempt to improve higher education must begin with primary schools.” Comment. (200 Words)

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

2) Energy security is a key ingredient of India’s interest in West Asia and it is said that India’s increasingly multidimensional relations with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states buttress
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Topic: Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure. ........................................................................................................................................60

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5) Recently, forest rights of tribals over their traditional lands in Ghatbarra village of Surguja district were taken away by the Chhattisgarh government to facilitate coal mining there. Do you support this policy? In the light of provisions of Forest Rights Act, critically comment. (200 Words) ........................................................................................................................................64

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2) In the light of increasing demand by dominant castes to include them in OBC list, it is now argued that adopting a non-political and pragmatic approach to reservations is necessary to stop non-deserving sections of population from accruing reservation benefits. In your opinion, in this regard, what approaches can be non-political and pragmatic? Critically discuss. (200 Words) ................................................................. 80

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3) In India, health care remains heavily skewed against the poor. To address this problem, price controls remain an effective answer to ensuring affordability. In this regard, examine the loopholes in drug pricing policy in India and how India can create an accessible and affordable health-care system. (200 Words) ................................................................. 81

Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation. ................................................................. 83

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3) India’s solar power programme has come under intense scrutiny by global political and business leaders, especially given its aggressive intent and extensive trade opportunities. In this regard, recently WTO ruled against India saying India’s solar ambition is against trade rules. Critically comment on this ruling and examine the issues the ruling has given rise to. (200 Words) ................................................................. 88

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General Studies: Paper-2

Topic: Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries

2) Compare and contrast the features of democratic systems of India and USA. (200 Words)

India and USA as the largest and the oldest democracies of the world respectively have played an important role in espousing the cause of democracy. While both of them follow the basic tenets of democracy with the "Government of the people, by the people, for the people", the systems employed by them to achieve this diktat are different. The main differences include:

1. USA follows the presidential system of government where the president is the real head of the state and elected indirectly through an electoral college. India follows the parliamentary system of government where the president is the nominal head while the prime minister is the real head of government.
2. There is complete separation of power between the legislature, judiciary and the executive in USA while in India the executive is part of the legislature and remains in power as long as the Lok Sabha has confidence in it.
3. There exists more specialization in the American President's cabinet as they are chosen by the president and need not be members of congress. In India, however even the ministers need to part of the parliament.
4. In the American constitution, the president can bypass the decision of the congress and bring in a certain order. For instance an American president can wage a war without approval from congress. However the congress can override the veto by 2/3rds vote. In India, the president can issue an ordinance after consultation with the PM and the council of ministers only if the parliament is not in session.
5. In the American system, the house of representatives change every two years, so a president can find himself in a situation where he has no support in the house of representatives. In India, each member of parliament holds office for a period of five years and such a situation is not possible.

6. America has a federal system where each state in USA has a separate constitution. The Indian system can be said to be an exercise in co-operative federalism. No other state except J&K has a separate constitution.

**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) Eradicating malnutrition is a precondition for India to realize its economic potential. Discuss how malnutrition affects country’s growth and recent NFHS-4 revelations on malnutrition in India. (200 Words)

Malnutrition is a condition due to lack of adequate nutrition in the diet leading to stunting, wasting and mortality.

It deprives people in realising their true potential, increases the health burden and impoverishes them. It is quite dangerous when below age 5 children doesn't receive proper nutrition causing irreversible damages in the child mental and physical being. Proper nutrition for pregnancy women is a must for healthy child. The ripples of malnutrition could be felt in the all walks of those effected by it.

Premature deaths, loss of productive man hours, chronic poverty, increase in health burden, catastrophic failure are the immediate consequences. All these robs the person of his economic, creative and social strength and country looses productive manpower. Economic growth and development agenda are strongly linked with the healthy being of the citizen.

Recent NFHS-4 throws positive light on this front in the below 5 age group. Stunting has fallen to 37% and wasting by 22%. Government health interventions like Integrated Children Development Scheme, Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram, Janani Suraksha Yojana, Mid Day Meals are validated by these positive results. National Health Mission with its rural and urban components is strengthening the primary health care. Swatch Bharat Abhigyan is improving the non-core health interventions.

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However, still India need to produce concrete results to subjugate the poverty menace to improve overall HDI which stands at 130. Targeted efforts with integrated approach to plug the fragmented policies is the need of the hour. frequently constituting NFHS could provide valid feedback to intervene.

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

4) It is said that the public universities in India are becoming insecure, narrow-minded and conservative. Critically examine why. What steps would you suggest to improve the status of public universities? (200 Words)

Caste system, age old prejudices and non flexibility to changes/ rigidness are the main causes which are responsible for our esteemed public universities becoming insecure, narrow minded and conservative

Reasons:

-> reservations has emasculated the age old domination of homogenous demographic of universities, where mostly upper an dominant castes used to study earlier

-> this breaching of elite's monopoly is creating tensions, because of entrenched castes system

-> liberal elite who can afford to be vocal are not rain the issue on account of their antipathy towards these public institutions; they can afford to ignore this and engage in first-world fees

-> increasing privatisation of higher education is seriously undermining state institutions

-> involvement of politicians in this lucrative education business sector has already seriously eroded the governance structure in this neglected field

To improve the status of public universities, some suggested steps:

-> more involvement of academicians in framing the education policies

-> more autonomy for these state institutions

-> increase funding in education sector

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there must be wider debate on the caste system in our country. No modern liberal country can afford to write a great economic story unless this age old, regressive system is weakened or completely finished in coming years.

our politicians leaders and leading academicians should take some blame for overlooking these tensions at our institutions.

there should be shift towards public discourse from so called 'make in india' to 'make India first'.

Unless some agent steps are not taken in near future, we must be ready to write obituaries of our august public institutions.

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

5) In your opinion, what should be the broad objectives of education? Do you think the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) has achieved these objectives? What suggestions would you like to give to the New Education Policy? Discuss. (200 Words)

In my opinion, the broad objectives of education should be:

1- Providing skills for professional growth.

2- Providing skills of life focussing on maturity and emotional attitude.

3- Providing skills to build her/his strong character to become a good human being.

The National Curriculum Framework has largely been failed to achieve so:

1- No linkage between Industry-Academic Institutions have forced graduates to do on-job training. National Employability Report (2014) founded that only 18% of engineering graduates are employable.

2- Focus on building an individual as a good human being has been largely neglected and as a result we see even a highly successful in professional life indulging into inhumane activities like tax evasion etc.
3- Emotional building aspect has also neglected, especially after the primary education. We can see that there is an increasing trend in suicides like in Kota due to exam pressure etc.

New Education Policy (NEP) should take care of following issues:
1- Emotional Aspect: Parents and teachers should experiment with the students in finding out their areas of interests like maths or history or whatever and endeavour her/him to excel in that field. In addition, continuous attachment and contact between parents, students and teachers should be ensured.
2- Good human being: Ethical practices such as switch off lights and fans when going outside etc, fundamental duties enlisted in our constitution should be included in the syllabus as well as inculcated in behaviour. For this, NEP should assign weightage on practical aspects.
3- Profession: Linking Skill India Mission with the universities so that extra years should not be wasted in learning skill after graduation. Moreover, Academia-Research Institution linkage should also be given priority.

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

6) Recently the International Monetary Fund made country quota reforms agreed by the G20 in 2010 a reality. Examine why this is an important step and what more needs to be done to reform IMF. (200 Words)

The reform push at IMF for some many years has been finally implemented by transferring of voting rights from advanced economies to emerging economies such as Brazil, India and China, making them the top ten quota holders at the global financial watchdog, along side the developed economies. This is an important step for the following reasons.

---Checking the unjustified dominance of the West in global financial system, including IMF: the US and its European allies had disproportionate says in functioning, lending, making and revisions of policies and rules at IMF. Virtually every lending decisions of IMF had to be sanctioned by the US, which was often influenced by the later geo-political interests, for ex, in case of lending to a friendly country-Greece being the latest example. The result is piling up of a lot of bad loans.

---Critical for the relevance of the IMF own existence: adjusting to the changing geo-political and economic realities of the new world order with the emergence of new economic power like China and India, is critical to the relevance of multilateral institutions like IMF. Failing this, they would be forced to frame their own institutions, like the latest one, AIIB or BRICs
Banks, which will significantly reduce the relevance and influence of IMF in setting the financial world order.

---Greater devolution of funds to meet the financial needs of the developing and the least developed world: Developing countries like India are in dire need of finances to fund their infrastructure and sectoral needs. Greater voting rights would mean they would have greater say in lending decisions at the IMF, which they could use to meet their financial needs.

However, the recent reforms fall short of making any significant and promising change in the order at the IMF as it is too inadequate. Therefore, the need is for more reforms push, some of which are mentioned below.
1. Voting rights should be allocated among members based prominently on their respective GDPs, as in the newly established AIIB... An approx 16% share of quota to the US doesn't suit it by any standard.
2. The lending decisions at IMF must take place by majority vote, in a transparent manner, with fair and equitable participation of all members, and not at the whims and fancies of the US, with weight-age to their respective votes, based on their respective quotas.
3. The IMF must work towards reducing the disproportionate dominance of currencies of the Western nations in the international exchange market. It could do it by expanding the Special Drawing Rights (SDR) Basket by including some suitable currencies.

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

3) It is said that at both school and college levels, the state of private higher education is critical in India. Examine the reasons. Do you think complete government control over private schools and colleges would reform them? Critically comment. (200 Words)

The reasons behind the consideration that the State of private education is critical in India are –

1. Financial – Public spending in education is less than 4% of GDP while the Kothari Committee had recommended at least 6% of GDP, where the private sector can play a significant role

2. Curriculum-framework - Private players can ensure greater course-alignment with respect to present and future
3. Issues with quality-control in public schools – Poor standards had prompted the Allahabad HC to direct politicians and bureaucrats to send their children to public schools

4. Proliferation of colleges – In higher education, numerous sub-standard colleges have cropped-up primarily in the engineering and science fields

5. World-class institutions – In most Western countries, world-class universities are primarily privately-backed and hence enjoy greater autonomy

Although increased government control holds the advantage of better-regulation, addressing issues related to affiliation, equal focus on all streams such as science, commerce, humanities etc. it must be understood that over-regulation would stifle innovation in institutes, may promote nepotism in appointments etc.

Hence, the following measures can be adopted –

1. Industry-university linkages by allowing colleges to undertake specific projects from corporate-sector

2. Bifurcation of responsibilities regarding quality control on one hand and management, skill up gradation, ethical framework etc. as recommended by 2nd ARC

3. Mandatory accreditation of private institutions as recommended by Yashpal Committee

Such measures would ensure a balance between government-regulation and private-participation in education which would ultimately benefit education sector in India.

**Topic:** Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to health; Mandate of international organizations

4) In recent years global emergencies have been declared over the outbreak of viral diseases in different parts of the world. Give an account of causes and consequences of such diseases, the role of international agencies in handling them and the ethical issues they have posed to governments and institutions. (200 Words)

The WHO has declared emergencies in recent years in the cases of polio, H1N1 and Ebola. Now Zika virus emerged in Latin american countries has been declared as another global emergencies.
Fundamentally these diseases are of poverty. Absence of Safe running water, hygiene, sanitation and housing. Climate change, temperatures rise and rain patterns change has expanded the regions (tropical belt conditions) where mosquitoes can thrive and spread disease.

As result mosquito borne diseases are now the most important disease worldwide, Dengue alone infecting 50 to 100 million per year and killing 22,000, mostly children. Ebola has killed more than 11000 people in Africa.

WHO and other international organization has played a great role through declaring them global emergencies, providing vaccination (GAVI alliance), and mobilizing resources, collaborative effort in research as well.

The various ethical issues include allowing testing on vulnerable section like pregnant women in case of Zika virus. Use of DDT to control mosquitoes also involve ethical dimension as it’s harmful for environment and already Banned across world.

**Topic: Indian constitution – significant provisions; Functioning of legislature and judiciary**

5) “India remains among the few countries with a constitutional commitment to a liberal democracy that nevertheless lacks comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation.” Identify the issues that are holding back India from making it a true liberal democracy and the role of legislature and judiciary in making it one. (200 Words)

True liberal democracy that seeks to serve the aspiration of people, ensures harmony among masses and promotes rationalism still needs to be ensured. Following are the issues that hold back from realization of this true liberal democracy:

* Discrimination-Discrimination against women and lower strata of the society continues despite tough legislation and constitutional guarantees e.g. Dalits being not allowed to enter into temple and called as 'impure'

* Communalism-Progressive rational and scientific ideas are not accepted well by the fringe groups that back fire against such ideas as evident by murder of Dabholkar and Pansare

* Sedition and Defamation-Legislative sections have become a ploy in government authorities that seek to use the relevant section of IPC (124, 499 & 500) to save themselves from desired criticism e.g. arrest of cartoonist Aseem Trivedi

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* LGBT rights- Transgender has been accepted as a third gender but these communities have not been allowed to consummate under Section 377 of IPC

In wake of all these issues, the legislature and judiciary can play the following role-

* Enact laws to further the pro-people agenda and the notion of equality

* Judiciary should indulge in 'activism' to correct any shortcomings in the law

* Decisions on sensitive issues should be taken by a higher bench of judiciary and in tune with modern trends

A true liberal democracy is must for realizing the potential of people and avoiding any kind of psychological crisis.

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

6) In the light of its tenth anniversary, critically evaluate the performance of MGNREGA scheme. Do you think it’s time to redesign the scheme to make it relevant to emerging challenges such as the ones posed by climate change? Comment. (20 Words)

MGNREGA guarantee "Right To Work" for atleast one member of family for 100 days annually, 150 days for SC/STs during non-agricultural seasons. Employment provided within 15 days of enrollment, failing to which the government will give unemployment wages to work-seekers.

Success of MGNREGA :-

1. Reduced the distress in indian agriculture & economy due low agricultural productivity & small land-holding size thus provided them better livelihood opportunities.

2. Most of MGREGA work is directed towards building irrigation canals, tanks etc. thus provides resources base for further rural development.

3. reduced rural distress & intensive urban migration.

4. provision like work upto 5 km from home, equal wages promotes women empowerment, gender parity & directed towards backward section of society.

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Challenges Faced:

1. Corruption, leakages & inordinate delay of wages.
2. Uneven implementation across states.
3. The average work days generated is much less than stipulated 100 days.

How MGNREGS can address some emerging challenges like climate change:

1. Directing MGNREGS works towards afforestation programs.
2. Linking it with watershed management programmes like Neeranchal.
3. Helping in reviving of wetlands to enhance flood control, water purification & creating artificial wetlands for treatment of household sewage & agricultural effluents.

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

7) Critically analyse the design and intentions of ‘One Belt, One Road’ (OBOR) initiative of China and examine if this initiative poses threat to India’s interests in Asia. (200 Words)

The celebrated revival of the Silk Road would seem to herald the return of China’s charm offensive, winning over neighbors and other countries in the region through increased trade incentives and transport connectivity.

**Design**

It has two main components-

1. Land based silk road economic belt
2. Oceanic Maritime silk road.

So Ports, roads and railways would be developed.

**Intention**

China lives in a tough neighborhood, sharing a long contiguous land border with Russia and India (with which it has unresolved land boundary disputes) and a common sea boundary with Japan (with which it has unresolved territorial and maritime disputes). As such, SREB/MSR could possibly be seen as a strategy to circumvent any encirclement or
containment that a hostile power in concert with other states may undertake to harm China’s interests.

The SREB/MSR project with its land and maritime path components promises to better connect China with the Middle East, Africa and Europe through its landlocked neighbors in Central Asia and the littoral states of Southeast and South Asia. It spreads the risk by multiplying access routes, thus reducing China’s vulnerabilities. The system of ports, railways and roads, which have variously been completed, or are under construction or being proposed, will enable China to diversify the routes by which it can secure the transport of oil and gas and other essential goods needed to sustain China’s economy. It enhances the country’s energy and economic security and mitigates the risks attendant to transporting fuel and goods through unstable, unsecured or unfriendly channels. For instance, the establishment or proposed establishment of transport corridors via Pakistan (through the Chinese-operated Gwadar Port, and then by proposed railway to link the Sino-Pakistani-built Karakoram Highway and ultimately western China), Myanmar (through the Kyaukphyu Port then through the railway and pipeline to Yunnan, which are under construction) and Thailand (through the proposed Chinese-funded Kra Isthmus project) will enable China to reduce its dependency on the Strait of Malacca chokepoint. Developing pipelines to get oil and gas directly from Russia and Central Asia to power western China also reduces its reliance on the volatile Middle East.

**Positives for India**

- Sponsor or financier for trade related infrastructure.
- The project has the potential to increase trade within South Asia, thereby leading to regional integration.

**Negatives for India**

- Regional integration could result in India losing hold over its neighbours like Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh.
- China’s presence in the Indian Ocean region through ports it is developing in Myanmar and Thailand.
- Dual use of ports - eg Pakistan’s invitation to China to setup naval base in Gwadar, recent stop over of Chinese submarine in Sri Lanka.

By staying away from OBOR India can’t stop Chinese intentions, on the other hand by actively participating in this scheme will help India in shaping OBOR as a binding force rather than an adversarial force.
Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations

2) What are the economic and strategic benefits that India will gain by building close ties with Myanmar? Also examine the advantages it has over China in building close relationship with Myanmar. (200 Words)

Myanmar is India's eastern neighbor, connecting Northeastern India to South East Asia. Thus, benefits of closer ties are

1. Economic:
   a. Provide connectivity to ASEAN region, thus providing greater access to market and trade across borders
   b. Economic and infrastructural development of India, especially north east region
   c. Implementation of Free trade agreement with ASEAN region.
   d. Promote energy gas supply and transportation via Kaladan multimodal project through Sittwe port

2. Strategic
   a. Counter China's growing influence in Myanmar, especially through Mekong Ganga cooperation, where China acts as upper riparian state against both neighbours
   b. Compliment India's Act East policy
   c. Check insurgency along porous borders, thus ushering stability in North east
   d. Promote regional integration through BCIM corridor

The advantages over China include

1. Myanmar is progressing towards democracy, which promotes convergence of interests
2. While Chinese investments are imperialistic, India adopts a cooperative approach
3. Myanmar leadership especially Aung Sang Suu Kyi has closer relationship with India

Thus, India can provide regional leadership by closer cooperation with Myanmar.
Topic: Issues relating to poverty and hunger; Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes

2) Discuss the hunger, food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture related Sustainable development goals (SDGs) and examine the ability of India’s ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) and other related schemes in helping India achieve these goals. Suggest how can India meet SDG targets related to hunger and malnutrition. (200 Words)

SDGs are universally agreed intergovernmental set of aspiration Goals with 169 targets. Which aims to end Hunger by ensuring access to adequate food especially for vulnerable and poor people, end all forms of Malnutrition, Poverty, achieve Sustainable Agriculture, Universal education, Reduce Inequality, Good Health etc.

Abilities of India's schemes:

1.) Hunger, Food security, Malnutrition:

To tackle the Hunger & Malnutrition successive governments have rolled out various schemes. ICDS, MDM, NFSA 2013, PDS system etc. helped in reduction in Malnutrition, Stunting, Wasting and ensured cheap food grains for almost 2/3 population of country.

2.) Sustainable Agriculture: The persistent efforts of the government for sustainable agriculture are appreciable. The schemes like Soil Health card, KCC, PMKSY, PMFBY, and augmentation by satellite imaging, remote sensing and forecasting are the steps in right direction. Recently, Sikkim achieved the status of "fully organic" state in terms of agricultural produce.

3.) Healthcare and Universal education: Although the spending on the healthcare and education in India is only 1% and 3% of GDP but the success Polio eradication and decreasing drop-outs with legislation like Right to Education are positive indicators.

How can India meet the targets related to Hunger and malnutrition:

> Use of DBT for efficient delivery (efficient use of JAM trinity)

> Proper Identification of beneficiary through Biometric (Adhar)
> Focusing on Millets and cereals in MDM and increasing pulse productivity and area under pulse through proper MSP.

> Regular Health checkups, strengthening NGOs, ASHA workers, increase the institutional delivery and ante-natal facilities.

> Delivery of Diet-Charts at schools, anganwadi centers etc. and regular data collection.

A healthy demographic dividend of India can lead to development at par with developed countries. Hence a Swift and steady approach is required to ensure the attainment of SDGs by 2030.

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

3) The Forest Rights Act (2006) and the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (1996) have established a framework for local self-governance in demarcated (or “scheduled”) areas, yet their full implementation is fraught with many challenges. Critically analyse these challenges and suggest ways to overcome them.

(200 Words)

Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) and The Forest Rights Act (2006) both were hailed as landmark act as they enforced the spirit of decentralized governance. Empowered gram sabha to take decisions pertaining to community endowments (land, water, mineral, forest). Ensured state laws will be in accordance with customary rights of the native people.

However over a decade later they are facing multiple challenges. In case of PESA first issue is that state and district has not ceded its power resulting parallel power channel. Financial autonomy is merely on paper. Most of time consultation in for name sake. Mandatory governor report in not being prepared. Corruption, capture of power by few local elite, ignorance wrt provision of PESA, low level of women participation further hamper the cause.

In case of FRA forest officer don’t want to cede their power major reason for bottleneck. Further absence of land record, low literacy, corruption and collusion between elite and officer derail the process. While individual right recognized most often community right (pasture land, lakes) not given importance. Slow implementation (MP only 23% land yet
distributed after 10 years) cumbersome process adds to woes. State override FRA clause under development pretext without adequate compensation and rehabilitation

Amendment of state laws in accordance with two laws. Empowering Gram sabha (financially, training, providing information). Recruiting more officers from the community. Governor report should be prepared on time. Fast track court to solve land grabbing issue. Participation of civil society and activist judiciary further add teeth to the twin laws which epitomize real swaraj as envisioned by Gandhiji.

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

4) Discuss how local communities and local governments can be instrumental in ensuring delivery of quality education in local schools. (200 Words)

Local communities and local governments can ensure good quality of education delivery through the following –

1. Local communities –

   (i) The School Management Committees (SMCs), setup under the RTE Act, which mostly consist of parents can ensure greater accountability of teachers

   (ii) Local communities can play an important role in revamping school infrastructure, especially in rural areas under schemes like MGNREGA

   (iii) People’s movement to support education of girl child by popularizing schemes like Sabla, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao etc.

   (iv) Local communities can help with issues of language-barrier which students from different communities face during initial years

   (v) Provide for holistic education through inclusion of environmental education, disaster management, traditional knowledge etc.

2. Local governments –

   (i) Panchayats can link-up of primary education with schemes like ICDS as ‘Education, including primary and schools’ falls under 11th Schedule
(ii) Representatives from Gram Sabha can conduct Social Audit of various educational programmes like Sarva Siksha Abhiyan

(iii) Effective monitoring of provisions of MDM Scheme so that mishaps like the one in Bihar don’t occur

(iv) Can act as facilitators for private players looking to setup schools in the vicinity

(v) Can disseminate information about scholarship programmes (e.g. KVPY) and mediate between government and students

Hence, a combined effort by the two stakeholders can ensure enhancement of education system at primary and secondary levels.

**Topic:** Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

5) In the light of recent events where Governors are accused of misusing their powers, discuss the constitutional proprieties that should guide a Governor’s word and deed. (200 Words)

Under Art 168, the Governor is considered part of the State Legislature which the body responsible for discharging governmental functions. However, the post of Governor has seen numerous controversies. Hence it is necessary for the Governor to Act according to Constitutional proprieties such as –

1. Appointment – The Constituent Assembly had provided for nomination and not election of the governor to prevent provincial separatist tendencies

2. Furnishing of information to Governor by CM - The provisions under Art 167 must not be interpreted as giving Governor the right to veto proposals of Council of Ministers

3. Discharging of Executive functions – The governor is not the office for discharging executive functions individually or personally but it is the State government’s responsibility in accordance to Rules of Business under Art 166(3)

4. Centre-State relations – The governor should not be influenced by political considerations in reserving bills under Art 200. Here Punnchi Commission recommendations regarding a fixed time-limit may be adhered to
5. Emergency provisions – The Governor should adhere to SC guidelines laid under SR Bommai Case before reporting to the President regarding imposition of President’s Rule under Art 356

6. Dual responsibility – The SC in Rameshwar Prasad case had observed the dual responsibility of the Governor to Centre and State. Hence, sufficient provisions regarding security of tenure should be provided

Hence, considering the exalted position of Governor in Indian polity, it is prudent that he discharges his duties in accordance with the country’s highest legal and social document.

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

6) Discuss the future challenges that India might face in evacuating Indian diaspora from conflict ridden countries. How should India prepare for these challenges? (200 Words)

India has successfully evacuated Indian Diaspora from the conflict ridden situations in the past. 1990 Kuwait evacuation, Lebanon, Libya and recent one in the Yemen in 2015 have shown India’s concern towards Indian Diaspora settled in various countries abroad.

Some Future challenges in this respect are :-

1. Identifying the regions and situation around the world timely, where Indian diaspora can be in immediate danger. Strong external intelligence is first challenge.

2. Coordination with the respective governments in the emergency without any policy or sovereignty related conflict is next challenge.

3. Efficient networking and coordination between diplomats and armed forces to avoid any delay in crisis.

4. Identifying and prioritizing the Indians among NRIs, PIOs and ethnic Indians among the Diaspora would be a greater challenge.

5. Developing a sense of security among the masses settled abroad would be an important challenge as expectations in the Diaspora will always remain high.

India must prepare on following fronts to provide security to its diaspora:-

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1. India must engage the NRIs through various activities like visa facilities, recognition through conferences and awards etc.

2. At the same time Indian policies must not create and unwanted interventions in the policies of a foreign country, like as it happened in the case of Malaysia in 2007.

3. Differentiation among the NRIs, PIO card holders and Ethnic Indians must be very clear to prioritise the evacuation in the time of crisis.

4. Diplomats should pay more attentions to the bilateral and multilateral agreements involving the concerns of Indian diapora.

5. Naval ships, patrolling capacities and air lifting capacities must be increased.

6. Some policy intervention in using the private airline in the time of emergency can also be considered as it will further enhance the availability and will be helpful in timely response.

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

7) Do you think the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 has been successful in taking quality education to marginalised communities and reduce class distinctions in society? Suggest ideas to universalise education in India which can sustain without diluting its quality and harming weaker sections. (200 Words)

RTE (2009) has mandated schools to reserve 25% seats for the students from weaker and marginalised sections. There are various studies which evaluated RTE on its objective of right to equitable quality access:

1- EQUITY: Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) has shown that enrolment in private schools has been increased from 18.7% (2006) to 30.8% (2014). However, another report claimed that only 16% of SCs and STs are enrolled in private schools. So, it is reasonable to assume that share of these marginalised categories have not been improved much. Further, Many private schools still are not following RTE mandate which is reflected in the state of UP where only 12 out of 75 districts show alignment to the RTE.
2- QUALITY : ASER further noted that 50% of the students can not do basic maths or read a story even after completing her/his elementary education.

3- LITERACY : SCs and STs are lagged behind in literacy rate from the national average by a margin of 9% and 17.4% respectively. In addition, female literacy rate is 19.4% lesser than their male counterpart.

4- ACCESS : Kerela has become the first state to achieve 100% enrolment in primary education for all section of society.

In my opinion, government could consider following ideas:
1- Exempting the schools from education tax/cess which completes 25% admission from marginalised sections under RTE act.
2- Government should actively support and promote minority institutions as envisaged in our constitution. On the same line, government can also consider LGBT specific institutions served by quality teachers recruited from various government exams.
3- Government can make "compulsory sending of their children to schools by parents" as an eligible condition for qualification to fight various elections, seek public sector jobs etc.
4- Kothari Commission recommendation of Common School System to bring various sections of society under one can be revisited. However, it seems virtually impossible in view of current discourse of education.
5- List of marginalised sections under RTE act should be clearly specified and must include children from sex workers, LGBT communities, Minority and disabled sections.
6- Finally, strict monitoring and outcome-oriented implementation of RTE act would go a long way to achieve a goal of welfare state as envisaged in DPSP of our constitution.

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

3) There is widespread grassroots opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in many countries. Discuss the reasons. What’s India’s stand on TPP? Examine. (200 Words)

Conclusion of TPP with the major countries like USA, Canada, Mexico, Japan, Vietnam, Chile, Australia etc., shows the changing patterns of global trade based on multilateral agreements. It accounts for nearly 50% of the global GDP comprising major powerhouses of the world.

Reasons for opposing TPP:
1) TPP includes obligations on ‘new issues’ such as labour, investment, environment, e-commerce, competition and government procurement. All these are the favourable steps for developed countries mitigating the interests of the developing countries.

2) TPP will lead to proliferation of private standards which are heavily tilted towards the interests of developed countries.

3) Strict implementation of intellectual property regime that is being practiced in advanced countries. This will obstruct the exemptions given to developing countries in TRIPS agreement, and thus, their economies.

4) Clauses like 'Rule of Origin' seriously obstructs the trade among the members and non-members of the TPP.

5) It is being criticised for building alternative global trade regime bypassing WTO regulations and threatening its relevance as a whole.

6) Unilateral ideation and declaration and lack of transparency in functioning.

7) Strict domain of USA creates loss of flexibility and decision making of developing countries.

India's stance:

1) What if India does not join TPP:
   > India might witness diversions in trade and foreign investments and decline in the outsourcing services from India.
   > The rules like ‘Yarn forward rule’ and ‘Rule of Origin’ rules our inclusion of any other countries outside that of the trade agreement for availing duty preference, which in turn makes India in-competitive.
   > Hurt market access benefit and have an adverse impact on other products such as processed food, heavy manufacturing, crops, sugar, vegetables, fruits etc.
   > Companies might be interested in reaping benefits of an open and inviting market of TPP member countries.

2) What if India joins TPP
   > Chances of India experiencing export gains, but in the longer run.
   > Countries with which India has signed FTA's may not suffer trade disadvantage.
   > India's output may also increase lending the employment generating sectors like textile, leather, fish, dairy etc.
> Mandate of high global standards of TPP makes Indian companies to adopt new technologies and makes them efficient and reduce carbon footprint in the economy.

> However, suffers from ever-greening of patents and delay the entry of generic medicines.

3) Safeguards for India

> Concluding bilateral agreements and multilateral agreements like Broad Based Trade and Investment with EU, RCEP, SAFTA etc.

> High degree of preparedness and smart coalition-building with like-minded allies to bring violations of TPPs trade practices against WTO regulations to the the dispute settlement mechanism.

> Identifying trade interest areas and propose alternative negotiating templates like bio-piracy, protection of traditional knowledge as per TRIPS and CBD etc.

Whatsoever, the time has ripen for India to enhance its capabilities by way of infrastructural development and cost effectiveness of India's products to make them competitive in the global markets.

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

4) Is privatisation and foreign investment in higher education good for this sector? Critically analyse. (200 Words)

For long privatization of higher education sector supposed to be like magic bullet which are seen as remedy of present malaise.

The benefits are obvious better quality as a result of better infrastructure, faculty, global exposure and wider interaction with global peer. Will enhance life chances as the degree offered will have international recognition. Promises diverse subjects ranging from advance science to contemporary arts. Will set benchmarks for others to follow. Sow the seed of higher level research, cutting edge innovation which India sorely miss. In addition it can act as platform for faculty exchange between different institution resulting passings on of best practices. Will help india to reap rich its demographic dividend.

However its will pose following challenges. Question of equity will it further deepen the class divide existing in indian system. Current subsidy and scholarship wont be able to keep up
with their high fees. Furthermore how India will protect students from other language background. Locality will further highlight urban biasness.

Experience with private engineering colleges has not been very heartening. Many has become collusion ground of politicians and businessman with learning taking backseat. With lowered employability scams like Vyapam and DMAT ask for revamping higher education system. However first of all India need as regulator in this field in line of TRAI. Government has to formulate policy to answer question like equity, urban-rural divide and fees structure. Moreover need to ensure it opens field for all stream and not just few more engineering and management schools. Ultimately we need to revamp our own university the temple of modern India and private schools should supplement them.

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

5) “MGNREGA is not a cure for rural distress but only a palliative. A more sustained focus on raising productivity in rural areas is needed, but has been missing in successive governments.” In your opinion, what should be this ‘more sustained focus’ to help address rural distress? Should governments solely depend on MGNREGA to generate rural employment? Critically analyse. (200 Words)

Agriculture employs the greatest share of population in India and despite measures like National Policy on Farmers, the expected results have not been achieved and rural distress continues. In this regard, more sustained focus is needed on the following fronts-

* Agricultural markets: A unified Agriculture market with efforts to revamp the bureaucratic APMC in order to allow the farmers fetch better prices for their produce

* Agro-ecological planning: Farmers should be educated about the environmental needs of crop so that crops suitable to particular regions are grown. e.g. sugarcane is being wrongly grown in the Marathwada region

* Research and Development: Apart from rice and wheat, most other crops like pulses require R&D in order to produce drought-resistant varieties as major agriculture region is still rainfed
* Increasing awareness: Farmers must be informed about the required soil quality-proportion of nutrients, new technologies-System of Rice Intensification, benefits of crop rotation and government schemes through channels like DD Kisan, mKISAN and Soil Health Card

MNREGA, a scheme intended to provide unskilled manual work has addressed rural distress to some extent by constructing works related to rainwater harvesting techniques and agricultural productivity. Efforts should be made to continue to garner benefits from MNREGA.

However, sole dependence on MNREGA is not a god option in the long run as it seeks to build a culture of dependence and causes a drain on treasury. There are complaints about non-durable assets being constructed. Adequate measures must be taken on above mentioned fronts and rural people should be provided with relevant skills to allow them to take up jobs in industrial sector that has huge demand because of ’Make in India’ initiative.

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

3) India has ratified the international convention on nuclear energy accident liability, that was perceived as a barrier for foreign companies to invest in the country. What do you understand by nuclear liability? Discuss the implications of India signing this convention. (200 Words)

Nuclear liability is the legal obligation that holds parties involved in nuclear project, both operators and suppliers of equipment liable to pay for the damage caused to lives and environment in wake of any tragic nuclear incident. The liability is shared by parties depending upon their respective obligations mentioned under the local laws of a sovereign state governing the nuclear operation in the country.

Recently, India ratified the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, 1997 and it shall come into force after 90 days from today.

Various implication arising out of India signing the treaty are as follows:-

1. Boost to India's nuclear commerce: It will facilitate and boost India's nuclear commerce with international partners. While India signed nuclear treaty with the US in 2010, the US companies like General Electrics and others have been reticent to be part of any nuclear
projects because of terse domestic nuclear liability laws that hold suppliers responsible too, in event for any nuclear incident. The new convention which holds operator responsible, will address suppliers concerns and boost trade with other countries too.

2. Uniformity with the global nuclear liability regime: It will bring the domestic nuclear liability law in the line with the norm followed globally that puts the liability on the plant operators. The move will also provide for a proper channel to disburse compensations to the victims of nuclear incidents.

3. Enhance safety and management standard: it will encourage global cooperation with the domestic operators in promoting higher level of safety and maintenance standards in accordance with internationally followed principles.

However, the primary concerns of India with regard to liability of compensations on nuclear damage remains un-addressed. Many a times, it is the faulty designs of nuclear equipment and plants that are found to be responsible for nuclear leakages and subsequent damages. Adoption of the convention would not only put onerous responsibility on operators, but also free the suppliers from any penalty in case the finding report holds supplier’s defective designs as the reason for nuclear incident. This would mean suppliers could carry nuclear trade with impunity, in the event of no law holding it accountable.

**Topic:** India and its neighborhood- relations.

4) The process of promulgating a new Constitution in Nepal has severely affected India’s relations with the country. What flaws do you see in the way the Nepal constitution was drafted? Compare it with how India drafted its constitution. Also comment if India’s recent intervention in Nepal was unwarranted. (200 Words)

Nepal has recently promulgated its first republican constitution thus embarking new journey of constitutionalism. However, in this backdrop, there has been massive protest and differences over the constitution so drafted.

In this context, the following reasons could be pointed out as a source of difference:

1) Territorial demarcation and federal boundaries: It has divided the Madhesis and Tharu communities into seven federations in which they are kept in minority in all provinces. This has been rejected by the community, who basically has common cultural and traditional values, wish to be divided into two provinces.
2) Proportional representation: In which the communities such as Madhesis and Tharus are not given adequate representation in the Parliament. This has further been contested by these communities demanding adequate representation in the Parliament.

3) Citizenship: Granting of citizens has not been uniform in which Women who have been married to SAARC nation have not been given the right to naturalised citizenship.

However, the constitution of Nepal is far more advanced than the contemporary constitution which extends fundamental rights and equality to various communities such as LGBT communities. However, it is different from Indian constitution in the manner of drafting and giving equality right to every citizen of the nation. While Indian constitution had been drafted in which fundamental rights and equality has been extended to every minority and the separate provinces. Thus it respected the rights of minority which is manifested in the unity in diversity and acceptance to constitution by every citizens of the nation. However, Nepal has failed to guarantee the same which lead to massive protest and denial to the constitution thus enacted.

In this context, India has emphasized on the on giving equality to the Madhesi and Tharu community, who are culturally and socially closer to India. This has led to series of intervention which was dubbed as intervention to internal matter of Nepal. However, this should not be seen as intervention into internal matter but the wish and suggestion of India as a neighbour and a largest democracy who have mastered the rights of minorities.

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

5) “Three development banks—the AIIB, the EBRD and the NDB—point to the emergence of new centres of power and influence in the global financial architecture.” Discuss. Also examine India’s role in these new centres of power. (200 Words)

The recent emergence of new financial institutions like the NDB and the AIIB points to the shifting power and influence in the global financial architecture, which has so far been the fiefdom of the western world led by the US at its front. The implications of this can be mentioned as below.

------> A **transition from an uni-polar world to a multi-polar world** :- the emergence of new financial institutions like AIIB and NDB represents the beginning of a new financial order in a multi-polar world, posing a challenge to the uni-polar world that has existed till now due to
disproportionate dominance of the Western nations in almost all multilateral institutions in the world, be it the IMF, the WB or others. It would ensure protections and adequate representations of voices and interests of the developing and the under-developed world that have so far been subdued or ignored.

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A effective alternative to the Breton Wood institutions like the IMF and the WB: these new financial institutions present a serious alterantive to the Bretton Wood institutions - the IMF and the World Bank - that have enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the international monetary system designed in ways to serve the interests of the West, which has also helped it in exporting imperialism to the rest of the world that remains largely dependent on financial and credit helps from these West-established institutions to finance their borrowing needs.

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Tremendous help in meeting the financial needs of the developing and the least developed world: Developing countries like India are in dire need of finances to fund their infrastructure, the most critical to sustain their growth momentum in long term. Since, banks like AIIB have been set up to meet sector specific needs of infrastructure, this would ensure adequate and easy financing of funding requirements. Over-dependence on the western credit institutions has often come in exchange of certain compromises for the developing world - like currency devaluation, undue liberalization in trade and tariffs at the cost of interests of domestic producers. The new institutions would reduce dependence too.

India's role in the new financial order:
India being the face of the emerging economies in the world has the privilege of being among the top ten quota holders at the IMF at the one side while being the principal founding member, both at the NDB and the AIIB at the other side, which it could use to promote close cooperation between these financial institutions to jointly address the challenges of the new world, with special attention to the problems of the developing and the under-developed world. India enjoys cordial relations with both, the West and the opposing world led by China and Russia and hence it occupies an unique position in the multi-polar world. It could play a bridge between these two sides.

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

2) Critically analyse the social and economic impact of MGNREGA on rural households. (200 Words)

MGNREGA is a rights based employment scheme for improving livelihood security to rural poor. The impacts on rural households are
1. Social
da. Positive impacts:
   i) provided guaranteed employment for rural areas, thus improving their standard of living
   ii) provision for one-third women beneficiaries has enabled women empowerment
   iii) provision of social audit improves social capital among rural community
   iv) checked distress migration, especially during non-agricultural seasons
   v) helped empowerment of marginalised sections especially dalits
b. Negative impacts
   i) As gram panchayats are involved in identification of beneficiaries and planning, concerns of marginalised sections like dalits may be neglected due to dominance by upper castes

2. Economic
da. Positive impacts
   i) Improved financial security, by guaranteeing provision of work for 100 days
   ii) Boosted rural economy, thus increasing rural demand, providing impetus to MSMEs
   iii) promoted rural infrastructure, thus improving agricultural productivity
b. Negative impacts
   i) Pushed up rural wages, thus increasing input labour cost in agriculture, causing increased food prices
   ii) Poor quality of assets generated to low material:labour ratio
Recent initiatives like rationalising material:labour ratio and JAM integration will help MNREGA act as an agent of rural transformation.
Topic: Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections

3) It is said that the personal laws of various religions in India have contributed to and perpetuated gender inequality. Do you think courts have failed to ensure justice to women by not striking down personal laws? Critically comment. (200 Words)

The practises such as Triple Talaq, distorted succession right to property remind of the discriminatory laws against Women, and failure of the judicial system at large to overturn them.

Yet, the failure can’t be struck entirely on courts because

1. The courts have to balance the Right to Equality under Article 14, with the Right to Freedom of Religion, under Article 25, both of which are basic features of the Indian constitution

2. The courts can judge only on the evidence offered, mostly by the governments. In many instances, such as Kerala govt’s position over the Sabrimala Temple entry issue, has been pro-religio oriented

3. Shah Bano case- Even if courts strike down a law, the state can still counter it, by enacting new codes. This was seen when the Parliament codified the Muslim Women Act to “annul” the judgement to reform Muslim Personal Law in Shah Bano Case

4. The laws have no meaning unless they are implemented properly. In spite of various women empowering legislations today, women are still subjugated because of poor implementation and monitoring

Nonetheless, as seen as by the recent judgement of Delhi HC to allow women to be the “karta” of inherited business, the judiciary is still trying to reduce gender inequality, while balancing the right to religion. It is upto the legislature, state, and the civil society now to come up and implement women empowering laws
Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education, Human Resources.

4) “The Right to Education, as an Act that vows to promote children’s right to education is itself potentially violating the same. It is also violating fee-paying children’s right to attend a school of their choice.” Critically comment. (200 Words)

The Right to Education Act 2009 (RTE, Act) provides for free and compulsory education of children of the age group 6 to 14. Its objective was to provide free, compulsory and quality education to children. The act also provides reservation of 25 % seats for students from weaker section of society.

It faces following problems:

>> Ambiguity over liability for funds: While section 7 of the act says, Central and State govt shall have concurrent responsibility for providing funds. Section 8 further says, appropriate govt would provide for free and compulsory education, which includes inter alia students from "weaker section". So unaided schools find difficult to claim their fees accrued to "weaker section" students.

>> Poor quality forces migration to private school: Median fees in private schools in rural and urban areas are Rs 300 and Rs 416 per month respectively. In contrast, govt school spend Rs 1300 per student per month (only on teachers). Despite this quality of education is poor in govt schools (though private school are only marginally better), which forces parents to migrate to private schools.

>> Small private school facing fund crunch: Enforcement of act causing fund crunch to low fees private schools, as reimbursement is often delayed and sometimes withheld. This is evident from the fact that by March, 2012 about 4355 private schools had been closed.

>> Inequity in enforcement: While enforcement was stiff for private schools, same enthusiasm lacking for govt schools.

>> Dual closure compounding the problem: while private are closing due to funding and strict enforcement, govt schools are being closed due to poor quality (causing migration) and fewer students making them financially unviable.

What should be done:

>> Right to education should be extended to Right to Quality Education.
Govt schools funding should be linked with their performance (like no of student retention, quality of teaching etc).

Better parental information about school, so that both schools and parents remain aware about quality of education being offered.

Govt school has "dual responsibility"—— promoting mother tongue (vernacular language) and competing with private schools which are guided by market forces. This should change and they should allowed to compete freely.

Although private schools have genuine grievances, all is not well with private schools, many elite private school are charging premium and these school are resenting any interference. We should take multi-pronged approach while dealing with the problem, as future of are kids at stake.

**Topic:** Role of civil services in democracy

2) In the light of the frequent violation of the right of innocent people to associate, assemble and give expression to dissent by the state agencies such as police, it is strongly argued that reforming the police is an urgent necessity. Critically comment. (200 Words)

Police reforms, perhaps, have been a longstanding issue & I think it is the need and necessity of the hour to reform our police forces urgently because:

1- Violation of rights: There have been many instances where police has beaten the individual or their groups protesting silently thereby violating their fundamental right. Recently released video footage in Delhi confirms it.

2- Non-cooperation: National Commission for Women (NCW) has repeatedly been raising the issue of non-seriousness of police to cooperate cases filed in the NCW.

3- Brutality & Torture: Rise in number of custodial deaths in prisons revealed the brutal face of our protectors.

4- Untrained: Our police forces are severely untrained which is reflected in their inability to curb crimes.

5- Non-proactive attitude: Our police forces tends to curb crimes when it already happened and not to avoid crimes.
6- Gender disparity: Our police forces contain only 6% women. Wherever women are, they are not given the responsibility to investigate crimes.

However, reforming police alone would not solve the problem. We need multi-pronged approach:

1- Citizen participation: Our society needs to engage with police to help curb crimes effectively. For ex. In places with severe crowd, crimes can be tackled successfully if we keep updating police about the suspicious activities.

2- All Women Police Stations (AWPS): Like Haryana, every state needs to increase the AWPS to make our police forces more representative, sensitive & soften its image. Studies have shown, there has been an increase in number of reporting of crimes against women where ever AWPSs are functioning.

3- Technology: We need to equip our police forces with 21st century technology to prevent crimes in this digital age.

4- Accountability: We need to fix the accountability of police officers to prevent brutal treatment and torturing.

All these suggestions will help our country internally secure and progress towards a welfare state as enshrined in DPSP of our constitution.

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

3) Recently, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) barred telecom service providers from charging differential rates for data services. Discuss the implication of this ruling on consumers, tech companies and telecom operators. (200 Words)

According to recent ruling of TRAI:- No service provider can offer or charge discriminatory tariffs for data services on the basis of content, service, application or other data that a user is accessing or transmitting on the internet. But emergency services are kept out.

Implication on consumers:-

- Remove the monopoly of particular company and debarred them from cartel formation between companies and internet service providers thus enhance healthy competition and help to bring down service prices for middle and high income group.
But further it will widen the digital divide, as vulnerable ones too have to pay relatively high prices thus foster the digital inequality.

Provision of free data packs during emergency will act as helping hand during the disasters.

Provision to put forward detailed and clear scheme before launching, help the consumer to choose better among the same.

Enhance the uninterrupted flow of data and increase convenience to scroll among different contents in one pay.

Implication on tech companies:-

This bring huge revenue loss, because it refrain addition of another one billion in internet. E.g. facebook’s free basic and airtel’s zero plan.

It bring level playing field to companies related to e- business like amazon and flipkart. Also somewhere bring push up to start ups related to this field.

This will lead to tech companies to think about out of the box ideas like Google’s project loon which help to connect hinterlands with globe without breaching net neutrality.

Implication on telecom industries:-

For them too it is loss of heavy estimated revenue, so it can hampers the future investment in the telecom infrastructure.

Breach in regulations in any way can burdened them with high mounted fines.

Somewhere it also ensure these industries regarding the strict regulation over VOIP application like watsappt, as TRAI more bend toward providing indiscriminate field.

Being a democratic country equality and neutrality is very fundamental, therefore sound and effective policies are much needed to cherish the dream of digital india.
Topic: India and its neighborhood relations.

2) In the light of Pakistan’s active participation in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), TAPI gas pipeline, its improved relations with Iran and its role in Afghanistan peace process, it is argued that India is being bypassed in the region. Do you agree? What should be India’s approach to these regional issues? Critically comment. (200 Words)

Of late, Pakistan has been reviving its geopolitical stand form a "Failed state" to a emerging economy through active participation in various initiatives.

- Islamabad is likely to reap the benefits of the TAPI pipeline being developed by the ADB hence building the regional goodwill.

- The China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is an under construction $46 billion mega-project which is intended to upgrade and expand Pakistani infrastructure and would facilitate a greater integration with China.

- The recent dissolution of sanctions against Iran paved the way for Islamabad to enter into dialogue with Iran for Trade and regional co-operation.

- Also the Pakistan's involvement in afghan's politics could be a concern for India.

Apart from this pakistan's support for OBOR initiative, Port facility for china at Gwadar, and backing from USA makes it a close ally of two big powers of the globe.

However, as argued by experts, these developments are not to be considered as a setback for India and it far from "bypassing India". Indian investment in Afghanistan particularly in Infraatructure, and a strong foothold in Iran with flourishing strategic relation have potential to offset pakistan. Also the trade relations with china and trade relations with southeast asia can not be ignored. India has always stood by the side of smaller nations, her relation with Maldives,seychells,Bhutan,Myanmar,Vietnam,Phillipines have been healthy.

What should be India's Approach:

1. A rational approach towards the china's OBOR initiatives.

2. Capturing greater stakes in Iran's natural gas and oilfields.

3. Investment in Afghanistan to be continued and strengthening intelligence network in the area.

4. Swift movement in projects like KALADAN,Mekong ganga,Chahbahar port,Sagarmala.

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India stands at the doorstep of being a permanent UNSC member and regional power, a holistic foreign policy and well-defined National Security Doctorine would help meet her aspirations.

**Topic:** Issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure

3) “Unless the Supreme Court completes its unfinished agenda of limiting the scope for partisan federalism through the strong enforcement of neutral constitutional rules on the appointment of Governors and the exercise of their powers, there is little possibility that cooperative federalism can define Centre-State relations in India.” What do you understand by this statement? Explain. (200 Words)

Since decades, there is a crisis like situation in the governance of the States which are run by the opposition parties at the Centre. There is a kind of Cold War existing among them for the sake of political interests. As the Centre having an edge over States in our Constitutional set up like that of appointment of the Governor who works as the 'Agent of the Centre', it has been highly misused to mend these States. This has resulted in 'partisan federalism'.

**Issues:**

1) Appointment of Governors:

> This provision would be used by the Centre based on their whims and fancies to influence the States where other parties are in power.

> As the Governor holds office during the pleasure of the President, Governors of States, where opposition parties are in power, would be removed after a regime change.

> Giving non recognition to the apex court's interpretation that the Governor of a State could only be removed for reasons which included physical or mental disability, corruption, and behaviour unbecoming of a high constitutional office only, by the Centre.

2) Role of Governors:

> For the sake upholding Centre's interests over States, some Governor's are deviating from the neutral policy as a Constitutional head.
Sending unreasonable and illogical reports to the Centre calling President's rule, and that is the reason why Constitutional emergency was provoked in the States numerous times.

Improper interpretation of Constitutional mandate of ensuring smooth functioning of the State's administration in line with Constitutional framework, and digging loopholes for biased administration like deviating from the Floor Test of the government to observe support of the ruling party in the House, summoning the House and deciding agenda of the House beyond the advice of the Council of Ministers etc., thus, proliferating the conflicts in States authoritarian set up.

3) Financial relations:

Many governments have outlived the principles of cooperative federalism in the name of execution of Plans prepared by the Centre, and has left low autonomy for the States in their functioning.

The establishment of NITI Aayog would re-balance this issue by way of giving greater autonomy in preparing plans and programmes.

Implementation of FFC's recommendation of greater devolution of finances from the Centre's divisible pool of taxes.

Even after the Committees like Rajamannar and Sarkaria Commissions suggested for excluding persons with political background in the appointment of Governor, and Supreme Courts instructions on similar line, the Centre often bypassed these for their political interests. Now, the time has ripen for the apex court to end this menace and ensure fair working of the Constitutional mechanism.

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

4) Recently the Finance Ministry withdrew customs duty exemptions for 76 life-saving drugs. How will this decision affect patients and pharma companies in India? Examine. (200 Words)

Recent decision to withdraw customs duty exemptions for 76 life-saving drugs have multifaceted implications on both patients and pharma companies -

Patients -
->Increased Cost - Cost of these drugs will rise adding to economic burden the patients already face.
Doctors - Few doctors suggest usage of imported drugs in spite of availability of local versions forcing patients to add more burden on their purse.

Not Covered under insurance - Many patients are not covered under proper insurance schemes and rely on their savings or debt to meet health expenditure. Increased cost pushes them into the debt cycle.

Trust - Though local versions are available, it will be difficult for patients already using the imported ones to shift to the local versions.

Pharma companies -

Costly imported versions increase the demand for cheap locally produced drugs.

Increase in customs duty on active pharmaceutical ingredients gives some relief for domestic industry which is facing heavy competition from cheap Chinese imports.

Pharma companies will change their strategy from exporting the drugs to improving the sales in Indian market.

Strengthening the tax structure to boost the domestic production clubbed with Make In India and Start Up Mission will lead to flourishing pharma industry.

More revenue from increased demand accompanied by govt support will encourage pharma companies to invest in R & D.

Though, removing custom duty exemptions is welcomed by Pharma companies, govt should be cautious and ensure that good quality of alternatives are available for the patients without increasing their economic burden. Proper awareness campaigns at hospitals and in media will help patients easily adopt the local versions.

**Topic:** Functioning of the Judiciary

2) Over the years the scope of the public interest litigation (PIL) has expanded to include matters that affect collective rights. Critics argue that the scope of PIL should be limited to its original constituents. Critically examine how PIL has increased its scope, the issues this has given rise to and the need for limiting it to its original constituents. (200 Words)

The increase in the scope of PILs can be seen as follows –

1. Questioning of government policy - PIL against disinvestment of BALCO
2. Green litigation – PIL against the damage caused by Mathura refinery to Taj Mahal
3. Unearthing corruption – PIL against allocation of 2G spectrum
4. Social reforms – Introduction of 27% reservation for backward classes by SC in Indira Sawhney Case

Hence, we see that PILs have increasingly taken the nature of public-cause litigation.

The issues arising out of it can be seen below –

1. Frivolous litigation against the government in power by political rivals, businesses or NGOs with hidden agenda etc.

2. Judiciary’s incursion into the Legislative and Executive domain e.g. guidelines for addressing Sexual Harassment of women in Vishaka Case

3. Judgement passed without considering technical advice e.g. in the 2G Spectrum case the TRAI had recommended sale without auctioning to increase tele-density

4. Wastage of Court resources and time which is currently overburdened

Need for limiting it to its original constituents arises from the following -
1. It was envisaged as an inexpensive method of conferring justice to the poor
2. Separation of powers between the Government’s three organs as per the doctrine of Basic Structure
3. Adjudications requiring technical acumen are better handled by Tribunals setup under Art 323B
4. Reduction of court’s workload

**Topic: RTI; Issues relating to poverty; Governance**

3) In the light of recent controversy over Free Basics, it is argued that the efforts to improve the access of poor people to knowledge need to be directly targeted to poor groups, rather than relying on prevailing processes of knowledge diffusion, which may simply reflect, and reinforce, existing inequities. Do you agree with this argument? Substantiate. (200 Words)

It is often said that ‘knowledge empowers You’ but it is equally important that how does this knowledge reaches. The traditional method of knowledge diffusion whereby one of the person who directly received that knowledge from an authentic source used to share the same with his/her peers, seems to be failed. This has happened because of the following reasons-
* The non-poor or the rich shares that mostly enjoy access to authentic information are reluctant to share the same with poor

* In some instances, where rich share information with poor or poor shares information with each other, there are chances of misinformation

These trends thus reinforce the existing inequalities as misinformation or no access to information doesn't empower people. The rich continue to garner benefits as an outcome of their access to correct knowledge while poor are deprived of it, thus perpetuating inequalities and bring social exclusion.

In the wake of this reality, it is being proposed that access of poor people to authentic/direct sources of knowledge be improved so that-

* No confusion about any information that is being spread

* Knowledge about pro-poor schemes will help them to assert their rights

* Inequalities will come down as poor gets empowered

This direct access to knowledge can be achieved through

* Internet: Through Government's project 'Digital India' and Google's 'Project Loon' and 'Tap to Translate' that provide information in local languages

* Campaigns-Campaigns that provide relevant and authentic information about government schemes and programmes

Boosting direct access to knowledge to empower the people should be the way forward.

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

2) It is said that over a year on, NITI Aayog’s usefulness and purpose remain unfortunately unclear. Do you agree? Comment. (200 Words)

The replacement of decades old Planning Commission with the NITI Aayog to evade the inefficiencies in our administrative system were seen as a progressive step by way of reforms. However, an analysis after its year long functioning raised doubts about its potential to reach the intended goal. Some critics argue that the usefulness and purpose of...
this institution remain unclear. This is true to some extent, but not as a whole, because its approach and strategies require some more time to calculate their results.

Achievements & initiatives of NITI Aayog:

1) Emphasis on Decentralisation and Cooperative Federalism: It replaced the system of 'one size fits all' and repetitive/cyclic approach wherein the States had to come to PC to get their budgets approved for schemes or plans sponsored by the Centre.

2) Sectoral specific approach: Unlike the PC which looks the economy from a holistic perspective at the national level, the NITI Aayog targets implementation in sector wise in a phased manner.

3) The NITI Aayog is trying to interlock and interlink its programs with the goals set by the PM and is focussing on bringing the effects of high growth to the common man. For example, it is working on Digital India, Swachh Bharat, Skill Development, Agriculture etc., also. Earlier, the PC's working style used to be disconnection with the PMO.

Lacuna:

1) In the last one year, the NITI Aayog has come up with various reports on wide range of issues. The reports contain more information than solutions to the problems persisting in the economy.

2) It has no power to implement its recommendations as it is only an advisory body, and again left these recommendations to the government which is bounded by delayed bureaucratic procedures.

3) Inadequate advisory establishment in the institution.

Based on this, we can assume that it may take time to transform itself first, and produced intended results in the coming years.

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

3) In your opinion, how’s India’s improving relations with UAE benefiting it? Critically examine. (200 Words)

The earlier visit of Indian PM to UAE, announcement of comprehensive strategic partnership between India and UAE, and now the visit of UAE's prince to India all points to
the improving relations between two countries. This relation has benefited India in the following ways-

* UAE is India's one of the largest trading partner, second largest export nation and a good source of crude oil

* UAE is home to around 2.5 millions thus forming a good source of remittance for India

* Medical tourism in India has attracted with tourists enjoying health services, ayurvedic establishments and spas

* UAE has sovereign wealth fund to the tune of $800 billion and investments in different sectors like smart city can increase. In the past too, UAE University and India's Amul Limited ahd signed a partnership to set up date palm tissue culture production in Rajasthan

* Collaboration in militant terrorism and cyber security can help keep a vigil on ISIS and checks on movements of radicalised youth

However, more needs to be done to harness the overall potential of relations-

* India needs to increase the crude oil import from UAE to reduce dependence on Saudi Arabia that has thought to charge more from Asian customers

* India needs to aggressively pursue the exports of gems and jewelery to UAE to counter negative trade balance

* Mutually agreeable labor protection paradigm should be explored to ensure job security and social security

* UAE's influence should be used to pressurize Pakistan to act against state and non-state perpetrators of terrorism

* Collaboration in Maritime domain in view of piracy also needs to be explored

The new domain of relation i.e. space (for assistance in Mars exploration) that the two countries have agreed to explore points to the fact that the relation between UAE and India is headed for bright days.
**Topic:** Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

3) In recent years, the issue of regulation of doctors and private hospitals has become important for the citizens. In this regard, critically examine the major issues and suggest what needs to be done to prevent and address the malpractices and abuses that are widely prevalent in the country. (200 Words)

Some major issues and malpractices prevalent in the private health care sector in India are:

-- UNETHICAL and irrational practices of unnecessary procedures, diagnostic tests and hospital admissions with a commercial incentive;

-- Kickbacks in cash or kind from companies or other physicians for prescriptions or REFERRALS;

-- Inflated and fraudulent BILLING for insurance payments;

-- Lack of attention to quality of care leading to catastrophic health outcomes following routine surgical procedures

-- COLLUSION with pharmaceutical companies to run “health camps” whose primary goal is to create markets for the company

-- Collusion with families to promote sex-selection.

-- ABSENTEEISM to run illegal private practices

-- Lack of basic dignity in healthcare

Some reforms needed are:

-- Begin from the very nature of the TRAINING of medical students, to prepare them not only to work in specialised urban hospitals but also in primary care in villages and towns.

-- Regulate the QUALITY of care delivered, to make costs of care completely transparent in the spirit of the RTI

-- Medical Council of India is mandated to uphold the high standards of medical education and quality of care. Any reform must begin with a root and branch re-engineering of this moribund body

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Complete ban on capitation FEES for medical college admission

Merger of the many health INSURANCE schemes into one.

The government should act as a facilitator to these reforms by appropriate legislative measures and increasing the spending (as % of GDP) on public health to make for a wholesome coverage of the issues.

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

4) Discuss why China’s relations with Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) have grown enormously in recent years whereas India lags in its approach to the region. Also examine why engaging deeply with LAC is important for India. (200 Words)

Geography & Distance has always been an obstacle in India’s engagement with LAC. Before cold war era India had limited engagement due to India’s Inward looking economy & lack of political stability & most of LAC nations were in US camp.

RESONS OF CHINA’S STRONG RELATION WITH LAC AS COMPARED TO INDIA

1) As China opened up its economy 15 years before India so China got a headstart in engaging with LAC

2) China has advantage in Infrastructure India being developing nation with low income can’t sustain freebies like that of China.

3) China’s Large Diplomatic footprint, India still does not have diplomatic mission in all LAC countries.

4) More Visa liberal policy & more engagement with DTAA by China as compared to India.

IMPORTANCE OF LAC COUNTRIES FOR INDIA:

a) LAC has huge land mass & low population, thus can help in India’s food security and also India has started importing 10% crude oil from LA countries, OVL can play an imp role in oil exploration by increasing its footprint.
b) LAC countries can be a big export market for Pharma, Textile & IT, S&T industries. As India is not part of TPP, bilateral Engagement with LAC can offset the losses of not signing TPP.

c) Engagement with LAC will boost Indian Shipping companies as shipping is the only economical way of trade.

d) India can harness Indian Diaspora, Growing acceptability & demand for Indian services in Healthcare & education. And can contribute in capacity building.

Although China has taken lead in engagement with LAC but there are ample opportunities & scope for India to get its well deserved position in engagement with LAC countries.

**Topic:** Issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure; Functioning of the Executive

5) Critically analyse the role of the President of India in promulgating Article 356 of the Indian Constitution. In the light of frequent violations in using Article 356, do you think it should be repealed? Justify. (200 Words)

As per the Art. 356 of Indian Constitution (ICN), if the President is satisfied on the report of the Governor, or otherwise, that there exists a situation in a state where its administration can't be carried on in accordance with the provisions of ICN, then (s)he can take over the state administration. Here, the council of ministers (CoM) is the de facto body for President's satisfaction. This is because, the President, while applying Art 356 can't act at his/her discretion, but is bound to act as per CoM's advice.

However, by virtue of the dignity of the office, President does enjoy influence if not power over constitutional proceedings and may express his/her reservations and warnings in such issues. This was evident in 1997, when the then President K.R. Narayanan declined to approve a recommendation by the United Front govt. for imposition of President's rule in UP and the central govt. dropped the idea subsequently.

There have been many allegedly partisan promulgations of Art 356 in the past. In my opinion, repealing of such landmark emergency provision from ICN is NOT the solution. It is the duty of central government to exercise political restraint when putting Art 356 to effect. Similar recommendations have been made by the Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State relations.

Moreover, the SC in S.R. Bommai judgement has laid out detailed qualifications over the use of Art 356. These include the suggestion of giving an advance 1-week warning to...
states, applying JR on the enforcement on grounds of basis of proclamation, malafide use of power etc. Constitutionalising them by amending Art 356 would be a better idea.

Therefore, the existing mechanisms, if used in earnest are capable enough to uphold the spirit of the ICN on the matter.

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

3) Critically evaluate the objectives and implementation of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act. (200 Words)

The PCPNDT Act, 1994 applied a blanket ban on pre-natal sex determination. This was done to:

-- Stop female foeticides

-- Arrest the declining sex ratio

Although, the objectives failed to hit the base of the problem. It should have also focussed on improving social values in favour of the girl child; short term through grass-root level awareness programmes and long term through education.

**IMPLEMENTATION** has had the following positive impacts:

1. Registrations of pre-natal diagnostic clinics saw have considerably risen

2. There has been a definite check on advertisements for sex selection from print media, television and from walls around the country.

   -- The SC ruling last year extended this check even to online advertisements hosted by Google, Yahoo etc

3. Efforts of public litigants has lead to effective implementation, eg: Maharashtra has seen a significant improvement in the sex-ratio over the years.

4. The 2003 amendment brought ultrasound in its ambit. This had led to a drastic reduction in its indiscriminate and unethical use.

   However, many aspects still need greater focus and attention in terms of implementation:
1. The conviction rates have been abysmally low, especially considering the high density notorious clinics running sex-determination tests.

2. Registration has not been followed by actions, in most states, to prevent sex determination.

3. Medical associations have been making continuous efforts to undermine the law, for continuation of their profiteering practices.

Need of the hour is to promote medical prudence and accountability in private health sector, to cover for the hindrances to PCPNDT Act's implementation. Moreover, relevant landmark schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, SSY and their functioning can be interlinked with the Act's provisions for greater enforcement of both.

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

4) “The attempt to improve higher education must begin with primary schools.” Comment. (200 Words)

Higher education status sets the stage for the rest of the life of a person. But in India, the Gross enrolment ratio (GER) is meager 20%. MHRD has emphasized and designed a road map to increase the enrolment to 30% by 2020. However, the inherent flaws in our primary education system are major roadblock for such enthusiastic move.

Our primary education system especially in rural areas has been detached from the progressive methods of learning through computer and internet. Also a giant student to teacher ratio gap makes it a nightmare for both pupil and teacher.

The curriculum offered at the government school in vernacular medium doesn't focus on basic English language, which haunt the student throughout their life. A student who aspires for higher education finds difficulty in filling application forms, applying for scholarship programmes, use of internet and computer for various projects and assignments.

The apathy in rural poor about the education and scarce income source causes higher rate of dropouts especially for a girl child. The absentee teachers makes it more difficult for the talented student to grow. The focus of school education system has been focused on a 'Stick and book' whereas the essential skill and analytic development and behavioural aspect of pupil are ignored.
the solution to these gigantic problem lies in basic nomenclature of increasing pupil to teacher ratio, monitoring of RTE, Implementation of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme in letter and spirit. Empowering the Local-bodies and Gram-Panchayats to regulate the schools at block level.

Hence there is a dire need to revamp the primary education system if the the schemes like Stand-up India, Skill-India, and Make in India is to be a large success.

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

2) Energy security is a key ingredient of India’s interest in West Asia and it is said that India’s increasingly multidimensional relations with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states buttress these energy security efforts. Discuss the efforts being made by India and the advantages it possesses in this regard. (200 Words)

India’s energy demands on the rise and in this regard, it has taken certain steps to up her engagement with West Asia-the house of more than 50% of global energy reserves. India has pursued ‘Look West Policy’ for engaging with West Asia in order to secure energy reserves. Under this policy, steps taken by India include-

* India has engaged bilaterally with different countries like Qatar, UAE and Saudia Arabia to secure energy supplies e.g. UAE’s prince guaranteed certain amount of free crude oil to India

* India’s Public Sector Units like ONGC and GAIL have been making investments in these regions in order to strengthen their claims on energy reserves

* Infrastructural growth e.g. Chahbhar port in Iran and push for INSTC to enhance economic relations

* Placing Persian Gulf as region of Primary interest under the Maritime Security Strategy so as to engage with these countries on maritime front

In engaging with GCC and West Asia, India possess the following advantages-

* The GCC states is home to a substantial number of Indian Diaspora that helps in strengthening the links between the two-India and GCC
* India enjoys a goodwill image in GCC states because of non-interventionist role as opposed to US and China that looks to exploit them

* India is one the greatest buyers of energy supplies and this proves beneficial to as it augments their resources

Stepping up enhancement by diversifying trade relations and making more investments should be the way forward.

**Topic:** Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies

3) In recent days, the Second Judges case law of 1993 has been in news for various reasons. Discuss the significance of this case for Indian judiciary. (200 Words)

In the second Judges case, the SC reinterpreted the provision of appointment of judges. It said that “Consultation” by the President of India with the Chief Justice of India (CJI) actually means “Concurrence” with the views of CJI and the 2 senior most judges.

It has been in news recently because of the debate around National Judicial Appointment Commission (NJAC) and the controversies surrounding judges’ transfer and reports of corruption in judiciary

**Significance**

1. The case evolved the collegium system which was further solidified in the Third Judges Case

2. It was in line with the directive principle under Article 50, which calls for the state to strive towards separation of judiciary from executive

3. It protected judiciary from political interference, and frequent transfer of judges after every election.

**Criticism**

1. The ruling went against the SC’s own observations in the First Judges case which upheld that consultation of the president does not mean being forced to stick to the views
2. The move was seen as keeping judiciary above the legislative and executive, which runs counter to the basic tenets of Constitution, which calls for equality amongst the 3 organs

3. It was used to delegitimise the creation of NJAC, which was seen as a breakthrough proposal to restore the equality

4. Excessive independence has brought to light instances of corruption, nepotism, internal rivalries and delay in decision making

The SC’s decision to call for public opinion to reform the collegium system is a welcome green shoot. The more transparent, accountable and organised it becomes, the more our democracy progresses

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

4) Do you think the existence of Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860 is justifiable in a true democracy? Critically comment. (200 Words)

Section 124-A covers sedition under IPC. Sedition is any form of speech, action, writing that incites hatred against the established order and harms the systematic peace of the country. It can be justified as:

1) To check and balance the public disorder created by different ideologies and hatred remarks.

2) Protects the integrity of the nation by curbing insurgency.

3) Defines a boundary for criticizing government to a limit only.

But there are some serious issues related to Section 124-A:

1) As article 19(1) gives the freedom to speech, 19(2) imposes legal restrictions upon its limit. Section 124-A just acts as an unnecessary deterrent.

2) Gives excessive discretionary power to the police.

3) Does not differentiate between aggressive or diffident nature of the demands.

4) Puts a ban on freedom of expression. E.g: Aseem Trivedi and Arundhati Roy case.

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Rather than repealing Section 124-A, there should be some changes made to it such as:
1) Reduce the punishments which currently includes life imprisonment. This has chilling effect on freedom of speech and expression
2) Forming a committee involving Government and renowned civil society members while deciding cases under section 124 A.
3) To limit the discretionary power as much as possible through better and comprehensive drafting of guidelines.

**Topic:** Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries

2) Compare and contrast how judges in India and USA are appointed. (200 Words)

Since, there are some similarities and differences in India's federal set up and division of powers with that of the USA, there are also some similarities and differences in the method of appointment of the judges:

1) In both the countries, President appoints the judges. But, in India, President is being advised by the Collegium of judges headed by the Chief Justice of India, whereas in the USA, President nominates judges, and with the advice and consent of the Senate, he/she appoints judges.

2) Alike USA, every judge in India is to be appointed by the President under his seal and warrant. But, usually the Collegium system administers the appointments and transfers of the higher judiciary like Supreme Court and High Court, and the judges to lower courts and District courts would be recruited through examination conducted by the High Court of the State concerned. Whereas in the USA, procedure of appointment of judges to higher as well as lower courts are same.

3) In the USA, in case of vacancy, the list of nomination would be prepared after a detailed inquiry and analysis of the conduct of judges by the State departments like Department of Justice, Committee on Judiciary, and agencies like FBI, whereas in India, judges will be selected by the Collegium system in a highly opaque manner.

4) There is strong checks and balances in the USA, as nominated judges are selected for appointment based on voting in the Senate, whereas in India, there is no kind of Legislative interference in the appointment of the Judges.
Topic: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability

3) It is said that the Companies Act 2013 has helped encourage whistleblowing and transparency in private companies. Examine why. Can similar law be made applicable in bureaucracy?

Comment. (200 Words)

The Companies Act, 2013 (CA) has ushered in the era of "Corporate Governance" in private companies. It has legalised measures to bring about Transparency and Openness. Eg: Mahindra & Mahindra setting up an externally managed hotline for employees to ensure no complaint is suppressed is an outcome. The measures include:

Promoting WHISTLE-BLOWING:

1. Has mandated firms to put in place, a vigilance mechanism
2. Places a criminal liability on board members for wrongdoing and non-compliance
3. The audit committee of the board has to regularly review all complaints, as opposed to action on complaints being at the discretion of senior management earlier

Promoting TRANSPARENCY:

1. Mandates that the Board of Directors should have at least 1/3rd independent members.
2. Through its provisions, CA promotes focus on profit, but with self-imposed morality
3. Encourages companies to work with "Nothing to fear, nothing to hide" attitude and make full disclosures of balance sheets etc.

Bureaucracy, as a whole, can be covered with similar provisions. The Whistle Blowers Protection Act provides an avenue to do so. Forming separate mechanisms for every govt. department may not be feasible due to the large-scale scope of a nexus to avoid scrutiny. Legally strengthening the powers and scope of Central and State VC may help the cause better.

Although, forcing transparency on bureaucrats may not help the cases where they need to act instantaneously and on discretion. Strengthening and legalizing the already present accountability mechanisms like Grievance Redressal Cells and Citizen Charters would be imperative.

Hence, similar provisions can be applied to bureaucracy by amending the existing rules and mechanisms.
Topic: Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

4) What do you understand by sedition? Critically comment on the way the courts have interpreted the Section 124(A) of the penal code. (200 Words)

Sedition is about when a person's speech, behaviour, language, written words attracts the group of people or a mob acts rebellion against authority of state or create incitement to public disorder or violence.

In India, sedition is 124A of Indian penal code & when person charged under this IPC. The offence is punishable with imprisonment for life.

Court have interpreted 124A of Indian penal code in many cases relate to 124A section:

Kedar Nath Singh Vs State of Bihar 1962: constitutional bench of supreme court made clear that allegedly seditious speech & expression may be punished only if speech is an incitement to violence or public disorder.

Subsequent cases have further clarified the meaning of this phrase.

In Indra Das vs State of Assam & Arup Bhuyan vs State of Assam, Supreme Court stated that only speech that amounts to “incitement to imminent lawless action” can be criminalised.

Therefore, advocating revolution or advocating even violent overthrow of State, does not amount to sedition, unless there is incitement to violence & more importantly, incitement is to imminent violence.

One of most important judgements in this regard is Balwant Singh v. State of Punjab, Supreme Court overturned the convictions for sedition(124A IPC) and Promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc (153 A IPC).

In this case, accused raised slogans such Khalistan Zindabad, Raj Karega Khalsa (Khalsa will rule) & Hinduan Nun Punjab Chon Kadh Ke Chhadange, Hun Mauka Aya Hai Raj Kayam Karan Da (Hindus will leave Punjab, we will rule) i.e. a few hours after Indira Gandhi’s assassination.

Despite the slogans clearly undermining Indian sovereignty and government, SC acquitted or free from charge or verdict of not guilty the accused because the slogans did not
imminently incite violence. Thus, even advocating secession of country or violent overthrow of government, does not attract sedition unless there is imminent incitement to violence. But in many charges court interpretation is maybe misused by the state for ex arrest of arundhati and recent kanhaiya kumar

Thus, Above cases can be seen in favour of freedom of speech & expression enshrine in fundamental rights of article 19, Supreme Court has tried to indicate that words & speech can be criminalised & punished only in situations where it is being used to incite mobs or crowds to violent action.

**Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations**

3) Whenever Nepal’s domestic politics gets polarised, India gets blamed for interfering in Nepal’s internal affairs and anti-Indianism rises. Does India deserve this treatment by Nepal’s leadership and public? How should India restore goodwill with Nepal? Critically comment. (200 Words)

There have been instances when Nepal's hard-line stand against India may have seemed justified such as the virtual economic blockade of 1989, protests against the Citizenship Bill of 2006 which accorded Nepali citizenship to stateless immigrants in Nepal’s Terai and the recent protest against India’s insistence on considering Madhesi demands in the Constitution-drafting.

However, on closer analysis we find that such stand is unjustified as –

1. The blockade of 1989 was driven by Nepal’s ambiguity on trade-and-transit treaties and acquisition of Chinese military equipment against the 1950 Treaty’s principles

2. The Citizenship Bill was a progressive move in portraying the democratic bearings of Nepal’s newly elected government

3. Including Madhesi demands would enable peace in the region, necessary for economic progress after Nepal-earthquake

Steps which can be taken to restore goodwill with Nepal are –

1. Continue with Gujral doctrine by allowing free trade and people’s movement which would improve the economic scenario

2. Offering scientific extension services such as Soil Heath cards, neem-coated urea etc. to Terai farmers
3. Relooking the contract on supply of oil-products to Nepal which recently signed a deal with China

4. Pursuing Track 7 diplomacy by promoting greater religious tourism, especially under BBIN-agreement

5. Expedite establishment of Energy corridor, food-bank etc. as per SAARC 2014 agreements to ensure greater emphasis on geoeconomics rather than geopolitics

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

4) Last year, the Supreme Court’s described India’s drug pricing policy as irrational and unreasonable. Discuss why. (200 Words)

Supreme Court’s described India’s drug pricing policy as irrational and unreasonable because:

*The market prices of all the medicines enlisted in the control order were not collected.

*The collected data was inadequate and sometimes faulty also.

*There were some instances where the selling prices of certain medicines were higher than the prices of market leader for such medicines.

*The order has not covered all the dosages of a same drug (only one or two dosages covered).

*If a price controlled drug is combined with a non-price controlled drug, then it is out of the purview of the control order.

*Drugs like cardiovascular drugs, anti-diabetic drugs, which are required for life-long therapy, are excluded from the control order.

*108 such drugs were put under National Pharma Pricing Authority (NPPA) which controls their prices. However, all the drug manufacturers are not following the NPPA’s orders. Action has not been taken on those who are not following.

Drug Pricing Policy should be carefully design to create balance between profitability and nurture of pharma industry and benefit to common people. Transparent functioning of NPPA in issuing such orders and guidelines, improving IPR regime is the need of the hour.

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

5) Recently, forest rights of tribals over their traditional lands in Ghatbarra village of Surguja district were taken away by the Chhattisgarh government to facilitate coal mining there. Do you support this policy? In the light of provisions of Forest Rights Act, critically comment. (200 Words)

Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA) was a landmark legislation since it recognized individual and community rights of forest-dwellers over forest lands.

The acquisition of traditional lands by Chattisgarh government is unjustified due to–

1. No provisions for revocation of title rights once they have been granted under FRA

2. Land diversion for developmental activities can be only implemented after the Gram Sabha’s permission

3. Is against SC orders cancelling earlier allocations

4. No plans for resettlement of displaced tribals due to land diversion were provided which is mandatory under FRA

This policy further needs to be seen in the light of Land Acquisition Act 2013 which provides for land-titles to forest-dwellers for the first time and hence may be against Art 300A provisions. Also, coal-mining in India is often of the open-cast type which causes deforestation and ecological loss.

In such a scenario, measures which can be taken to resolve future issues are –

1. Amending Coal-Bearing Areas Act, 1957 to return land back to tribals after exhaustion as per Xaxa Committee recommendations

2. States in 5th Schedule Areas should enact comprehensive laws regarding mining, excise etc. alongwith PESA provision as per 2nd ARC recommendations

3. Adopt the Andhra Pradesh model in which only tribal-cooperative are allowed mining activities

4. Adopt less-polluting mining methods like tunnelling, block caving etc.
Hence, a balanced approach between development and forest-dweller welfare needs to be ensured. Mineral exploitation can be allowed but it should be within the auspices of FRA else the act would lose its meaning.

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

2) It is criticised that India has repeatedly failed to protect the domestic food security agenda at WTO negotiations. Do you agree? Critically comment. (200 Words)

India is often criticised for its repeated failure in WTO negotiations to protect its food security because:

1. Its agricultural subsidies fall under amber box while those of US are under green box even though latter's subsidies are massive.

2. Conditions attached to peace clause puts a cap on the expansion of food security programmes in India.

3. It recently signed Trade Facilitation agreement (TFA) which means relinquishing its bargain chip at WTO.

4. Its chances of achieving Doha’s development for food security are also bleak.

However above arguments are fallacious in the light of below arguments-

1. India has been able to maintain its stand of not reducing tariff against the wishes of developed countries. Use of special safeguard mechanisms helps it in protecting domestic interests. So, signing TFA becomes less important.

2. It was able to have a peace clause to safeguard its public stockholding programmes.

3. It is constantly and aggressively pushing developed countries to reduce their farm support with the help of many developing countries.

4. It has the right to impose trade barriers when whenever its imports increase in a rapid manner.

India's stand at WTO and signing TFA recently is justifiable in the light of various multiple agreements like TPP and its ambition to become economic superpower along with protecting interests of its farmers.
4) In the light of recent controversy over the status of the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) as a minority institution, do you agree with the argument that setting up minority institution in a secular state is wrong? Critically comment. (200 Words)

Art 30(1) provides that all linguistic and religious minorities shall be allowed to establish and administer religious institutions and Art 30(2) provides for non-discrimination of State in providing aid. Hence, we see that the State has not been charged with the responsibility of setting up minority institutions and only towards providing aid and recognition.

However, Art 30 cannot be viewed in isolation and needs to be read with Art 26(a) which states that religious denominations can establish institutions for religious and charitable purposes as determined by SC in TMA Pai Foundation Case. AMU has been involved with commendable work in Social sciences and imparting education to Muslim youth which can be considered as charitable work.

Hence, the State is duty-bound under Art 38 to implement all policies which minimize inequalities among different sections of the society. In such a scenario, setting up universities may be helpful as they adhere to highest standards of imparting education and are allowed to award degrees. Besides, revoking minority status from such institutions is also against SC adjudication in Kerala Education Bill Case which limits State regulation from depriving minority from managing the institution.

Hence, the State is not wrong legally in not setting up minority institutions. However, such measures cannot be seen negatively due to the State’s compulsion under DPSPs to provide for the welfare of all sections of society.
**Topic:** Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health

5) What are the constraints Indians facing when it comes to accessibility, affordability and availability of medicines. Critically discuss. (200 Words)

The constraints faced by Indians regarding the medicine sector can be seen under the following heads –

1. **Accessibility** –

   (i) TN Model of Jan Aushadi Scheme has not been replicated in other parts of the country

   (ii) Low health insurance coverage and no coverage of Fixed Dose Combinations even though they account for 50% of marketed drug

2. **Affordability** –

   (i) Calculation of drug prices is based on average of market-prices and not on cost-prices which has resulted in pharma companies fixing prices many times over production cost

   (ii) While fixing price-ceilings, regional variability to accessibility to drugs was not factored in

3. **Availability** –

   (i) Issues of IPR, compulsory-licencing and export to developing countries has discouraged foreign investment

   (ii) Low domestic research into drug-manufacturing due to shortage of funds, infrastructure in labs etc.

However, these constraints have also resulted in some positive development such as –

1. A National Intellectual Property Policy is being drafted to ensure better IPR protection and improve foreign investments

2. 100% FDI in medical devices sector has been permitted which is expected to help in medicine-manufacturing

3. Impetus to traditional medicinal knowledge under the newly-formed Ministry of Ayush

4. Awareness campaigns under schemes like AMRIT etc.

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Hence, we see that although there are constraints to easy drug-access, the government has been taking proactive measures to address the issue.

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

4) The recent violent protests by Jat and Patidars demanding reservation under OBC are termed as the unreasonable demands. Do you agree? What are the causes behind such demands? Should they be fulfilled? Critically comment. (200 Words)

The protests by Jats and Patidars for reservation under OBC seems unreasonable because-

* The sole premise of the demand rests on 'caste' and not the 'class' and thus tend to diminish the way reservations have been extended.

* In the Indira Swahney case, SC said that even though caste helps in easy determination of backwardness of social group, it can't be the sole reason to extend reservation

* National Commission on Backward Classes has favored against inclusion of Jats as OBCs

The reason behind upsurge of these demands stem from the following reasons-

* Benefits of the reservation system and its extension for decades

* Failure of the economic system to create enough jobs and opportunities for everyone

* Reducing agricultural productivity as a natural outcome and because of sub-divisions of land upon which Jats sustain themselves

In wake of these, it can be said that there exists a solid reason to extend benefits to these sections of the society. However, one needs to take out the 'caste factor' while extending these benefits. It can't be contended that all Jats are prosperous and hence there is no reason to extend benefit to them. Thus, focus should be to make the socio-economic indicator as the sole reason for extension of benefits.
Apart from this, government should focus on manufacturing sector through 'Make in India' and 'Skill India' program that has high employment elasticity.

**Topic:** Important aspects of governance; Functioning of executive

5) Critically discuss the elements and objectives of the Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana. Do you think this scheme was needed when Members of Parliament are already getting funds under the MPLAD (Member of Parliament Local Area Development) scheme? (200 Words)

According to ambitious "Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana", each member of parliament will choose/adopt a village in his/her constituency (any constituency in state for RajyaSabha members and village in nearby constituency for urban constituency members) to fulfill the following broad objectives

1. Use of already existing schemes to develop model villages—Adarsh Grams—and development of new initiatives within the local contexts of the village.

2. Developing the model for local development which can be replicated in other villages as well.

The Goal is that each MP will have developed 3 villages by the end of 2019 and 8 by 2024.

As a granular level, Adarsh Gram is expected to have minimum basic facilities like pucca houses, all-weather roads with covered drains, electrification of all houses, street lights, drinking water, pucca infrastructure for Anganwadi, schools, gram panchayats, availability of modern education mechanisms, post office etc.

No separate funding had been allocated for this scheme but it has to accrue from other schemes like Indira Awas Yojana, MGNREGS, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, MPLADS, Gram Panchayat's Revenue, Central & State grants, CSR funds etc.

In the second phase of scheme parliamentarian's response was not at all encouraging where only a handful of them (32/785) adopted the second village. Their apathy towards this scheme can be understood;

• As there are no dedicated funds for the scheme and

• no accountability for the implementation of this scheme.
MPLADS funds are for broader utilization and SAGY focuses specifically on a village so it is not fair to say that SAGY is redundant when MPLADS is existing.

There are no doubts that intentions around SAGY are good but to encourage it, the government should come up with some innovative ideas like:
• competition and awarding best Adarsh Gram and its MP
• Encouraging that some % of funds from schemes like MPLADS to be utilized for SAGY
• building accountable and transparent mechanism for its implementation.
• Along with MPs also nominating a corporate to adopt a village, and it can be added to their CSR profile.

**Topic:** Bilateral, regional and global groupings

3) Why does Britain want to exit from the European Union? Do you think the EU has succeeded as a monetary union? Is it time for its political union? Comment. (200 Words)

*Why Britain wants to be out of EU*

1) Britain fears the loss to its autonomy in economic and immigration matters if it chooses to continue in the EU,

2) The anti-EU lobby (called "eurosceptics") is pretty strong in British politics

3) EU membership has become a question of **sovereignty** in Britain

4) In a Europe torn apart by immigration and economic crisis, Britain wants to cover its bases

*Has the EU been a successful monetary union?*

1) Moderately so, positively, there has been greater mobility for the people and capital flowing across the nations. The Euro has been a stable currency for long and the union has managed the economic crisis well.

2) However, the cost of losses has not been borne equally. The punishment for bailing out failed members like Greece has been largely the responsibility of Germany. Consensus building within the union takes time and is usually an ill-suited compromise and hostility between member nations is on the rise.

*Is it time for political union?*

Not yet. The way EU mismanaged the Greece crisis and the refugee crisis shows deep disagreements between the nations on key economic and political policies. A lack of
consensus is apparent with Britain now holding referendum to decide whether to stay or leave the EU. A forced political union at this point cannot be a sustainable option.

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

4) Strong arguments are made that the reservation in higher education – as even the Supreme Court has recently argued – needs to be done away with. Do you agree? Critically comment. (200 Words)

Reservation for weaker sections emanates from Art 46 of DPSP which provides for affirmative action for socially and educationally backward sections. However, arguments against such reservation in higher education is based on the following –

1. Equality of opportunity is provided to students at the primary level, evening out the playing field

2. Higher education is critical for rapid economic advancement of the country necessitating the admission of dedicated students

3. Reservation benefits are often availed by economically stronger sub-sections of the reserved categories

4. Students unable to cope with the advanced requirements of higher studies

However, these arguments can be countered by the following reasoning –

1. Primary education lacks in quality leading to poor performance of children as indicated by successive ASER reports

2. Economic advancement without attaining equity among different sections will be counter-productive for the country

3. Reservation policy in India is class-based and not individual-based and hence, reservations cannot be accorded to economically weaker individuals of all classes

4. Blaming the inability of reserved category students on their being ‘incapable’ indicates an elitist outlook of the issue
Hence, we see that although reservation has resulted in certain unfavourable scenarios, it cannot be claimed that the policy is mistaken. Measures need to be taken to improve pedagogy, infrastructure etc. to ensure imparting of holistic education to all sections.

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

5) India is trying to become member of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum for many years. If it becomes APEC’s member, how will it benefit both India and APEC? Examine. (200 Words)

The benefits which can be accrued by India by joining the APEC can be seen as follows –

1. Would be a natural extension to India’s current engagement with Asia-Pacific under East Asia Summit and ASEAN Regional forum
2. Since APEC is a non-binding forum, its decisions would be more suitable to India’s requirements
3. Could give an impetus to India’s Make outside India Policy to access markets in countries like China
4. Could help India to address problems regarding SPS and TBT and measures to deal with bureaucratic red-tape

The benefits to APEC can be seen as follows –

1. India is currently the fastest growing large economy and its inclusion can help prop up the Asia-Pacific’s economic growth
2. India’s experience regarding food security and disaster mitigation can assist APEC
3. India’s young population can help address workforce shortage problems
4. Its burgeoning middle-class can help generate demand for goods

However, there are certain issues regarding India’s inclusion as well –

1. India lags behind in issues regarding land acquisition policy, labour reforms etc.
2. APEC may be divided into two blocs once the TPP and RCEP materialize

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3. India's infrastructural funding needs can be satisfied by AIIB and NDB

Hence, India's inclusion will be largely beneficial for both parties provided the issues are ironed out at the earliest.

**Topic:** Governance and accountability

2) The use of state power to silence dissent has always been resisted by intellectuals all over the world. Do you think a democratic state has a legitimacy to silence dissent of any form? Justify. (200 Words)

A democratic state has two fold functions—meeting the aspirations of the people and ensuring the security and sovereignty of the state. Every democratic state should seek to maintain a fine balance between these two goals.

Citizens have the right to dissent as an outcome of the right to speech and expression. This should be seen by the state as an opportunity to improve the governance in order to bring it in consonance with the desires of people.

However, while doing so, the state should not jeopardize the security interests of the state. Any unreasonable demand that ulna vires the established doctrines of constitution of that state and seeks to harm the sovereignty of the state needs to be handled sternly.

In the Indian scenario, SC and constitution has tried to achieve the fine balance between the two strands. On one hand, SC struck down the section 66A of IT Act, acquitted Aseem Trivedi from sedition charges and under Kedarnath case held that 'incitement to violence' during dissent is an essential component for framing sedition charges. On the other hand, constitution has put reasonable restriction on freedom of speech and expression in the form of security, sovereignty and integrity of the state.

Thus, it can be said that the question is not whether the state has the legitimacy to silence dissent in any form but to see whether the demands are justified and do they seek to ensure the welfare of people on a large.
3) “Ignoring Pakistan is not an option. It makes little sense to adopt an on-again-off-again strategy that smacks of ad-hocism. It would be prudent not to look upon Pathankot as yet another instance where India’s hopes have been dashed by Pakistan.” Do you agree with this view? Critically comment. (200 Words)

The path to good relations between India and Pakistan has often remained straddled with roadblocks. The recent attack on Pathankot air base is another roadblock that can result in derailment of dialogue between India and Pakistan.

In the wake of this attack, India should call off the talks because-

* Sends a strong message to Pakistan that it is not India but Pakistan that needs her
* Corrects the soft power image that has often became a pretext for launching attacks on India

However, such a myopic vision may not be useful in the long run because-

* Engagement with Pakistan is necessary to ensure regional peace esp in wake of volatile situation in Afghanistan
* Continuation in talks ensure positive results of previous talks are not lost and there remains an upswing in the relations
* Calling off the talks helps not India or Pakistan but the militants that get emboldened to launch more attacks for derailing talks
* Engagement with Pakistan ensures that commercial maneuvers in the form of TAPI and IPI pipeline fructifies

I think ad-hocism in relations with Pakistan does more harm than good. Continuous engagement on a sustainable basis can ensure that Pakistan shed off the mask of terrorism-breeding state and come forward to ensure peace for every stakeholder of the region.
**Topic**: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education, Human Resources.

4) “We need more than just technical skills in the globalised world we live in. We need skills that help us relate to those who are not like us. We need soft skills, more exposure to global languages as well as critical thinking.” In the light of the statements, discuss the need for encouraging inclusion and study of liberal arts in the Indian higher education system. (200 Words)

In contemporary times, India has focused more in achieving technological and medical knowledge. It has been successful as can be seen from service sector employment and our achievement like those of ISRO. But we need to encourage inclusion and study of liberal arts in higher education because:

1. Will develop critical thinking—which will be helpful in challenging the status quo and those in power. Analyzing the situation better and reacting on that basis will be promoted then. This is important when we go blank in terms of voting decisions, or follow mob mentality as in the case of recent jat agitation.

2. Will broaden the perspective—Once critical thinking is developed and we are able to analyze the situation issues like intolerance or so-called anti-national tendencies will be dealt much better. Currently most of us feel uncomfortable when anything goes against our views. So arts give opportunity to be more accommodating.

3. Reviving traditional knowledge—In an attempt of achieving technical knowledge we have forgotten to know our culture, art, and philosophy. It is unfortunate that we have globalized but most of us are deprived of knowing our place and unaware of our ancient languages. This will also reduce the bulk of unemployed engineers and doctors.

Freedom struggle had the perfect blend of intellectuals who could see the pros and cons of a situation and the technical experts who could make the bombs to scare the authorities. So, we need to have such Newtons and Arístoles who could develop logic and science and the same time can challenge what is wrong.
3) In your opinion, why is Nepal important for India? Comment. (200 Words)

Nepal’s importance to India can be seen under the following heads –

1. Political –
   (i) Nepal’s progress is an affirmation of the success of Gujral doctrine
   (ii) Is important for the success of regional integration measures as Nepal is part of BBIN etc.

2. Economic –
   (i) Numerous fast-flowing Himalayan rivers in Nepal have immense hydroelectric potential
   (ii) India is the largest exporter of petroleum products to Nepal

3. Strategic –
   (i) Nepal acts as a buffer State between India and China
   (ii) India and Nepal jointly man the Nepal-Tibet border under 1950 Treaty provisions

4. Cultural –
   (i) Important centres of Buddhism (e.g. Lumbini) are located in Nepal which portrays its significance in attracting religious tourism
   (ii) Many Gorkha soldiers in Indian army trace their roots to Nepal

5. Security –
   (i) Nepal is important to address threats emanating from the open border like trafficking, counterfeit currency-inflow, terrorism etc.
   (ii) Important to prevent the spread of Maoist ideology in the Red corridor region of India

Hence, we see that Nepal occupies a multi-dimensional relationship with India which magnifies its importance. Hence, recent issues such as Nepal’s accusation of India’s interference in drafting of Nepal’s constitution, Nepal’s signing of an agreement with China for supply of petroleum products with China have brought serious strains into the relationship which needs to be addressed expeditiously.
**Topic**: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests

4) India is investing in the Iranian port of Chabahar. Why is investing in this port so important for India? Examine. (200 Words)

The importance investing in Chabahar port holds for India can be seen under the following heads –

1. **Geo-economic** –
   (i) Would provide an alternative access to trade with Afghanistan
   (ii) The port may be used to implement the INSTC project
   (iii) The free-trade zone around the port can be an important trade center with West Asia

2. **Geo-political** –
   (i) Reduced dependence of land-locked Afghanistan on Pakistan for sea-access lowering Pakistan’s strategic hold on Afghanistan
   (ii) Counter Chinese presence in the Arabian Sea through the support to Pakistan in developing Gwadar port
   (iii) Can be used to station security vessels for merchant ships off the African coast

3. **Diplomatic** -
   (i) Can provide a link promote cultural linkages between India and Iran
   (ii) Can be a centre to coordinate humanitarian operations such as mass evacuation of refugees
   (iii) Can provide the diplomatic edge to India’s ambition of developing a blue-water navy

However, it must be understood that the developing the port itself will not satisfy Indian ambitions as –

1. Afghanistan is not strong economically and besieged by internal problems
2. The INSTC project poses challenges in developing a multi-modal transport system with Europe, Russia etc.

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3. Stationing of security forces in Chchbahar may not be agreeable to Iran

4. India's blue-water navy ambitions needs to be backed by rapid navy modernization

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

5) It is reported in media that India’s role in the South China Sea dispute is assuming a new dimension as its involvement in the region is growing. Examine the nature of India’s involvement in the dispute and its costs and benefits for it. (200 Words)

India has been seen as a ‘strategic equalizer’ in the South China sea dispute by many countries in the region like Vietnam, Phillippines, Taiwan who are the parties in dispute and struggling to counter Chinese aggressive steps to accommodate more islands in its territory.

Nature of India's involvement:

1) India strategic engagement with the countries like USA, Japan and Australia and performing maritime drills is a step to limit Chinese aggression and to ensure freedom of navigation.

2) India’s ‘Act/Look East Policy’ gains good hold in S.E Asian countries and ASEAN, and growing ties with them. This in turn acting as a ‘support’ for the small countries in the region.

3) India engaged in oil and mineral explorations by agreements with countries like Vietnam, Phillippines etc.

4) India's attitude is always tilted towards peaceful diplomatic settlement of issue instead of a military one. Thus, its main emphasis was on de-militarisation of disputed islands and seek arbitration as per UNCLOS and other international practices.

India's benefits:

1) Energy security and imports markets diversification of oil and natural gas.

2) Market diversification with growing economic ties.

3) Access to regional groupings and securing India’s interests in their policies.

4) Peaceful settlement of dispute sustains regional political and economic stability.
5) Access to high seas famous for huge in international trade, and access to certain choke points like Malacca straits.

Costs:

1) Growing India’s presence in the region would increase Chinese distrust over India, and subsequent economic and trade indifferences.

2) Maintaining naval forces and patrol incurs huge expenditures for India, and thus, compromising fiscal deficit targets.

However, as the Chinese territorial claims over these islands seem unreasonable with its controversial 'nine-dash line' and its growing assertiveness threatens the peace of the region, India’s needs to play her role as a responsible international country.

**Topic: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability**

6) Do you support the abolition of Section 124A of IPC?  
Substantiate. (200 Words)

Section 124a of IPC, criminalising sedition, is raising intensive debate. Critics have called for removal of the act arguing that

1. Dissent is allowed in a true Democracy under the Right to Freedom of Speech

2. It’s a colonial act and even the British govt removed the clause related to sedition in England recently

3. The section has been used as a political tool

However, I do not support abolishing Section 124(A) because

1. It stems from the constitution of India which under Article 19(2) allows the state to make reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech in order to protect sovereignty and integrity of the nation

2. It’s validity has been upheld by the Judiciary in the Kedarnath case

3. The Arab Spring revolution is a prime example. It started with opposition against the govt policies. However, the dissent soon turned into a chaos, led into a civil war and led to the rise of ISIS

4. India too is vulnerable because of the immense diversity of views in the nation
5. Separatist movements in the country require a strong tool to be dealt against

Hence, section 124(a) in itself must not be banned. What needs to be checked is that it is not used as a political tool. This can be done through

1. Making the conditions under which Sedition can be imposed Objective in nature
2. Having an independent committee to decide when to impose it
3. Making it a bailable and non-cognisable offence

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

2) In the light of increasing demand by dominant castes to include them in OBC list, it is now argued that adopting a non-political and pragmatic approach to reservations is necessary to stop non-deserving sections of population from accruing reservation benefits. In your opinion, in this regard, what approaches can be non-political and pragmatic? Critically discuss. (200 Words)

Reservation was devised as a means to empower the Socially and educationally backward classes of Indian Society. But are they really helping or are they Pushing the society towards more backwardness is a debatable issue.

The ambit of reservation has only increased since the time of their application from SC's and ST's to OBC's and the demand still grows today.

Seeing at the Recent agitations of various Communities for getting Backward Reservation, a more Pragmatic, Prudent and Non Political methodology should be devised.

Some of the Approaches Can be:

1. Statistics Approach for Policy Formulation: Incorporating the Caste Data in the census to identify the exact number of the beneficiaries should be the first step before devising any further policy.

2. Changing Eligibility to Reservations Approach: The eligibility criteria for reservations should be examined and evaluated every 10-20 years and should be seen from a wider perspective. Reservations should not be just based on the Caste.
3. Application Level Approach: One Potent way to reach to the widest section is eligibility of Reservation only at certain levels for example if you want reservation at Education level, it won’t be there at Employment level, by using Adhar it can be incorporated.

4. In and Out Approach: The effect of Reservation in the social and educational upliftment of various classes should be analyzed and those classes which have bettered off should be taken out of the ambit of reservation. Several new vulnerable classes should be targeted and provided with reservation.

5. Development Approach: Looking at Jats and Maratha demand for reservation, economic weakness (Agricultural Failure) is a major cause for raising Reservation, so Development of agriculture and economic growth can help in resolving "Economy Based Demands".

However there are certain bottlenecks to these approach:

1) Vote bank Politics: It vitiates and further entangles the cycle of Reservation.
2) No Reliable Data availability on Caste.
3) Behavioural Change is needed which in itself a slow process.
4) Social Inequalities / Discrimination ingrained at various levels of Society.

Time is ripe for becoming Pragmatic for betterment of society otherwise every now and then we will find a demand arising out of nowhere for Reservations.

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

3) In India, health care remains heavily skewed against the poor. To address this problem, price controls remain an effective answer to ensuring affordability. In this regard, examine the loopholes in drug pricing policy in India and how India can create an accessible and affordable health-care system. (200 Words)

The loopholes in India’s current drug pricing policy can be seen under the following heads –

1. Institutional –

(i) Absence of organic linkage between Department of Pharmaceuticals (under Min of Chemicals and Fertilizers) and Min of Health
(ii) Absence of provision for strict action against doctors not prescribing generic drugs

2. Structural –

(i) Calculation of drug-prices is based on market-prices and not on cost-prices allowing resulting in pharma companies fixing drug prices much over the production cost

(ii) Regional variations in availability of drugs have not been factored into price-calculation

3. Procedural –

(i) FDCs are left out of the price-control regime even though they occupy 50% of the market share

(ii) No provision of linking up drug-availability with schemes like Jan Aushadi to improve accessibility

To improve accessibility the following steps may be considered –

1. Replicate TN model of Jan Aushadi scheme throughout the country

2. Improve awareness of drug-pricing regime through schemes like AMRIT, Rajiv Gandhi Jeevandayi Yojana etc.

To improve affordability the following methods can be applied –

1. Consider issues of compulsory-licencing, evergreening etc. in the upcoming Intellectual Property Policy to improve confidence of foreign investors and attract investments

2. Expedite research into API manufacture in India, instead of importing them from China

Hence, alongwith relooking the pricing policy, it is imperative that non-price related methods of improving drug-access is considered.
4) The union government plans to set up a National Media Analytics Centre (NMAC) to monitor and analyse blogs, web portals of television channels and newspapers, as well as social media. Critically comment on this move. (200 Words)

The proposed NMAC is an attempt by the Union government to monitor online blogs, articles etc. and counter any attack on it based on factually incorrect data.

The criticism against such a monitoring agency are –

1. NMAC may come in conflict with SC judgement in Shreya Singhal Case which had declared Sec 66A of IT Act unconstitutional

2. Monitoring of Social media websites may rekindle protests over violation of individual privacy

3. Can be used for narrow political gains and supress genuine discontent

However, there are certain benefits to such an agency as well –

1. The move is in accordance with Sec 69 of IT Act which allows government to intercept/monitor computer data in the interest of integrity, public order etc.

2. The gathered content can be used to improve government schemes as is being done by private companies to improve their services through big data analytics

3. Can be used to monitor content of unscrupulous parties such as foreign-funded NGOs attempting to sabotage India’s developmental projects

Additionally, the government has prevented any attempts to legislate any Act which infringes the privacy of people. For instance, the GCTOC Bill of Gujarat government has been rejected by three Presidents for including provisions such as tapping of telephone conversations. Hence, the NMAC cannot be criticized outrightly as Government overbearance on people’s freedom.
**Topic:** Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education,

5) It is said that the government’s Choice Based Credit System is also designed to foster privatisation of education. Critically examine the merits and demerits of making higher education a profit-oriented and tradable commodity. (200 Words)

The benefits of making higher education profit-oriented and tradable commodity can be seen below –

1. Will allow the achievement of investment in education at 6% of GDP as was recommended by Kothari Committee
2. Would help foster industry-university linkages as is the model followed in the West
3. Private participation may ensure enhanced efficiency of Higher education initiative like Imprint India which aims to link university research with social issues as part of their CSR commitments
4. Can provide impetus to better internship opportunities, scholarships etc.

However, there are certain negatives as well –

1. Private investments may lead to much higher fees preventing the State from discharging its social responsibility of imparting equitable education under Art 41 of DPSP
2. There are no guidelines for measuring the efficacy of private investors in establishing and managing institutions(pointed out by Yashpal Committee)
3. Educational institutes are mostly registered as trusts and used to channelize non-taxed earnings
4. The barriers to entry into the higher education sector are high as was pointed out by NKC, allowing entry of only the well-connected and rich

In this scenario, certain measures such as mandatory accreditation for all private institutions (e.g. private ITIs) recommended by Yashpal Committee and including the concerns of private sector in the upcoming Education Policy can help improve quality of private investment.
Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education,

6) “The no-detention provision (NDP) and continuous and comprehensive evaluation (CCE) in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RtE) Act 2009 have become arguably the act’s most controversial clauses.” Examine why. (200 Words)

Right to education mandates no detention provision (NDP) and CCE at the elementary school stage. They aim to address the problems of high drop out rates, inequality, educational load etc.

Why such provisions were added..

NDP provision is made as compelling a child to repeat a class is demotivating and discouraging whereas CCE is a procedure that will be non threatening, releases the child from fear and trauma of failure etc.

Why NDP and CCE has become controversial..

A. This policy has led to lackadaisical attitude with there no risk of failing
B. No distinction between good or bad students.
C. Sharp fall in learning outcomes and academic level.
D. The CCE has failed to take off in most schools owing to lack of basic capacity and awareness.

What can be done..

A. counselling to ascertain the reasons why a child is failing constantly.
B. Learning capacity, achievements and progress of a student should be measured from time to time by conducting tests.
C. Additional classes or special coaching for children who are weak in studies.
D. Teacher training programmes must be revised in line with the requirements of CCE.

To conclude, measuring the learning level outcomes of all children on catalyzing a performance and rewarding high performers at every level, changing stakeholders mindset
and preparing them for new provisions in which parents are made accountable for full attendance of their children.

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

7) Discuss why The South Commission (1987-90) was set up, and what were its mandate and recommendations. The Human Development Report (HDR), 2013 titled “The Rise of the South” has recommended setting up a new South Commission. Examine why. (250 Words)

South Commission (1987-90) was set up among the countries of south as despite claiming common aims & solidarity, they knew very little of each other's affairs & real potential of comprehensive relationship.

The NON ALIGNED MOVEMENT gave the South Commission its political identity and fire. Its platform was built around anti-imperialism and liberation from colonization it was the era of rebuilding the colonies as free nations and leaders were innovating ways for that reconstruction. Common colonial past & same current problem bonded the global south countries

The mandate & recommendation of commission were :-

a) Greater cooperation between its members
b) Cooperation with North (developed countries)
c) Non alignment with cold war
d) People centric development
e) Development of Self reliance

The Human Development Report (HDR), 2013 titled “The Rise of the South” has recommended setting up a new South Commission because the third world counties (mainly south) still lagging in various development indicators like HDI, Economic growth, High MMR, Malnutrition. A similar kind of alignment is required to counter common challenges, Joint R&D, Increasing Trade. This will not only increase the bargaining power of Global south in International forums but press the north for economic cooperation.
Topic: Functioning of the judiciary

2) Analyse the significance of the proposal of setting up of a ‘National Court of Appeal’ to hear routine appeals in civil and criminal matters from the High Courts. (200 Words)

SC recently decided to examine the plea calling for setting up of national court of appeal with four regional benches. NCA is intended to hear appeal against HC judgements pertaining to civil and criminal matters.

The proposal is significant for various reasons in present context:

1. Official data shows over 60000 odd pending cases arising out of appeals against HCs in SC

NCA would ease the burden of top court

2. NCA with 4 regional benches would reduce the time and cost borne by litigants in filing cases of appeals. This will improve accessibility to judiciary.

3. Even Bhagwati J. in of the judgement remarked that SC was never intended to be a regular court of appeal.

However, the proposal was earlier objected by Centre and successive CJIs on many grounds:

1. Setting up of NCA would dilute the constitutional superiority of SC.

2. The proposal requires amendment of article 130 which in turn would alter the constitution of SC.

3. There is a concern regarding sharing of powers under Article 136 (special leave petition)

4. Already judiciary is facing shortage of judges and staff. Adding more courts without first filling the posts will not solve the problem

Legal experts opined that focus should be on courts of first instance i.e. trial courts to reduce the need of approaching higher courts.

Nevertheless, the idea of NCA requires thorough consideration that addresses the problem of access and pendency of cases without undermining the aura of SC.
Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests

3) India’s solar power programme has come under intense scrutiny by global political and business leaders, especially given its aggressive intent and extensive trade opportunities. In this regard, recently WTO ruled against India saying India’s solar ambition is against trade rules. Critically comment on this ruling and examine the issues the ruling has given rise to. (200 Words)

Justification of the WTO’s ruling has been given on the following grounds:

1) DCR clause which provides financial assistance of Rs 1cr/MW to implementing agency in National Solar Mission (NSM) violates WTO’s principle by discriminating against the solar power developer of other countries.

2) Domestic subsidies provided for domestic solar components manufacturers under NSM can distort the free trade.

However, this ruling is opposed by India on following grounds:

1) Poverty goal under SDGs: Ruling has completely ignore that the incentives to domestic solar manufacturers are essential to achieve the Sustainable development goal’s (SDG) agenda to reduce poverty.

2) Paris CC Agreement: Ruling violate the spirit of the agreement held during Paris Climate Change (CC) summit 2015.

3) No Commercial Trade: Ruling has not taken into account that India has already assured that the power generated under susidised solar panel will not be sold for commercial trade.

4) Basic Industrial nature: Ruling tends to forget that any indigenous industry require Government support during its initial days to be able to compete internationally one day.

5) Global Gain: India’s solar industry can boost competiton in international market & hence can reduce solar prices for every one.

This ruling has given rise to various issues:

1) Counter Complaint Against US: Almost half of all US’s states provide renewable subsidies. Ruling has create an option for India to file a counter-complaint against US which may result in bitterness in Indo-US relations.
2) Poverty vs Free Trade: For developing and least developed nations, ruling has given rise to another debate poverty vs free trade.

3) CC vs Free trade: Recent ruling describes that a free trade can endanger the clean energy economy and undermine the efforts to tackle CC.

Certainly, a law or rule or norm in a sector can not be an absolute, in view of interconnected and inter-dependence of various sectors. Now, it is the suitable time for WTO for course correction to include other larger issues such as Poverty and Green Economy.

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

4) Critically comment on the selection process for the post of the UN secretary general (UNSG) and the significance of this post. (200 Words)

UNSG is the head of UN secretariat. He is also de facto spokesperson and leader of UN.

**SELECTION PROCESS:**

A UNSG is appointed for 5 years. This appointment materializes after the recommendation of P-5 and approval of UNGA.

This selection process ensures that the veto of selection remains with the most responsible countries and developed countries of the world. However such selection process has some lacunae:

1. UNSG is representative of only 5 nations, not of whole assembly.

2. It undermines the powers of General Assembly which has members from almost all countries.

3. Transparency of such selection is also questionable.

4. Most importantly, leader selected may not have required qualifications of diplomacy, management, experience of IR and communication and multilingual skills.

Such selection is unacceptable because of the significance of the post of UNSG which are as follows:

1. He has an important role to play in peacekeeping and police missions across the world.
2. He has to raise the funds and manage the budget of UN which is more than the GDP of one-third UN countries.

3. He leads a large international bureaucracy and an increasingly complex organization. The complexity of organization lies in the fact that it has to deal with almost all kind of international issues pertaining to the harmony, stability and peace of the world-peace and security, development, human rights, drugs and crime, disarmament, refugees etc.

Thus, time is ripe for expanding UNSC and giving more power to General Assembly so that UNSG can actually be representative of the UN.

**Topic: Issues relating to poverty and hunger**

5) Do you think the poor, through their intensive use of natural resources, are responsible for environmental degradation?

Comment. (200 Words)

Environmental degradation implies deviation from the normal state/composition of the environment surrounding us. Poor people contribute to the cause of environmental degradation in the following ways-

* Demand for firewood leads to cutting and felling of trees
* Jhum cultivation involves clearing of fields by burning them and thus releasing pollutants
* Excessive withdrawal of water due to subsidized power results in land subsidence and water depletion
* Biomass burning results in release of harmful gases in the environment
* Rice cultivation and raising of ruminant livestock contributes to release of methane emissions

However, it is not always the poor that degrades environment and rich have also their share-

* Higher consumption of power puts burden on thermal power plants leading to greater use of coal
* Industrial houses indulge in mining and blasting activities that disturbs isostatic equilibrium and weaken lithologies
* Greater use of water for washing clothes and vehicles leads to excessive pressure on water resources

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I think blaming any single party for the cause of environmental degradation is a myopic idea. Everyone has contributed to this cause in one form or the other and thus it is high time that all stakeholders come forward to realize the vision of sustainable development.