SECURE SYNOPSIS
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**NOTE:** Please remember that following ‘answers’ are NOT ‘model answers’. They are NOT synopsis too if we go by definition of the term. What we are providing is content that both meets demand of the question and at the same time gives you extra points in the form of background information.
Q) Why is cow considered as sacred by some sections of the Indian society? Critically comment how is recent cow politics affecting diversity of India. (200 Words)

**The Hindu**

**Introduction :-** Cow is the most important animal in the Indian society owing to the ancient importance given to cow, its place in Hindu mythology and rituals. It is considered sacred by some sections of Indian society due to following reasons:

- People in the Vedic period were primarily pastoral. They relied on the cows for milk and dung. Cow dung is one of the main fuels in rural India and also served as a fertilizer. Cow dung and cow urine is also thought to be an disinfectant among ancient Indians and used to clean up home. Thus, cow provided the food, fuel, disinfectant and fertilizer for the Vedic people.

- Hindu scriptures have always considered milk as among the highest forms of food – Satvic. Cow’s milk is believed to have a great calming effect and improves meditation.

- A product of cow’s milk – ghee (clarified butter) – is used for Yajna (fire worship). Fire worship is the highest form prayer for Hindus. This adds religious significance to cow’s products.

- Despite its big size, a cow is a calm animal and non-threatening – you could see cows quietly roaming Indian roads. Hindus have always appreciated the tolerance, patience and calmness of the cow. Thus, cows stood for the goodness of Hindu religion and considered a representative of Dharma. Also, a cow’s affection to its calf is a beautiful thing and Vedas greatly appreciated this bonding.

- Sustainability: Ancient Indians probably ate meat when they wandered in the grasslands. However, as soon as they settled and the population near Ganges exploded, they saw the issues cropping. The key was water pollution from the slaughterhouses. Both the leather industry and slaughter industry hugely polluting industries and thus taboos quickly came.

- In some ways, cows for Indians are like the pets in the Western Culture. You don’t see dog meat, cat meat or even horse meat in the US as these are the animals people have in their homes and form a special bonding with. For some Westerners, killing a dog for meat can be as gruesome as killing a human for meat. In the same way, many of us Indians formed a special bonding with our cows.

**The cow politics is affecting the Indian diversity in following ways :-**

- Community which consume Beef :- The new cow slaughtering rule is not completely understood and which results in the conflicts.

- Leather industry :- Animal market one of the important place where Buffalo cow and other animals sold of leather industry where finally they slaughter. The above ban definitely impact such industry.

- Farmer socioeconomic factor :- Well many farmer sell their animals in order to get some money which might be used to compensate the loss faced in agriculture work.

- One part considered cow as sacred and other sectors won’t rely on that. In the light of cow politics, we won’t confined it only to cow, an animal. It also expands up to the platform of Hindu nationalism.

- Hindu Nationalist wants to change pluralist India into a monolithic Hindu nation. This creates a sense of fear among other sects, who are not Hindus.

- By projecting themselves as Cow vigilante, they try to destroy economic power of minority group, who depend on Cow slaughter.

- After eliminating their economy, they are force to depend on monolithic religion, which affects India’s multiculturalism.
- India’s diversity stays alive because of Indian democracy and public questioning. By incorporating religion with cow, they hindered the ability of asking questions from majority hub.

**Topic: Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present**

**significant events, personalities, issues**

Q) Critically analyse Gandhiji’s views on caste, casteism and untouchability. (200 Words)

**The Indian Express**

**Introduction :-**

**Gandhiji on caste and casteism:-**

- Mahatma Gandhi’s views can be understood from Gandhi’s personal practices with regard to caste restrictions and religious obligations; how community life in Gandhi’s different ashrams was organised, since it reflected the basic principles of Gandhi’s philosophy of life and can be seen as an extension of his own practices and some explanations that are generally put forward to clarify some of Gandhi’s writings in which he explicitly defends and validates caste, varna, and some of its restrictions.

- While Gandhi’s opposition to untouchability was consistent and uncompromising, his attitude to the caste system—of which untouchability was a morbid growth—seemed to be marked by a certain ambivalence in the early years after his return from South Africa. The Hindu epics had given him a romantic image of the varnashrama, in ancient India, the fundamental four-fold division, in which castes were the equivalent of trade guilds, and birth was not the sole determinant of status and privilege.

- It seemed to Gandhi that the system, despite its obvious faults, had served as a cushion against external pressures during turbulent periods; he wondered whether it could be restored to its pristine purity and adapted to the changing needs of Hindu society. This was the background of some complimentary references he made to the caste system, which are often quoted against him.

- It must, however, be borne in mind that all the kind words he ever said about the caste system were about what he believed it to have been in the hoary past and not about what it was in his own time. Closer acquaintance with the Indian social scene convinced him that the system was so flawed by superstition, ‘touch-me-not-ism’, social inequality and discrimination, that it was past mending.

- We can see a progressive hardening of Gandhi’s attitude to the caste system. In December 1920, he wrote, ‘I consider the four divisions alone to be fundamental, natural and essential. The innumerable sub-castes are sometimes a convenience, often a hindrance. The sooner there is fusion, the better’.

- Fifteen years later he declared that ‘the varnashrama of the shastras [scriptures] is to-day non-existent in practice. The present caste system is the very antithesis of varnashrama. The sooner public opinion abolishes it, the better’. He suggested that all Hindus should voluntarily call themselves shudras, who were supposed to be the lowest in the social scale.

- He rejected the notion that untouchability was an essential part of Hinduism; it was, he said, a ‘plague which it is the bounden duty of every Hindu to combat’. In the 1920s, he had been prepared to defend taboos on inter-dining and inter-marriage between members of different castes as exercises in self-restraint.

- Gandhi’s reluctance to make a frontal assault on the caste system in the early years may have been a matter of tactic.

**Gandhiji on Untouchability:-**

- Of all the social evils that beset India of his times perhaps none moved Gandhi quite as much as untouchability. He saw it as one of the principal obstructions in reforming and uniting Hindus and by extension the whole of the Indian nation. He realised the whole moral basis for asking for freedom from the colonial masters would be rendered void and hollow if Indians continued to condone and acquiesce in the practice of untouchability. Hence Gandhi focussed on removal of untouchability with an energy and zeal that was unprecedented in the history of Indian social and political movements.

- According to Gandhiji, the practice of untouchability is “a leper wound in the whole-body of Hindu politic”. He even regarded it as “the hate fullest expression of caste”. He made it his life’s mission to wipe out untouchability
and to uplift the depressed and the downtrodden people. As a servant of mankind, he preached that all human beings are equal and hence the Harijans too have a right for social life along with other caste groups.

- Gandhiji believed in the four-fold division of the Hindu society into four varnas. He regarded untouchables as Shudras and not as the Panchamas or fifth Varna or Avarna. Hence he sincerely felt the need for bringing about a basic change in the caste structure by uplifting the untouchables and not by abolishing the caste as such. He appealed to the conscience of the people to realise the historical necessity of accommodating the “Harijans” by providing them a rightful place in the society.

- Gandhiji had much compassion for the Harijans. He said: “I do not want to be reborn. But if I am to be born, I would like to be born an untouchable, so that I may share their sorrows and sufferings.” He was of the opinion that the practice of untouchability was a moral crime. He said that “if untouchability is not wrong, then nothing in the world is wrong.” He believed that a change of heart on the part of the Hindus was essential to enable the social and cultural assimilation of Harijans. He was very much moved by their social distress and started a nationwide movement to remove their disabilities.

Gandhiji’s Campaign against Untouchability:

- Gandhiji who regarded untouchability as a blot on Hinduism wanted to do away with it completely. He wrote in 1920 “... Without the removal of the taint [of untouchability], “Swaraj” is a meaningless term.” He even felt that the foreign domination of our country was the result of our exploitation of almost one-sixth of our own people in the name of religion.

- He advocated positive means for the uplift of Harijans. He addressed various public meetings reposing doctrines of Harijan welfare. He led several processions of Harijans with other upper caste people and made them participate in “poojas, bhajans, keerthans and puranas”.

- He believed that opportunities of education and temple entry would reduce social inequalities between Harijans and caste Hindus. He launched movements for cleaning Harijan residential areas, for digging wells for them and for similar other beneficial things.

- Gandhiji wrote in “Young India” in April 1925. “Temples, public wells and public schools must be open to the untouchables equally with caste Hindus.” He started two journals, ‘Harijan’ and ‘Young India’ through which he advocated his ideas. He started an ashram where people of all castes and creeds could come and stay without any differences.

- Gandhiji served the “Harijan Sevak Sangha” started by the social reformer Takkar Bapa in the year 1932 for working out the religious and social welfare of the Harijans. The organisation opened schools and dispensaries in various places and arranged for free educational facilities and scholarships for Harijan children.

Political Role of Gandhiji:

- As a much respected political leader of the masses, Gandhiji could never ignore the tasks of the removal of untouchability and upliftment of Harijans. Gandhiji entered the Indian freedom struggle in 1919.

- From 1920 onwards, under the leadership of Gandhiji the Indian National Congress became committed to get the independence on the one hand and to the removal of untouchability on the other. In 1920 itself, he declared that “Untouchability cannot be given a secondary place in the programme” of Congress.

Gandhiji’s Protest against the Proposal of Separate Electorate for Harijans:

- Gandhiji was very much against the British policy of “divide and rule”. He condemned the British policy of separating the Harijans from the rest of the Hindu Hence he protested against the proposal of creating separate electorate for the Harijans. He said to Ambedkar who was in favour of the proposal, that “the political separation of the untouchables from the Hindus would be suicidal to the nation.”

- Gandhiji declared at the Minorities Committee of the Second Round Table Conference in London [1932] that “we do not want the untouchables to be classified as a separate class. Sikhs may remain such in perpetuity, so many Muslims and Christians. Will the untouchables remain untouchables in perpetuity? I would rather feel that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived. I will resist it with my life.”

Conclusion :-

Gandhiji has been criticized for not recognizing Caste System prevailing as the root cause of Untouchability. Events like his opposition to separate electoral for depressed class, Poona pact etc sometimes appear doubtful but certainly his fight
for any kind of discrimination helped in restoring feeling of unity among people which resulted in India's independence. His efforts during struggle mobilized the mass against British oppression.

Q) What were the factors that led to abolition of Sati system in the British India? Critically comment on the role of Hindu community and the British in abolition of Sati system. (200 Words)

The Indian Express

Introduction-
Sati Pratha or tradition of widow burning at the funeral pyre of her husband has been a shameful social evil and an age old practice in Indian society. A widow was burned either with her tacit consent or most of the times forcefully by her in-laws after the death of her husband. The practice of Sati or self-immolation by the widow was associated with a kind of virtue. The ‘virtue’ of this practice was defined by a religious logic that it was inauspicious for widow to live after the death of her husband. A widow who agreed to self-immolate herself at the funeral pyre of her husband was considered to be very virtuous and attained to the status of Sati Mata or Sati Goddess.

However culmination of different factors and circumstances helped British administration to end the practice in 1829.

Factors that led to abolition of Sati system in British India-
- Role of Christian missionaries-
The abolition of sati in 1829 owes much to the efforts of the Christian missionaries. They worked against the British government, which was hesitant to take any action against this custom. They sent investigators collected data, compiled statistics of the victims, and they preached and published books and pamphlets against the rite, and thus helped to create in Britain an anti-sati public opinion.

- Role of Enlightened Indians-
Early reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy led a crusade against the evil practice of Sati. He and his followers preached against the Sati, persuaded relatives of the widow to not to let her immolate, kept watch on the river banks etc. He gave references of ancient Hindu texts to the conservatives to disown the practice in letter and spirit. He actively worked with the government to ban the practice.

- Spread of modern thoughts and awareness-
The efforts of reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Christian missionaries helped to create awareness about the evil practice of Sati and to penetrate the modern thoughts in Indian society particularly to the middle class.

- Role of GG William Bentinck-
William Bentinck marshaled the courage to take firm step in abolishing the practice of Sati and issued regulation in 1829 to ban the sati practice.

Role of Hindu community and British in abolition of Sati system-
Hindu Community-
- Though the Hindus like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his followers were in support of abolition of sati practice, they formed the minority group within the Hindu community. Large numbers of Hindu conservatives zealously supported the practice.

- In 1817, the universally respected chief pandit at the supreme court, Mrityunjaya Vidyalankar Chattopadhyaya, was officially asked to give a vyavastha (ruling) on sati. After consulting some 30 texts belonging to various schools, he concluded that though burning was termed optional, it was still not to be recommended. Vidyalankar’s tract became the unacknowledged starting point for Ram Mohan Roy in his anti-sati campaign.

- To build his case, Roy had to selectively enlist the support of ancient rishis like Manu and Yajnavalkya, while condemning authorities such as Gotama. Till this time, the anti-sati campaign was exclusively all-European involving missionaries, government and British public opinion.

- With Roy, sati became a topic of debate among Hindus. Had Bengal’s Hindu leadership rallied behind Roy, the colonial administration would have had no difficulty in banning sati immediately. But it was not Hindus versus sati, but conservative Hindus versus Roy and his supporters, backed by Christian missionaries.
British-

- The British recognized sati as a barbarian practice, but were aware that it had been in vogue since ancient times and enjoyed scriptural support.
- The colonial administration took 40 years to make up its mind. As early as 1789, it instructed its officials in the mofussil not to use official power to prevent sati on the grounds that it was “authorized by the tenets of the religion of the Hindus”. In 1813, guided by court pandits, the government decided to regulate the practice, thus unwittingly encouraging it.
- Finally after the support from Indians like Ram Mohan Roy, the firm decision was taken by Governor General William Bentinck to ban the practice by issuing the regulation of 1829.

Conclusion-

Thus there was great divide among the Hindus about the practice of sati. Majority of Hindus still then supported the practice. It was result of the minority Hindu block led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Christian missionaries that British government could overcome the hesitation to abolish the Sati practice.

Q) “What Indira Gandhi is to Indian politics, Justice Bhagwati is to the Indian judiciary.” Critically comment. (200 Words)

The Hindu

Introduction-

Justice Bhagwati is correlated to the former PM Indira Gandhi because their legacies have endured, having engineered a populist democratisation based on radical rhetoric, but at very heavy costs to the institutions themselves.

Indira Gandhi-

PM Indira Gandhi displayed authoritarian tendencies and even disregarded institutional autonomy to mend the ways in her favour. Indira Gandhi nationalized the 14 major banks in 1969 with paltry compensation and next year attempted to abolish privy-purse which had constitutional guarantee. Further she enacted a 24th and 25th constitutional amendments to undone the effect of Golaknath case.

In the aftermath of Keswanand Bharti judgment, she superseded the three senior-most majority judges leading to their resignations, and appointed Bhagwati and Krishna Iyer to the Supreme Court. The infamous Emergency was declared in 1975 and, by then, eight new judges had been appointed to the Supreme Court by her government. A shocking attempt was made by Chief Justice Ray to review the Kesavananda Bharati decision by constituting another Bench of 13 judges. Thus her critics argue that by overlooking the institutions, Indira Gandhi set a new precedent in Indian political system which could prove dangerous when charismatic personality comes to power.

Justice Bhagwati-

Justice Bhagwati is considered one of the most important faces of Indian Judiciary of the post-independence era. Some of his important rulings can be summarized as follows:

- During the tenure of Indira Gandhi, he upheld the validity of the draconian Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA), and ruled the writ of habeas corpus as invalid during emergency.
- On facing criticism for his partisan judgements during the tenure of Indira Gandhi, he upheld the validity of Article 356 (President’s rule) in Congress led governments in the state.
- Another instance of favouring the incumbent government was observed when he upheld the primacy of DPSP over Fundamental Rights in the case of Minerva Mills.
- In the Judges’ Transfer case, he went on to explicitly support the appointment of judges based on their ideological predilections, i.e., court packing for a ‘committed judiciary’.
- When the constitutionality of the National Security Act, 1980, Mrs Gandhi’s successor statute to MISA, was challenged, he got another chance to somewhat undo the notoriety of the Habeas Corpus case, but he upheld this law as well.

Despite the unpopular ruling as a judge, he is being credited for his work in developing means of increasing the outreach of legal aid in the form of Lok Adalats at the local level, tribunals at the intermediate level, and PIL at the higher level.
More enduringly, instead of grounding the PIL in rules and principles, his view of legal procedure as the enemy of justice meant that all aspects of procedure in PIL cases were diluted, removing all checks on judicial arbitrariness and making it a juggernaut annihilating all procedure. The dilution of locus standi could have been grounded in some notion of ‘representation standing’. In its absence, most PILs are filed by citizens unconnected to any issue. In the Bandhua Mukti Morchacase, he diluted evidentiary standards in PIL cases to an extent that proved catastrophic in the long run. He also was the first judge to openly legislate in a PIL relating to inter-country adoptions, creating another dangerous precedent.

Justice Bhagwati is also famous for his judicial improvisations. Based on the idea that ‘arbitrariness is the antithesis of inequality’, he introduced a new test to examine violations of ‘Right to Equality’.

Even more famous is his pioneering ‘right to life jurisprudence’ in the Maneka Gandhi case. A negative right against the state’s illegal deprivation of any individual’s life or personal liberty has since been interpreted as a positive right to life, making it a receptacle for all manner of socio-economic rights.

His most enduring legacy as a role model for future judges is to think of their judicial role instrumentally as social activists and not mere jurists. A certain looseness of legal language entered Indian appellate judgments and radical rhetoric became the path to power for Indian judges. The value of careful judicial prose declined as fidelity to law no longer mattered, what mattered was the show of ideological commitment.

**Conclusion**

Justice Bhagwati has been criticized for judicial overreach and legislation. Though the actions may have seen as judicial excesses, the importance of his judgements lies in the matter that judges should not only confine themselves to the rulebook, but strive for social justice. In this way former PM Indira Gandhi and Justice Bhagwati stand apart for setting a new precedence in their roles of public service.

Q) Why did the Indian government abolish privy purses and privileges of erstwhile rulers of Indian States? Was this move justified? Examine. (200 Words)

**The Hindu**

**Privy purse**

In India, the Privy Purse was a payment made to the ruling (royal or lower) families of erstwhile princely states as part of their agreements to first integrate with India in 1947, and later to merge their states in 1949 whereby they lost all ruling rights. The Privy Purse was continued to the royal families until the 26th Amendment in 1971, by which all their privileges and allowances from the Central Government would cease to exist, was implemented after a two-year legal battle. In some individual cases however privy purses were continued for life for individuals who had held ruling powers before 1947.

**Why the privy-purse and privileges of the erstwhile rulers were abolished?**

Privy-purse and privileges of the erstwhile rulers were abolished because according to government of the time concept of Privy Purses and special privileges were incompatible with an “egalitarian social order” and violated the principle of equality.

**Was this move justified?**

**Supporters of the move justified it because—**

- Socialist State: Providing such privileges and emoluments to the most prosperous section of society was irrational but also against democratic socialist principles.
- Lack of sympathy for Princes: Considering that most had prospered on the side of the British and never struggled for the Indian independence as British rule provided them luxurious lives for which they had become infamous.
- Egalitarian Social Order: privy purses and special privileges were incompatible with an egalitarian social order.
- Fiscal Consolidation: Indian government had been incurring revenue deficit. Thus government tried to reduce it by abolishing privy purses.

**However following points should also be taken into the considerations—**

- Payments reduced progressively: The total cost to the Indian exchequer in 1947 was Rs.6 crore, which was to be progressively reduced. At the time of abolition in 1970, the total amount payable to all the erstwhile princes was just Rs.4 crore a year.
Small price- privy-purse proved to be small price for what independent India got in return. British had given princely states the option to remain independent. Thus there were great chances of balkanization of India. Hence the overall sum of 6 crores to be given to princely states was nothing vis-à-vis integration of princely states into India.

Peaceful integration- Independent India did not have to fight bloody war to integrate princely states. Great wisdom of Sardar Vallabhi Bhay Patel and V K Menon brought the peaceful integration of princely state with the offer of privy-purse.

Constitutional breach- The most important argument made against the abolition of privy-purse was that, constitution had guaranteed kings and rulers privy-purse and privileges. Thus its abolition was grave act of constitutional breach.

Indian constitution makers were aware of the fact that concept of Privy-purse and privileges was incompatible with the egalitarian social order and goes against the principle of equality. They also knew that princely states had largely helped the British rule and even acted against the Indian national movements at a time. Still, Sardar Patel could bring consensus in the constitution assembly for offering privy-purse because of the critical nature of the time which threatened the dis-integration of India. Had they not offered privy-purse, the integration of princely state would have never been so peaceful and smooth. Privy-purse was given constitutional protection to ensure its continuity and to respect the promise made by government of India. Even though constitutional amendment in 1971 was technically well within its limit and scope, it violated the promise made by constitution makers and it tilts the argument in favor move being ethically unjustified one.

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

Q) Critically comment on the role played by Sabarmati Ashram in India’s struggle for Independence and its significance today. (200 Words)

_The Indian Express_

**Introduction :-** Sabarmati Ashram (also known as Gandhi Ashram, Harijan Ashram, or Satyagraha Ashram) is located in the Sabarmati suburb of Ahmedabad, Gujarat, adjoining the Ashram Road, on the banks of the River Sabarmati, four miles from the town hall. This was one of the residences of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, generally called Mahatma Gandhi, who lived there for about twelve years along with his wife, Kasturba Gandhi.

It was from his base here that Gandhi led the Dandi march also known as the Salt Satyagraha on 12 March 1930. In recognition of the significant influence that this march had on the Indian independence movement the Indian government has established the ashram as a national monument.

**History :-**

On his return from South Africa, Gandhi’s first Ashram in India was established in the Kochrab area of Ahmedabad on 25 May 1915. The Ashram was then shifted on 17 June 1917 to a piece of open land on the banks of the river Sabarmati. Reasons for this shift included: he wanted to do some experiments in living eg farming, animal husbandry, cow breeding, Khadi and related constructive activities, for which he was in search of this kind of barren land; mythologically, it was the ashram site of Dadhi Rishi who had donated his bones for a righteous war; it is between a jail and a crematorium as he believed that a satyagrahi has to invariably go to either place. The Sabarmati Ashram (also known as Harijan Ashram) was home to Mohandas Gandhi from 1917 until 1930 and served as one of the main centres of the Indian freedom struggle. Originally called the Satyagraha Ashram, reflecting the movement toward passive resistance launched by the Mahatma, the Ashram became home to the ideology that set India free. Sabarmati Ashram named for the river on which it sits, was created with a dual mission. To serve as an institution that would carry on a search for truth and a platform to bring together a group of workers committed to non-violence who would help secure freedom for India.

**Its role in freedom struggle :-**

- Experiments in living, farming, animal husbandry, cow breeding, Khadi and related constructive activities. For Gandhi freedom did not just mean no British rule, but freedom from social evils and freedom to live a satyagrahi lifestyle. He developed those in Sabarmati.
- Idea of Dignity in Labour: Intrinsic to the independence movement was upliftment of the masses. Campaigns for cleanliness became a part of the Gandhian idea of a new India and In Sabarmati Ashram both Gandhi Ji and Kasturbaji cleaned the Ashram themselves.

- Schools: While at the Ashram, Gandhi formed a school that focused on manual labour, agriculture, and literacy to advance his efforts for self-sufficiency. During the freedom struggle many Indian schools were opened as an alternate to British schools.

- Dandi March: From the Ashram, on 12 March 1930, Gandhi launched the famous Dandi march (with 78 companions) in protest of the British Salt Law.

- Important decisions taken here: Many national leaders like Pandit Nehru, Vinobha ji, Sardar Patel, Rajaji have visited this place and took historic decisions.

- Home to leaders: Vinoba Bhave lived here as did Miraben.

**Ashram’s relevance today:**

- In times of turbulence or unrest when not so often the civil society raises its voice against the atrocities by holding protests and sitting on dharnas outside the Sabarmati Ashram, the world gets a glimpse of the reminiscences of Gandhi’s freedom struggle in the form of demonstrations, protests, marches and boycotts which formed the core of the political satyagrah movement for freedom in India.

- But it is only a look alike of the yester times—there is hardly the fire, the will or the respect for the very cause of these collective actions. The conscience seems to have become slightly dormant, the inner voice seems to be fading and the will to dream is slowly losing its life.

- But the Ashram reminds us to be hopeful and optimistic. It tells us to not thwart the vision of the Mahatma even in the face of immense adversity. The Ashram embodies the true memory of Gandhi, his pure truth and his utmost humility as his way of life.

- The Ashram still personifies the ideals of truth and humility of a man who once lived there and lived for a nation and died for a nation. A man who wanted these high ideals to be held high always by a nation so great as India.

**Conclusion:** The Ashram tells us about one man’s dedication, determination and ideals but also reminds us of the road we still need to traverse in order to realise Gandhiji’s dream of an India free from injustice. On its 100th birthday, the Ashram had a wish—“We need Gandhiji more than ever”. It muses “How long will I have to wait to see his dreams fulfilled, an India with equality and equal opportunities for all?”

Q) Mahatma Gandhi went on a five-day fast and called off the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1922. Was this fast justified? Critically comment. (200 Words)

**Introduction:**

On 5 February 1922, the police station put into the fire by a violent mob. 22 policemen burnt in it. Gandhi was deeply hurt and called out Satyagraha movement. After this Mahatma Gandhi was arrested and sentenced 6 years jail. The five-day fast undertaken as a penance for the Chauri Chaura disaster began on the evening of Sunday, February 12, 1922.

**Was this fast justified?**

As mentioned earlier, fast by Mahatma Gandhi was taken to repent the violence at Chauri-Chaura. This fast sometimes is criticized because people thought that the violent mob had done no wrong in responding to the firing of policemen. Otherwise those policemen in a way would have killed some people in course of suppression. Further critics say that British were already being unethical in their treatment to Indians. Hence sometimes tit for tat policy is justified in the context of the attack by mob.

However critics fail to understand the very basic principle of Mahatma Gandhi’s ideology. He has always supported that two wrongs do not make a right. “An eye for an eye will make whole world blind”. Thus the unethical behavior of British does not give any justification for the act of the mob.

Further the act of killing itself is morally wrong and as a leader of the movement he took responsibility of the killing. He wrote “Fasts are my lot. I consider myself fortunate for that and regard fasts as good omen. Crimes will certainly take place in this world. We are no doubt responsible for them but they are an indirect responsibility. However, there are
certain crimes for which we are directly responsible. We have but to atone for those. One such crime is that of Chauri Chaura. So, I have decided to fast till Saturday”.

He wrote again, “The brutal conduct of the Chauri Chaura crowd was indefensible. One does not know whether it contained volunteers. Let-the volunteers who violence are punished by all means; but no such mob misconduct can possibly excuse the use of force against innocent and inoffensive men. God has been abundantly kind to me. He has warned me the third time that there is not as yet in India that truthful and non-violent atmosphere which and which alone can justify mass disobedience which can be at all described as civil, which means gentle, truthful, humble, knowing, willful yet loving, never criminal and hateful.

Thus it is very clear that the act of the mob was grossly unethical and unbecoming of true satyagrahi. Hence the fast of Mahatma Gandhi was right and clearly justifiable considering the high moral and ethical principles upheld by him.

**Topic: Post-independence consolidation and reorganization within the country.**

Q) Discuss critically the significance of Naxalbari movement in the modern Indian history. (200 Words)

**EPW**

**Introduction**-

The movement which started to protect the farmers of the Naxalbari region of West Bengal in 1967 has turned into the biggest internal security threat of the country. It was mainly led by local tribal and the communist leaders of the so-called “Siliguri group”. They launched the uprising by giving the call for initiation of armed struggle and started seizing land from jotedars (landlords landowners who owned large plots of land in the region). The importance of Naxalbari movement in modern Indian history cannot be ignored due to its cause and types of impacts it has caused on the society as a whole.

**The importance of this movement can be explained as:**

- **Farmer’s cause:**

  The original purpose of this movement has a very strong morale basis as it gave the voice to one of the most deprived sections of the society. The decade of 60s has many problems linked with farming community and thus at that crucial time it provided platform to put their grievances in front of the society.

- **Ideology establishment:**

  Communism has always been a part of Ideology in country from pro-independence period. The Maoist ideology differs from communism and it has its own character that makes this ideology unique in its type. It boosted the morale of the Maoist force to rise against the injustice being done to them.

- **Security challenge for the forces:**

  One of the main challenge that internal security of the country holds today is the Moist linked insurgency activities. Maoist movement has become increasingly more militarised. The Maoist movement is bent upon overthrowing the Indian state, through a combination of protracted armed struggle, mass mobilisation, and strategic alliances with the oppressed nationalities.

- **Challenge of underdevelopment in some areas:**

  The other dimension of persistent armed rebel by group of people belonging to particular region clearly indicates the underdevelopment that is feeding these activities. It has the given state an opportunity to concentrate more on least and under developed areas in India. It goes against the unity and integrity of India. Naxalists often cause huge loss to the public assets by blocking the roads and by burning state institutions. It has caused huge loss of the life of Indian security personnel and has misled poor Indians.

- **Issues of Human rights:**

  In today’s modern context, the rights are parameters of the level of inclusive development. It further showcased the evils like inequality, poverty and the plight of farmers, trials and aboriginals of India. The movement is taking away precious of trained force soldiers and ignorant followers of the movement in the clashes.
Conclusion
The Naxalbari movement that has got ugly turn through politisation and armed conflicts etc has been the hindrance in the overall development of the country. Government should increase educative and training facilities in the region so that these people can understand the real cause of their backwardness. It can be achieved with good governance, developmental programs, creation of infrastructure etc

Q) Discuss the roots and causes of the current Gorkhaland agitation in Darjeeling. (200 Words)

Introduction
The Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM), called for an indefinite shutdown in the northern West Bengal hills. Principally targeting public offices to press for a separate state of Gorkhaland, the call for a shutdown has caused fresh uncertainty in the region which earlier seemed to be returning to normalcy with the Army deployment.

Roots and causes of the current Gorkhaland agitation in Darjeeling-

- **Historical scuffling**-
  Darjeeling was never supposed to be part of West Bengal. The Gorkhas had captured Sikkim and most parts of the North East including Darjeeling in 1780. But after losing to the British, they surrendered their territories to in the Treaty of Segoulee in 1816. While the British had given Darjeeling to Sikkim, they leased it back in 1835 for strategic and political reasons.

- **Issue of identity**-
  It may be noted that the Nepalese and Lepchas living in Darjeeling and the adjoining areas have a more distinct culture and history than the Bengalis in rest of the state. Historically, they have been sharing cultural and societal values with Sikkim and Nepal since hundreds of years when there were no nation-states the way we interpret at present and no closed boundaries. Thus they have fiercely protected their Nepali language and culture in a broader sense.

- **Tendencies of racism**-
  Despite being part of Indian history from before the British era, the Gorkhas are still looked down as migrants from Nepal, and therefore ‘foreigners’, by many Indians. The people in the hills felt marginalised as a race was evident when the public campaign for Prashant Tamang—a local boy from the hills who made it to the talent show Indian Idol in 2008—turned political.

- **Discriminatory treatment**-
  The Gorkhas have always maintained that they have received the short end of the stick because Bengali-speaking politicians don’t understand or care enough about their needs or issues.

- **Weak Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA)**-
  It was only six years ago that the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) signed a peace deal of sorts with this same government, led by chief minister Mamata Banerjee—which in turn led to the establishment of the GTA, the empowered avatar of the erstwhile Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council, in 2012.

The West Bengal’s plan to quell the demand for Gorkhaland by giving the locals more autonomy brought only limited results. The GTA, arguably still weaker than its counterparts in other states, was never satisfied with the powers it had been given and publicly accused the state government of betraying its trust.

- **Imposition of Bengali**-
  The latest bid by the GJM for a separate Gorkhaland state was triggered by an announcement by the Mamata Banerjee government that Bengali would be made compulsory in schools across the state. While West Bengal is a largely Bengali-speaking state, the northern hilly areas of Darjeeling, Kurseong and Kalimpong are inhabited by mostly Nepali-speaking people, who, understandably, have a problem with the diktat of the West Bengal government.
• Political rivalry-
The current flare-up is the result of a political turf war between CM Mamata Banerjee and her Trinamool Congress (TMC) party on the one hand, and the GJM and its ally, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), on the other.

Conclusion-
Viewed thus, the Gorkhaland movement is essentially a case for identity. The cause is legitimate and it cannot be subject to a veto by Kolkata. Though the debate over the separate statehood to Gorkhaland will continue for long time, there is need true decentralization of the powers to local autonomous institutions like GTA. Further there should be genuine efforts to integrate the marginalized Gorkha community with the rest of the India for peaceful solution of the issue.

Topic: History of the world will include events from 18th century

Q) What are the dangers of hyper-nationalism? Discuss from the experiences in modern world history. (200 Words)

The Hindu

Introduction-
Hyper-nationalism is defined as having extreme pride for one's country, its people, culture and values. Hyper nationalism tends to see their nation as the greatest of all and may have attitude of inferiority towards the other people and nations. The most important objective of Hyper-nationalists is to uphold the greatness of their country at any cost.

Dangers of Hyper-nationalism-

• It allows the government to control the country on the premise of national pride. Nationalism has been used for centuries as a propaganda tool to manipulate people into buying into the governments agenda.

• Hyper-nationalism does not allow critical engagement in any sphere of life. It projects anything critical of the ruling party as anti-national. It operates hand in glove with casteism and religious fundamentalism. This attitude keeps little room for the improvement in the governance of the country. This also restricts the reformative scope of the government.

• Hyper nationalism follows 'One size fits all' and 'Top-down' approaches and also possesses the authoritarian attitude in its governance.

• It discourages the international relations of a nation. Nationalism creates xenophobes. It creates the idea that outsiders are not to be trusted.

• Hyper nationalism also breeds the racism. Hyper nationalists think they are of pure blood and the main contributor towards the progress of their nation. Minorities tend to be treated with contempt and discriminatory attitude.

• Hyper-nationalism helps to keep the nation perpetually in conflict, with everyone at war with the other. The three main groups are those who believe in the supremacy of their nation are on the far right, those who have all inclusive and democratic attitude are on the central side and those who want treatment of equality and positive discrimination for historically discriminated on the far left.

• Hyper nationalism has also waged many wars and battles with the other countries thereby disturbing the global peace in the history to establish their dominance over others.

Experiences from the modern world history-

• The Hyper or extreme form of nationalism was strongly witnessed in Europe during the first half of 20th

• First decade of 20th C witnessed extreme nationalism in Balkan region, Austria, Russia, Germany etc which led to the precipitation of 1st WW in 1914.

• The most evident example was Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy led by Adolf Hitler and Bennito Musolini respectively. This Hyper nationalism in Germany had a racist angle towards the non-Germans. Millions of Jews were wiped out through systematic government-led genocide.

• The Hyper nationalist tendencies were also visible in America in 19th and 20th It had racial dimension and was directed against the blacks. Martin Luther King Jr had to wage Civil rights movement in mid 1950s to assert the rights of the black people. Even as late as 2013, the movement named 'Black lives Matters' was organized to protest against the systematic discrimination against the blacks by state-led police forces in USA.

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Conclusion-
Government is the main instrument through which hyper nationalism is systematized and institutionalized. Thus it is the chief responsibility of government to check the hyper nationalist tendencies of the citizens and to desist from giving any patronage to it.

Q) Why did the Six-Day War took place and what were its consequences? Do you see its repercussions even today? Examine. (200 Words)

The Hindu

Introduction-
Six-day war was fought between June 5 and 10, 1967 by Israel and the neighboring states of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria. It resulted into decisive victory for Israel and changes the future course of events in west Asia forever.

![Image of Israeli territorial gains following the Six-Day War, 1967]

Reasons for the Six-day war-
- The very creation of Israel in the year 1948, out of the British "protectorate" of Palestine.
- The forging of a kind of pan-Arab nationalism, with its main target being Israel.
- In January 1964 an Arab League summit, claimed that the diversion of the Jordan waters by Israel (for its national carrier program) multiplies the dangers to Arab existence and decided to deprive Israel of 35% of the National Water Carrier capacity, by a diversion of the Jordan River headwaters to the Yarmouk River. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) attacked the diversion works in Syria in March, May, and August 1965, perpetuating a prolonged chain of border violence that linked directly to the events leading to war.
- On 23 May 1967, Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran in defiance of the guarantees given by the “maritime Powers” in 1956. In effect this operated as a blockade against all Israel shipping to the East. Israel used this as the justified cause for declaring war on the Arab alliance.
- Increased tensions and skirmishes along Israel’s northern border with Syria were the immediate cause of the third Arab-Israeli war.
- During May 1967, Israel came to know about a plot being hatched against it by Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, and hence it decided to initiate an attack against them from before-hand.
Consequences of the war-

- **Immediate**-
  1. Israel came into possession of the Sinai desert up to the Suez Canal, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem including the Old City, and the Golan Heights.
  2. Israel announced an official policy of “territories for peace” i.e. withdrawal to secure borders to be negotiated, in exchange for “full peace” and recognition.

- **Long term**-
  1. The war has drawn permanent wage in the Arab world and Israel. It further strengthened anti-Israel sentiments among the Arab countries, and is considered by many historians as the reason for the growth of Palestinian nationalism, and the creation of PLO.
  2. Though there were anti-Israel sentiments an all Arab countries, Arab countries could never stand up to Israel together after the Six-Day War. Egypt, the strongest of them all, would take years to recover from the humiliation it suffered. Nasser died in three years, and with him died the idea of pan-Arabism.
  3. The war reinforced Israel’s military might in the region. No Arab country but Egypt would dare attack Israel directly after the June War.
  4. It turned Israel into an American asset in West Asia. The United States realized the true strategic potential of Israel only after the June War.
  5. The war led to the beginning of the upgrading of the military apparatus and technological stature of Israel, for the purpose of its defense.

Israel made peace with Egypt following the Camp David Accords of 1978 and completed a staged withdrawal from the Sinai in 1982. However, the position of the other occupied territories has been a long-standing and bitter cause of conflict for decades between Israel and the Palestinians, and the Arab world in general.

Jordan and Egypt eventually withdrew their claims to sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza, respectively. Israel and Jordan signed a peace treaty in 1994.

After the Israeli conquest of these newly acquired ‘territories’, it launched a large settlement effort in these areas to secure a permanent foothold. There are now hundreds of thousands of Israeli settlers in the West Bank. They are a matter of controversy within Israel, both among the general population and within different political administrations, supporting them to varying degrees. Palestinians consider them a provocation. The Israeli settlements in Gaza were evacuated and destroyed in August 2005 as a part of Israel’s unilateral disengagement plan of that time.

**Are their repercussions of the even today?**

- **Territory over peace**-
  Policy of favoring territory over peace is continued by Israel, making the region extremely volatile. Despite international efforts like Oslo Accord for recognition of Palestinian state, Israel continued its advancement to East Jerusalem, West Bank. According to report of UNHRC, Israel aggressively violated human rights in the region.

- **Instability**:
  The region west Asia is full of instability and part of the reason can be attributed to the six-day war that pushed Israel into dominant position vis-à-vis Arab states.

- **Persistent hostility**:
  There has been no conclusive peace agreement and no efforts from either side to establish peace among all the countries. Hence the both the parties view each other with skepticism and hostility.

**Conclusion**-

Six-day war was one of the most important war fought in the history that had monumental effects. Israel has emerged as the strongest power in the region after the war. However her occupation of Arab and Palestine territories have resulted into long stand-off between Arabs and Israel and millions of Palestinians are living a life of hell. Israel could diffuse the situation if it decides to come to negotiations with the Arabs and make respectful place for the Palestinians.
Q) Why was Germany divided after the Second World War? What factors contributed in its unification in 1990? Examine. (200 Words)

The Hindu

Introduction-

The reunification of Germany in 1990 is one of the most important historical milestones of the European history after 1945. It once again created the strong Germany in the Europe and signaled the end of cold war.

Why Germany got divided after 2nd WW?

- AFTER its defeat in World War II, Germany was divided into four zones under the control of the United States, Britain, France and the former Soviet Union. The division was initially decide as provisional one. What the Powers desired was an economically united Germany rather than a divided one because the country’s economic recovery was a prerequisite of the revival of postwar Europe.

- However, the postwar development of Germany turned out to be different from the settlement of the Potsdam Conference (1945). The Powers failed to adhere to what they had decided in the conference and began to pursue their own interest in their occupation zones.

- Different policies were carried out in the four zones, so economic unity and inter-zonal agreements had never been achieved. The most serious divergence existed in the US zone and the Russian zone, and consequently frictions developed between them.

- The problem of reparations was the focus of dispute. For the Russians, the extraction of the greatest possible amount of reparations from Germany was of primary importance, so equipment was removed from the German factories and products were seized. For the Western Powers, the economic reconstruction of Germany was given priority.

- There was also a disagreement on shaping postwar Germany. The former Soviet Union extended the communist economic and political systems towards its sphere of influence. The government, police and factories were dominated by communists. Nationalisation and socialisation went on in full swing.

- Land was collected and then redistributed to the peasants. Bigger industries and commerce were transferred from the private sectors to state ownership. As a result, the Russian zone developed separately from the Western occupation zones.

- In the Western zones, a different pattern of polices was carried out. The Allies preferred to stop Germany from posing as a menace to the world order by making it a peaceful member of the international community. The United States hoped for a democratic, pluralistic and capitalistic Germany that could become a market and partner of its trade.

- After about a year of unpleasant experience, the Americans, British and French realised that they could hardly co-operate with the Russians on the German economic reconstruction and political unification, so they decided to work on their own. The release of the Truman Doctrine in March 1947 ended all the possibility of a US-Soviet co-operation and dashed the hope of German reunification as well. Later that year, one more step was taken to consolidate the unity of a West Germany. Three western nations decided to unify there areas into single block. The merger of the three Western zones was completed by mid-1948.

- The Russians reacted by introducing the Ostmark in their occupation zone and the whole of Berlin. They also suspended all land and air traffic to Berlin. This was known as the "Berlin Blockade".

- The Western Allies had to carry out massive airlift to provide food and other supplies to the West Berliners. The Russians eventually agreed to put an end to the blockade as it was costing more than it was worth, but the fundamental differences between Russia and the Western Powers on Germany could not be reconciled. The Berlin Blockade accelerated the setting up of a separate government in the Western zones.

- The Federal German Republic (West Germany) was set up on September 21, 1949. This was followed by the setting up of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) with East Berlin as its capital a month later.

Factors contributing Germany’s unification-

- Economic crisis in East Germany- East Germany’s economy and infrastructure underwent a swift and near-total collapse. While East Germany was long reckoned as having the most robust economy in the Soviet bloc, the removal of Communist hegemony revealed the ramshackle foundations of that system. The East German mark was
worthless outside East Germany for some time before the events of 1989–90, and this further magnified the problem.

At the same time West Germany prospered under the western block. People of the East Germany wanted prosperity like West Germany and naturally got attracted to the idea of unification.

- **Role of Mikhail Gorbachev**- In contrast to his predecessors, Gorbachev regarded as necessary to change radically not only the internal economic and political conditions but also the foreign policy of the Soviet Union including the attitude to the East European countries. He gave indications that East European countries had right to make their own policies. It created hopes and aroused the aspirations among both the Germany about the reunification

- **Weakening of hold of USSR**-

  With weakening of hold of USSR over its satellite states, many states started overthrowing the communist governments. This gave the hope of reunification to the people and governments of both East and West Germany.

- **Role of Helmut Kohl**-

  The crucial role in the process of the German reunification was played by the West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl who, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, clearly declared his intention to reunify both parts of the divided German state. On 28 October he gave in Bundestag an important speech in which he emphasized necessity of a speedy reunification of both German republics. On 28 November 1989 he presented so-called ten-point plan for German reunification. Initially, no timetable was proposed. However, events rapidly came to a head in early 1990. First, in March, the Party of Democratic Socialism—the former Socialist Unity Party of Germany—was heavily defeated in East Germany’s first free elections. A grand coalition was formed under Lothar de Maizière, leader of the East German wing of Kohl’s Christian Democratic Union, on a platform of speedy reunification.

  The integration of the two states was done also at the economic level. The date of declaration of the monetary union between the GDR and the FRG was set and the union came into effect on 1 July 1990.

  On 23 August 1990 the East German parliament adopted at its extraordinary session the reunification of both parts of Germany and on 31 August 1990 the Reunification Treaty was signed by both the groups.

  **Conclusion**-

  Reunification of Germany was one of the most important events of the 20th century. It gave shape to the wishes of the Germans and healed the wounds of the division. With the unification, Germany regained its glory and changed the course of history forever.

Q) Countries colonised by Europe’s imperial powers had vastly divergent economic fates after the end of colonial rule. Some prospered into extraordinarily rich economies, while others made very little progress. Examine the causes of this divergent economic fates of colonies. (200 Words)

**The Hindu**

**Introduction** :- The idea of colonial hegemony propagated for the better part of 18th,19th and the 20th century. The resources being drawn out from the colony were responsible for fuelling and sustaining Industrial revolution of the 19th century.

As the colonialism ebbed to it’s nadir in the second half of the 20th century, certain fissures began emerging amongst various colonies. Some proposed to great heights, some undertook growth at a mediocre pace and a few others developed at the snail pace. There were various reasons for these differences. Some of them are-

- Quality of institutions – The quality of institutions developed and put in place by the colonial masters was one of the major factors. In places where the institutions were long lasting, like in Spain, they propelled after colonial growth of the economy. At other places, where institution were only of make shift type and meant for quick plunder, like in Nigeria, these institutions itself become a burden on the overall system.

- Ratio of European population to the Total population – The colonies where the European population was significant as compared to indigenous population, those colonies were favoured by the inflow of technology and modern ideas which helped them shape up their “after-colonial” economy. The best example is of America where Colonial masters drove away the indigenous American Indian population.
Climatology of the colony – The European Masters made home to the places where climate was favourable to the them. Hence, these colonies prospered (consider temperate climate in USA). On the other hand, in the tropical countries, the Europeans didn’t settle due to the unfavourable climate and plundered these colonies in quick time, drying them of their resources. For eg. The Asian tigers.

Democratic system – India where British introduced democracy prevailed later and allowed for people’s will to guide the development.

Different attitude towards decolonization – Where British invested a lot in the infrastructure like Railway, educational institute leading to better growth in later years. On other hand, Belgium barely invested anything in Congo leaving it bare.

Divide and Rule – African division on the straight lines partitioned several countries into numeral warring tribes leading to civil war in several African countries.

Some countries like Zimbabwe witnessed rapid growth in initial years because of increased White settlement and their control over key land and industrial resources. But this growth was not widely shared among mass population and later control by native population put their growth rate on backfoot.

International cooperation – British strategy of cooperating with its colonies through commonwealth further guided the development and helped colonies to secure a status in the international forums leading to better developments.

Fight back by the countries like Egypt to control critical asset of Suez canal led to enormous increase in their revenue thus better spending on healthcare and education.

Nature of leadership- Military leadership proved to be a bane. Benevolent dictatorship worked well in Malaysia. Populist leadership worked well to mitigate colonial wounds but was unsustainable in the long term.

Variation of resources and geographical conditions- The variation in the distribution of resources also played a role in progress as in the early USA. Geographical features hindered growth as in African nations and in some regions of India. Location and coastline benefitted the Asian tigers. But some countries like Australia rose above such barriers.

Human resource- Some nations developed to manufacturing hubs due to cheap labour. nations where people had a more progressive mindset became technologically advanced. Countries like India and Pakistan where people were not very open to change faced hurdles in keeping up with the pace of other countries.

**Topic: Political philosophies**

Q) What do you understand by globalism and nationalism? It is said that today the dominant dichotomy has become globalism versus nationalism. Discuss. (200 Words)

*The New York Times*

**Introduction**-

Globalization implies the opening of local and nationalistic perspectives to a broader outlook of an interconnected and interdependent world with free transfer of capital, goods, and services across national frontier. It is the worldwide movement toward economic, financial, trade, and communications integration.

**Globalization/Globalism**-

- Globalization is the only way to enhance the trade relations between any two countries. It is the medium to eliminate the global trade barriers.
- Globalization is about the open communication not within the country but across the world. It is uniting the world into a single entity.
- Globalization is not about the cultural imperialism but about the cultural exchange where the different ethnic groups from various companies try to know each other’s culture.
- People can change their perception and habits. It is the impact of globalization. It doesn’t teach them to forgo their patriotism for the country.
Nationalism-
- Nationalism is a multidimensional social construction reflected in the communal identification with one’s nation. It is a political ideology oriented towards gaining and maintaining self-governance, or full sovereignty, over a territory of historical significance to the group (such as its homeland).
- Nationalism therefore holds that a nation should govern itself, free from unwanted outside interference, and is linked to the concept of self-determination. Nationalism is further oriented towards developing and maintaining a national identity based on shared characteristics such as culture, language, race, religion, political goals or a belief in a common ancestry.
- Economic Nationalism gives birth to protectionism that is really harmful for the overall global economy. And if globally economy declines, it will even have the same impact on our country.

Globalism Vs Nationalism-
- Globalization is said to destroying the culture and heritage of a number of countries and the ethnic groups surviving in it.
- The greatest negative impact of globalization is seen on the national language. The people who communicate in regional languages are thought to be backward and illiterate.
- Western world is clearly dominating the entire world. It is killing the nationalism under the shadow of globalization.
- Cultural Imperialism is the drawback arising from the globalization that in a way forces the developing or under-developed countries to follow the ideas and use the products set by the West.
- Globalization leads to a higher percentage if immigration that can have a negative impact on the social structure of the country.

Globalization and Nationalism are said to be the two different parts of the same coin. In a way, both are connected with each other, and still are very different from each other. In the changing world, where world is shrinking with the use of latest technology, people are finding it tough to stay in touch with their own sense of nationalism.

In current context the globalization versus nationalism has become an important dichotomy and issue of controversies. The issues have mainly become a crucial discourse in developed countries through a political channel. **If we see at deeper level, we can find out that:**
- The new nationalists seek to reassert control over their own countries. Their targets are global structures such as the European Union, the World Trade Organization (WTO), NATO, the United Nations and the North American Free Trade Agreement. However, the new nationalists posit no credible plans for replacing the institutions of globalization they seek to tear down.
- The globalists have underestimated the collateral damage globalization has inflicted upon workers. They placed too much weight on the strategic advantages of trade and dismissed too readily the value that many ordinary citizens still attach to national borders and cultural cohesion.
- Intense backlash against immigration (and globalism) is cultural, not fundamentally economic. The voters for Brexit and for Trump were bothered less by competition from immigrants than by their perceived effect on the country’s linguistic, religious and cultural norms. This is perhaps the most troubling aspect of this new nationalism.

The great question for the world may be this: How do we reap the gains of global cooperation in trade, culture, education, human rights, and environmental protection while respecting—rather than diluting or crushing—the world’s many local, national, and other parochial identities, each with its own traditions and moral order? In what kind of world can globalists and nationalists live together in peace is the solution that we need to find out.
**Topic: Salient features of Indian society**

Q) Should cow be made national animal. Critically examine pro and against arguments.

(200 Words)

*The Hindu*

**Introduction**

Cow has always been an important part of culture in India. The pastoral Rig Vedic Aryan people established the importance of cow that has been continued till date though mythology and stories. The recent debate over protection of cow and violence linked with it has made it an essential point to discuss upon.

**History of Cow protectionism:**

- The cow protection movement has been a religious and political movement aiming to protect the cows whose slaughter has been broadly opposed by Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs. While the opposition to slaughter of animals including cows has ancient roots in Indian religions, the cow protection movement traces to the colonial era British India.

- The earliest activism is traceable to Sikhs of Punjab who opposed cow slaughter in the 1860s. The movement became popular in the 1880s and thereafter, attracting the support from the Arya Samaj founder Swami Dayananda Saraswati in the late 19th-century, and from Mahatma Gandhi in early 20th-century.

- The cow protection movement gained broad support among the followers of Indian religions particularly the Hindus, but it was broadly opposed by Muslims. Numerous cow protection-related riots broke out in the 1880s and 1890s in British India. The 1893 and 1894 cow killing riots started on the day of Bakri-id, a Muslim festival where animal sacrifices are a part of the celebration.

- Cow protection movement and related violence has been one of the sources of religious conflicts in India. Historical records suggest that both Hindus and Muslims have respectively viewed “cow protection” and “cow slaughter” as a religious freedom.

**Arguments in favour**-

**Constitutional provision:**

Directive principles of state policy mandate to protect the cow by improving its breed. This has a moral as well as scientific meaning. Protection given to the cow will be in line with the DPs mentioned in the constitution of India. Prohibition of cow slaughter is part of the Constitution, under Article 48, “Organisation of agriculture and animal husbandry”, which reads: “The State shall endeavor to organise agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines and shall, in particular, take steps for preserving and improving the breeds, and prohibiting the slaughter, of cows and calves and other mulch and draught cattle.”

**Component of Ayurveda industry:**

Cow milk and ghee has prime importance in Ayurveda industry and thus conservation of Indian breed will has direct positive impact on the Ayurveda industry.

**Animal breeding improvement:**

It has been scientifically found out that the local cow verities are far more stringer and resistant that imported foreign breeds. The conservation of local cow breed is prerequisite for the preservation of existing genetic diversity. It will lead to improvement in dairy industry and breeding since more infrastructures will be developed.

**Arguments against**:

- Cows are domesticated animal, so are not covered under WPA1972, so many state govt. have made specific rules on cow slaughter regulation.

- Banning the cow slaughter will hamper the many labour intensive industries. As India is already suffering from the problem of unemployment, such a step will definitely lead to more unemployment.

- Many communities have different opinion on cow slaughter which is directly linked to the religious belief and faith. The role of government in this case may hurt the religious feelings of minority communities.
- India earns a good foreign exchange in beef exports. The ban on cow slaughter may have negative impact on the export component of Indian trade. Leather industry has traditionally been the strongpoint of India in international market.

- The deliberations on making cow as national animal to be done by purely dispassionate and apolitical attitude involving all the groups and stakeholders is notrationally justified and do not go in spirit of constitution of India.

Conclusion-

Making cow as a national animal is just a symbolic gesture. The more important thing is how government and people make efforts to improve overall condition of the cattle in India so that they are more productive. Without improving their condition, just making them as national animal will make no difference to actual issue.

Q) “Multiculturalism is part of the Indian society and any attempt to monochrome it will be self-defeating.” Critically comment. (200 Words)

The Hindu

Multiculturalism describes the existence, acceptance, or promotion of multiple cultural traditions within a single jurisdiction or single political territory. Multicultural ideologies and policies vary widely, ranging from the advocacy of equal respect to the various cultures in a society, to a policy of promoting the maintenance of cultural diversity, to policies in which people of various ethnic and religious groups are addressed by the authorities as defined by the group to which they belong.

Multiculturalism that promotes maintaining the distinctiveness of multiple cultures is often contrasted to other settlement policies such as social integration, cultural assimilation and racial segregation. Multiculturalism has been described as a “salad bowl” and “cultural mosaic”.

The culture of India has been shaped by its long history, unique geography and diverse demography. India’s languages, religions, dance, music, architecture and customs differ from place to place within the country, but nevertheless possess a commonality. The culture of India is an amalgamation of these diverse sub-cultures spread all over the Indian subcontinent and traditions that are several millennia old.

Diversity is also existent in the very idea of free markets, especially in the mental make-up of the youth of the country whose aspirations and impatient to ‘acquire’ socio-economic upward mobility is defined by their sense of entitlement to have multiple choices in what they eat, wear and believe in.

This cultural diversity stands as the strength of India and not its weakness. The real threat to Indian unity arises when single culture dominates others or when there are attempts to enforce the single cultural identity on all the people in the country.

The attempt to monochrome its tradition results into confusion, distress among minorities, hatred towards other cultures, languages and tradition. This could also breeds non-tolerant attitude among people towards each other’s culture, practices and traditions which is a bad for democracy.

In India too there have been instances where threads of multiculturalism were shaken and attempts were made to enforce majority culture. Cow vigilantism and moral policing have emerged as threat to minority rights and has created serious mistrust among different communities.

In a democracy like India there should be enough space for dissent and diversion from the mainstream thinking. In some of the instances, such dissent and diversion from the mainstream thinking in colleges and universities were crushed with the brutal force by the state.

Seeing and projecting the country as a unidimensional monolith may seem to be an easy way out but will be both fruitless and counterproductive, hindering our peaceful and sustainable development.

The surge in confidence in individuals and communities in today’s India has resulted in a reinvention of identities and helped them express resistance to the emergent nationalism in innovative forms. Their expressions not just make us aware of the multicultural character of our country but also show that attempts to monochrome its composition will be a failure.

Any kind of action to tamper with the idea of diversity will only result in conflicts and resistance, and will impede the country’s economic development, which characterizes the aspiration of all Indians today.
Q) In the light of contemporary issues. Critically comment on the role of religion in the Indian society. (200 Words)

The Indian Express

Introduction-
With the communal issues flaring up once again in India, there has been intense debate on the right and wrong practices of religions across the India. While the debate should always be there, the current debate in India is more about pointing out the shortcomings of other’s religion and defending all the practices of one’s. Thus there is need to have critical perspective towards all regions to find out what role does religion play in one’s life.

Role of religion in the Indian society-

- Religions arose when people were deficient in their understanding of fundamental issues — the core function of religion is to set people free.
- Religion serves as a beacon of light when it helps to make us better human beings. For that, religion has to be rational, and our practise of it, reasonable.
- Religion turns human beings towards God, so that they are led out of narrow-mindedness.
- All the religious preachers from Gautama Buddha to Prophet Mohammad and from Bhagawan Mahavira to Guru Nanak and Swami Vivekanand, emphasized the need of tolerance, love and respect for one another. Their followers do uphold these preachers in high esteem but falls short of following their true teachings.
- Further religion plays important role in fostering the moral and ethical values among the followers and discourage them from following the socially deviant behavior. The religions are the binding glue of the society which promotes common brotherhood.
- However in India recent some of the instances have belied all these expectations. Hindus and Muslims are vigorously defending the practices like cow vigilantism and triple talaq respectively. Rather than looking from neutral and critical perspective at these issues, what is happening is mud-slinging at each other.
- From a constitutional angle, freedom of choice is basic to the practice of religion. This assumption is spiritually sound — but religious agents who claim protection under Article 25 flout this freedom. No religion respects the freedom of an individual to make free choices with respect to the religion he or she wishes to practice. All religions function on the basis of birth. No religion gives freedom to individual to select another religion or forsake one’s religion. Thus article 25 is practically nullified.
- Every religious establishment is keen to focus on religious rituals: No one presents the philosophical core. The followers of one religion must rise against the unfair and exploitative practices of their religion. But this rarely happens.
- In a multi-religious society like India, it is dangerous to allow religious wheeler-dealers to wreak havoc. Every religious agenda that promotes alienation among citizens should be disallowed. Religions need to be libererated from so-called places of worship. Temples, mosques, churches, gurudwaras and so on have nothing to do with godliness.

However all these does not mean that religions have failed completely to play their role. Even at present many religious leaders and institutions are actively engaged in social service not only for their followers but irrespective of religion. Persons like mother Teresa despite being Christian worked for welfare of poor of the country largely consisting of Hindus and Muslims.

Conclusion-

The most important contribution that religions can make to India is by counterpointing expediency, which drives politics and statecraft with long-term wisdom. Total submission to expediency cheapens a nation. Time attains significance only under the aegis of eternity. Indeed, religions are meant to embody the intimations of eternity within the fleeting nature of man-made systems, structures and institutions.
Q) Differentiate between the middle class and the new middle class in India. Discuss the growth and structure of the new middle class in India. (200 Words)

EPW

INTRODUCTION –

Class is a social identity of an individual. Three such prominent identities are – low, middle and high class. Now a new class seems to be emerging from the middle class named as “new middle class”. The huge lower middle class, has led new middle class expansion in quantitative terms.

Definition of middle class itself is not clear and difference between it and it’s new variant is more sketchy. It is largely based on income and consumption level of the person. This class consists of people who spend $2 to $10 per capita per day.

GROWTH of NMC –

- It is attributed to rise in income levels due to open trade, expansion of service economy, rise in average education level, spread of IT, societal reforms, released caste barriers and changed dietary habits.
- It’s growth is not confined to a particular time but is perceived largely since 1991 economic reforms.
- In the initial period between 1999–2000 and 2004–05, growth of the new middle class was modest. In the latter period from 2004–05 to 2011–12, the size of the new middle class almost doubled, totalling over 600 million individuals, or half of India’s population.
- Moreover, this expansion was witnessed across both rural and urban areas, as well as in a majority of the states of India.

The increase in consumption level of individual has resulted into the emergence of this new class. The reasons for emergence of this class are –

- **Green revolution**-
  Due to increase in agricultural surplus the per capita expenditure has increased manifold. Hence the new middle class constitutes majority in Region of Punjab, Haryana and Western UP.

- **Socio Economic Reforms**-
  The various socio economic reforms done by the government after independence and 1991 reforms.

- **Globalisation**-
  The new services brought by economic liberalisation and the private sector proved as catalyst for income and expenditure of middle class. Private sector increased the per capita income of individual and promoted them to spend more.

- **Education and Mass media**
  The growth in education resulted in demand for more needs to live in global world of television, advertisements, new products for consumption. It created a lure among people to access those goods to live a prosper life as claimed by the advertisements.

- **Role of technology**-
  Technology made man’s life easier, using the commercial technological goods such as water filter, television, refrigerator, mobile phones, and now internet also. This has increased the consumption expenditure.

CHARACTERISTIC DIFFERENCES –

- **Income** – The income of a person of new middle class (NMC) ranges from $2 to $10 per capita per day with a bend more towards the upper limit whereas a middle class person has an uncertainty in his income but it is majorly near around $2 to $6 per capita per day.

- **Expenditure** – People from NMC have many luxury items, plenty of leisure time, accessibility to information and have wide influential power. They have surplus money to accumulate the same for investment whereas a middle class person has only enough to spend on his daily needs with some money to invest on entertainment periodically. They go beyond the basics to high-priced segments in their expenditure and in basics they spend on ultra-modern.
Caste structure – Qualitatively, the new middle class is quite different from the earlier middle class in India. While the upper castes dominate the new middle class, considerable proportion of lower caste households too have entered the new middle class.

Occupation structure – There is diversity within the new middle class also in terms of occupation. A large section of the lower middle class is employed in occupations similar to that of the poor, that is, in agriculture and construction activities, whereas several upper middle class households are engaged in new service jobs in finance, insurance and IT sectors.

Non-homogeneity – The new middle class in India is not a homogeneous entity, but consists of quantitatively and qualitatively distinct subgroups. The lower middle class merits attention for its large size and rapid growth. The upper middle class is important, for it symbolises the global middle class, which other classes below it perhaps aspire to emulate. It is their spending capacity and ability to drive consumption demand that binds these subgroups together into a single class.

Role in the development – New middle class is the primary beneficiary of liberalisation engaged in high paying new service activities, essentially refer only to the upper middle class. The majority in the lower middle class are perhaps not regular wage earners or well-educated (as they are in agriculture or construction activities), which may restrict their role in the development process usually associated with the middle class.

Participation of women – the participation of women in the workforce has significantly increased, leading to better income of the family.

Conclusion –
In all the spheres, this new class in India could prove driving engine for the socio economic development of the country. Being extremely diverse in its character, this class reflects emerging and inclusive picture of country.

Q) Differentiate between science and faith. These days, Indian society is witnessing instances where science is used to prove faith. What are the outcomes of these instances? Do you think government should promote science over faith? Critically comment. (200 Words)

The Indian Express

Science is a stream of knowledge that is based on logic, proof, universality and is secular in nature. Faith, on the other hand, is an inward manifestation and is non universal and often divided on various lines.

There is a thin line between logic and irrationality and between faith and science. If we believe in the existence of Ganesh, we are following a faith. The moment we try and explain him through science, we are not only misusing science but we are also putting a question mark on our faith in him. Faith does not require the reasoning of science and hence we should always keep the two at a safe distance.

Many times faith is misunderstood as religion which is absurd. Science is based on logic(experimental data) where as faith is a result of inner belief that relies on intangible sources.

But sadly science is being used in many ways to lure people in “their” faith –

- Practice of fasting as followed in religions like Islam, Jainism is advocated as scientifically proven as beneficial for health. This type of absurd practice claimed life of 13 year old Jain girl who was on a fast for 68 days.
- Some sects of Muslims are scared to take vaccines .They believe “scientifically” that taking vaccines may make them impotent. This was claimed to be scientifically proved by their religious heads( this shows the absurd reality )
- At the 102nd Science Congress various research papers were showed to prove existence of flying jets (vayuu yaan).
- Also it is being shown that Cow exhales oxygen and not carbon dioxide.

Outcome may be:

- Minority community may feel to produce similar line of thought.
- Trying to prove glory of a religion may further lead to religious fundamentalism.
- The scientific community may be divided nationally as pro or anti religion—a loss to India.
May diverge the little resources we have towards proving religion so compromising the R &D.

WAY FORWARD – –

The government should promote science but not at the cost of faith. The government must take a balanced approach in promoting science and eliminate the social evils that are practiced based solely on beliefs. But the government shouldn’t write down faith because faith can do good too. Simply promoting science at the cost of faith can be disastrous as a seen in the world happiness report that shows USA considered to scientifically advanced in the 19th position whereas poorer countries like Nordic countries who inculcate values in their way of life in the top places in happiness index ranking.

Topic: Role of women

Q) Examine how the role of women is changing in Afghan society. In your opinion, in societies like Afghanistan, what factors would help in meaningful empowerment of women? Comment. (200 Words)

The Hindu

Introduction-

Women in Afghanistan have been silent, yet vulnerable victims of civil wars and violent conflicts for years. Since the military coups of 1973 and 1978 that brought political instability and after the fall of the Soviet regime back in 1989, women have been excluded from society and merely deprived from all rights. Their status became non-existent and their role as citizens made little sense in a society largely made for and by men. In the light of the past few years, and the multiple efforts by the international community to bring peace to Afghanistan, the condition of women is changing for a good.

How the role of women is changing in Afghan Society?

- Since the formation of government of Hameed Karzai and currently under the Ashraf Ghani efforts are being taken to encourage the women to work in Public life.
- The educational opportunities are fairly available for women in Afghanistan and more and more women are being pursuing higher education in major cities of Afghanistan.
- Large number of women are taking jobs as teachers, medical doctors and nurses and government servants.
- Women are also exploring the hitherto male dominated professions like Journalism, Law and Civil services.

However, women in Afghanistan’s professional world is still a revolution in the making. Culturally speaking, for many Afghans the idea of women owning businesses and working outside of their homes is still suspect. Furthermore, not all Afghan women who own and operate their own businesses yet control their profits, as this role is sometimes usurped by their husbands or other male family members. For other Afghan women, daring to begin a new business can still be a life-endangering act.

Measures to be followed for meaningful empowerment of Women in Afghanistan-

- Prioritizing women’s inclusion at every stage of planning for reintegration and reconciliation.
- Prioritizing women’s inclusion in decision making bodies.
- Ensuring that women who participate in decision making bodies and the peace jirga are representative of women civil society activists.
- Ensuring that the government of Afghanistan offers guarantees of women’s constitutional rights, including basic freedoms such as access to education, right to work, access to health, access to justice, freedom of speech and freedom of movement.
- Ensuring that a proportion of the financial incentives to communities to support reintegration should be used to support women’s empowerment and development.
- Ensuring that mechanisms are in place to protect the rights of women and girls in reintegration and reconciliation plans through rigorous monitoring and mechanisms of redress.
- Devoting a significant proportion of international donor assistance (including funds going through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund) to women’s needs in the areas of reconstruction, rule of law, and access to formal justice.
• By ensuring that all girl children get formal education till the graduation with the aid and efforts of government.
• By reserving at least 25% of the seats at national and provincial level legislature for women.
• Government should ensure that those who attack women working in public places do not go unpunished.
• Further government should vigorously investigate and prosecute all crimes of violence against women, including sexual violence.
• Government should support programs of gender awareness for men at all levels public life to discourage discrimination and an atmosphere of hostility and intimidation for women.

Conclusion—
To establish and sustain the new Afghan economy, it is imperative that Afghan government makes whole-hearted efforts to increase women’s participation in all spheres of public life. Those women who have dared to break traditional norms and have singularly achieved spectacles in public life should be rewarded and be made as examples for other to follow.

Q) It is said that women’s entrepreneurship might be the tool needed to improve the labour force’s gender balance in India. Do you agree? Substantiate. (200 Words)

Livemint
Introduction-
The labour force participation rate (LFPR) for working-age women (15 years and older) is abysmally low in India—at about 27%, it performs only slightly better than Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Some of the reasons for this phenomenon are—
• Men take the lion’s share in the jobs available in organized sectors.
• Women want jobs that are well-paying, close to their homes, and have flexible working hours, according to World Bank research, and these are hard to come by.
• Also, there are many jobs to which women’s access is restricted by law, such as those in mines and hazardous industries.
• Young women are studying longer; that as incomes have increased, women who worked only out of necessity have retreated to their homes.
• Agriculture has come under stress and rural women have been squeezed out of their farm jobs on the one hand, educated urban women haven’t moved into the workforce in considerable numbers on the other.

How women’s entrepreneurship could improve the situation?
• The World Bank’s latest development update for India draws attention to an interesting insight: Women employers tend to hire a significantly greater number of women.
• This is partly the result of the kind of businesses that women set up in what is already a heavily gendered labour force. For example, a beauty salon or a small tailoring unit owned by a woman can be expected to mostly hire other women. However the trend also holds true for medium-sized firms.
• Working paper by Ejaz Ghani, Arti Grover Goswami, Sari Kerr and William Kerr, Will Market Competition Trump Gender Discrimination In India?, finds “a clear pattern of gender segmentation in both manufacturing and services, where, for instance, about 90% of employees in female-owned business in unorganized manufacturing are females”.
• Women entrepreneurship might indeed serve as a catalyzing opportunity to bring more women in the workforce. Women cooperatives in small industry sector have shown remarkable progress in enhancing women employment. Targeted policy measures like this have been shown to deliver great results as seen in Bangladesh’s Garment Industry.
• Women entrepreneurship could also act as an inspiration and Ideology in the society for the girls to come out of their houses and contribute to their society and encourage girls to be self-dependent.

India currently ranks 70 out of 77 nations on the Female Entrepreneurship Index, but moving up that index might not be as difficult as it seems. Certainly, long-term, structural reforms are needed but in the short term there are a few
examples from around the world that indicate how targeted policy measures can deliver specific goals even when the rest of the infrastructure (such as ease of doing business, access to credit facilities and affordable childcare) may not be in place.

**Conclusion**

Gender segmentation is a double-edged sword in the sense that just like female-owned or female-led firms tend to hire more female workers, male owners and employers have the same tendencies. A 2014 paper, Political Reservations And Women’s Entrepreneurship In India, by Ghani and others noted that “97% of working men are employed in male-owned enterprises”. In the long run, such extreme levels of gender segmentation are obviously undesirable and inefficient. But in the short term, it may help to view this trend as a catalysing opportunity that will bring more women into the workforce.

Q) What is sustainability sector? Examine the role of women in sustainability sector. (200 Words)

**The Hindu**

**Sustainability sector**

- The sector which participates in environmental friendly activities to ensure that all processes, products and manufacturing activities adequately address environmental concerns while maintaining a profit are known as sustainable sectors.

- Despite large number of women graduation and other degrees in sustainable sector, their actual role as leaders and managers is quiet limited.

- The percentage of women working at climate and energy policy think tanks is 36% at the employee-level, 33% at the leadership level and 21% at the board of trustees level. Though these numbers seems fairly well, they are short when we look at the data that more than 50% of the graduates from sustainability and climate-related degrees in India are women. 40% of all science graduates and 37% of all science PhD candidates are women. They make up only 16% of employees at government-run scientific research organisations and only one out of the 39 directors at Council of Scientific and Industrial Research laboratories.

- These two issues are not unrelated: women are often passed up for promotions due to perceived familial duties and may quit the workforce when their careers are not progressing. Equally, women often quit the workforce due to social pressures and insufficient support mechanisms and therefore, there are fewer women left vying for leadership positions. In the last two decades, female workforce participation in the country has declined by 11%.

**Role of women in sustainability sector**

- **Economy**–
  1. The female labour force participation rate is abysmally low. This can be improved with the rising number of working women in sustainability sector as well as other sectors of economy.
  2. Greater female participation in engineering and technology oriented jobs would spur innovation & economic advantages.
  3. 70% of world’s poor are women, bringing them into mainstream will reduce their poverty and vulnerability.

- **Social**–
  1. Help in development assistance policies that promote mainstreaming gender perspectives more fully into the health policies and programs.
  2. Helps in raising Cost-effectiveness of health care & social programmers by better implementing services.

- **Environmental**–
  1. Women participation leads to better Crisis management.
  2. Better resource management, innovation, farming and care – giving and hold the key to adaptation to climate change.
  3. In any environmental crisis the most affected section of the society is women. Thus high number of women in the sustainable sector could reduce the vulnerability of women.
Political–
1. Women help develop more sustainable government policies and a better world economy.

Conclusion–
“Women have a vital role in environmental management and development ... and are therefore essential to achieve sustainable development.” The present lack of women’s participation in most policy-making signals a gap in the resources devoted to women. More balanced and effective approaches could be developed if international climate change negotiation processes as well as national climate policies considered gender aspects.

Q) Recently, in Haryana’s Rewari district school girls went on indefinite hunger strike demanding that their school be upgraded to a higher secondary school- to which the state conceded. Discuss the significance of this event. (200 Words)

EPW

Introduction :-

Background :- What a group of gutsy schoolgirls began in the village of Gothra Tappa Dahina in Haryana’s Rewari district is now spreading to other districts in the state. On 10 May, around 80 girls at the government school in the village went on an indefinite fast. They demanded that their school be upgraded to a higher secondary school. They said they could not access the nearest such school some three kilometres away because of lack of transport and the sexual harassment they faced en route. What began as something that the state government expected would fizzle out, instead ballooned into a full-scale crisis as the girls refused to end their fast. Within 10 days, the state government conceded and the village school will now have classes 11 and 12.

CASE STUDY :-

Bihar under Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. In 2006, he created something of a mini-revolution when he launched his Mukhyamantri Balika Cycle Yojana giving every girl completing class 9 a bicycle so that she could travel to the nearest higher secondary school to complete class 12. Thousands of girls benefited. As a result, the National Bureau of Economic Research noted that 30% more girls stayed on in school after class 9 and the gender gap in enrolment at the higher secondary level between boys and girls reduced by 40%. Since then, several other states have followed Bihar’s example.

Significance of the event :-

- The agitation of these girls was unique in many ways. They are products of a state that does not love its girls. Haryana has the lowest female to male sex ratio in the country, just 877 as compared to the national average of 940. Its 0–6 years sex ratio is even worse, 830. If girls escape being eliminated before or after birth, they barely survive in a society where deeply entrenched conservative attitudes control and constrain their lives.

- The agitation by the Rewari schoolgirls has relevance beyond Haryana. It reminds us of several important aspects of education in this country that are far too readily overlooked and that are not being addressed even as the government basks in slogans like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao. There is a wide chasm between such slogans and the reality on the ground.

The government of Haryana can do the following to overcome the above situation.

- Transport facility :- In my home state Andhra Pradesh, our government provides a transport stipend of 300-1000 rupees per month to the parents of students who are far away from schools. This can be replicated across India to ensure enrolment of students specially the girls.

- Providing cycles :- Bihar government and Andhra government have provided bicycles to girls who have passed class 9, this helps the girls so that they don’t have to walk large distances to come to school. This should be taken on pan-India basis.

- Increase quality schools :- Just like the Delhi government spending more of education budget, To ensure all spend more on education, we must have a law that that makes it legally binding for governments to spend a particular amount of their budget on education
Q) Critically comment on the role of women in agriculture in India, especially in the light of recent farm crisis gripping the country. (200 Words)

The Indian Express

Introduction-
Agriculture in India defines familial tradition, social relations and gender roles. Female in the agricultural sector, whether through traditional means or industrial, for subsistence or as an agricultural laborer, represents a momentous demographic group. Agriculture is directly tied to issues such as economic independence, decision-making abilities, agency and access to education and health services and this manner has created externalities such as poverty and marginalization, and compounded issues of gender inequality.

In rural India, the percentage of women who depend on agriculture for their livelihood is as high as 84%. Women make up about 33% of cultivators and about 47% percent of agricultural laborers. These statistics do not account for work in livestock, fisheries and various other ancillary forms of food production in the country. Rural Women form the most important productive work force in the economy India. Rural women often manage complex households and pursue multiple livelihood strategies. Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, working for wages in agricultural or other rural enterprises, collecting fuel and water, engaging in trade and marketing, caring for family members and maintaining their homes. Many of these activities are not defined as “economically active employment” in national accounts but they are essential to the wellbeing of rural households.

In light of recent Agricultural crisis the various dimensions of woman and her role in Agriculture are:

- Gender division of labor-
  In India, the typical work of the female agricultural laborer or cultivator is limited to less skilled jobs, such as sowing, transplanting, weeding and harvesting, that often fit well within the framework of domestic life and child-rearing. Many women also participate in agricultural work as unpaid subsistence labor.

- Time allocation-
  In addition to rigorous agricultural work that is undervalued and underpaid, women are also responsible for the well-being of the household. They care for their children, provide nutrition or usually take part in subsistence agriculture, and do chores around the house.

- Access to land and resources-
  Critical resources such as land are also unevenly distributed by gender. Women seldom enjoy property ownership rights directly in their names. They have little control over decisions made in reference to land. Even with land in their names, they may not have actual decision-making power in terms of cropping patterns, sale, mortgage and the purchase of land

- Biodiversity loss and its impact on woman-
  The loss of biodiversity in India and specifically food crops is a serious concern of food security and sustainability of the agricultural sector in India. The connection between women farmers and environmental health is not simply for subsistence and survival. It also stems from a long existing cultural valuation of India’s agricultural fertility in ritual and practice.

- Exclusion by agencies-
  The traditional systematic denial of women as key producers in India’s agriculture causes them to often be overlooked in the research and study, thus further entrenching the exclusion of women in roles of agency.

- Impact of Male migration-
  Over the last decade, as farming became less and less profitable and small and marginal farmers began migrating to cities, rural jobs for full-time women daily-wage labourers (those who do not own land but work at least 183 days in a year in someone’s farm) in the agricultural sector have shrunk alarmingly.

Measures Taken by the Government for upliftment of Women in Agriculture Sector
The Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare implements various programmes of farmers including women in agriculture sector. As per directives for the Women Component Plan, the State Governments have been asked to ensure flow of funds to the tune of 30% for the benefit of women farmers.
Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)

The primary objective of Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) implemented by Ministry of Rural Development is to empower women in agriculture by making systematic investments to enhance their participation and productivity, as also create and sustain agriculture based livelihoods of rural women. Under the Pariyojana, projects are conceived in such a manner that the skill base of the women in agriculture is enhanced to enable them to pursue their livelihoods on a sustainable basis.

Q) Why is the practice of child marriage still exist in India? Discuss how it can be prevented. (200 Words)

The Hindu

Introduction-

Child marriage usually refers to a social phenomenon practiced in some societies in India, where a young child (usually a girl below the age of fifteen) is married to an adult man. A second form of practice of child marriage is that in which the parents of the two children (the girl and boy) arrange a future marriage. In this practice, the individuals (the boy and girl) do not meet one another until they reach the marriageable age, when the wedding ceremony is performed.

Facts and figures about the prevalence of Child marriage in India-

- Child marriage is widespread across India, with nearly half of brides married as girls. While there has been a decline in the incidence of child marriage nationally (from 54 per cent in 1992-93 to 33 per cent today) and in nearly all states, the pace of change remains slow, especially for girls in the age group 15-18 years.
- Child marriage is more prevalent in rural areas (48 per cent) than in urban areas (29 per cent). There are also variations across different groups, particularly excluded communities, castes and tribes – although some ethnic groups, such as tribal groups, have lower rates of child marriage compared with the majority population.
- Drop out of school, have a low-paid job and limited decision-making power at home. A girl with 10 years of education has a six times lower chance of being pushed into marriage before she is 18.
- 40% of the world’s 60 million child marriages take place in India according to the National Family Health Survey. India has the 14th highest rate of child marriage in the world, according to the International Center for Research on Women.

Why the practice of child marriage still exists in India?

- Social groups follow traditions from previous eras without questioning contemporary relevance. Early marriage allows parents to waive ‘responsibility’ of settling their children.
- Economically weak and large families encourage the practice as it helps send-off girl children early, while marriage of a boy brings an additional hand to assist in household and economic activities.
- Members of communities practicing child marriage tend to have little to no formal education. Belief in religious scriptures and the idea that these contain prescription for early marriage drive families to fulfill this “obligation.”
- Early marriage ensures full “utilization” of fertility and childbearing capacity.
- Strong caste ties limit the availability of suitable marital partners. As soon as parents identify a match, they make haste in conducting the marriage.
- Limited education opportunities, low quality of education, inadequate infrastructure, lack of transport and therefore concerns about girls’ safety while travelling to school significantly contribute to keeping girls out of school and therefore tend to favour child marriage.
- Girls are often seen as a liability with limited economic role. Women’s work is confined to the household and is not valued. In addition, there is the problem of dowry. Despite the fact that dowry has been prohibited for five decades (Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961), it is still common for parents of girls in India to give gifts to the groom and/or his family either in cash or kind. The dowry amount increases with the age and the education level of the girl. Hence, the “incentive” of the system of dowry perpetuates child marriage.
- The families and girls who might benefit from social protection programmes are not always aware of them and these schemes are often limited to providing cash transfers without the accompanying messages to address the multi-dimensional nature of child marriage.
Measures to prevent child marriages-

- Education is one of the most effective strategies to protect children against marriage. When girls are able to stay in school an attitudinal change can also occur towards their opportunities within the community.

- Gender sensitization programs: Gender training programs should be spread throughout the district for police and NGOs. Primary and secondary education for girls should be promoted.

- Government of India along with organizations like UNICEF and NGOs should make the efforts for the implementation of the convergent national strategy, which includes:
  1. Law enforcement: Capacity-building on laws, support mechanisms such as a child marriage telephone hotline, ‘Odisha Child Marriage Resistance Forum’.
  2. Girls’ empowerment: Imparting Life skills, protection skills, higher education and employment opportunities etc.
  3. Community mobilization: Working with influential leaders, oaths and pledges, counselling, folk and traditional media. Government’s partnerships with civil society organizations and communities are key to supporting community mobilization efforts and mindset changes and partnerships with the media are very important for raising awareness of child marriage.
  4. Promoting convergence of sectors at all levels, in particular with education and social protection schemes and programmes.

- Government of India has already enacted laws like Child marriage prohibition act 2006 and started many initiatives like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Sukanya Samridhith Yojana etc to incentivize the people to give equal treatment to their daughters as their sons.

- The Government of India is also implementing national programmes aimed at protecting and promoting the development of children, while states are supporting these initiatives through state-level schemes. However, many of the programmes focus on addressing financial vulnerability through cash transfer schemes to keep girls in school. The governments’ efforts should go beyond the financial solution and should also focus on changing mindset, creating awareness etc.

Conclusion-

Government of India has the biggest responsibility towards ensuring better childhood of every child. Every child irrespective of socio-economic status is entitled to the quality education, health facilities and freedom and space to enjoy childhood.

Q) Compare and contrast the nature of socio-political empowerment of women in Pakistan and in India. (200 Words)

The Hindu

Introduction-

Pakistan has been ranked very low in the Gender Gap Index, with only Yemen being worse off. These facts about the position of women in Pakistan are often related to social and cultural norms, where ‘Islam’ is said to blame for women’s backwardness, or the fact that the Saudisation of Pakistan over the last few decades has meant that the hijab or the abaya worn in parts of Islamic West Asia by women have become the sartorial choice of many women in Pakistan. However this does not depict the complete picture and needs more analysis.

Comparing and contrasting the nature of socio-political empowerment of women in Pakistan and India-

- Patriarchal nature of societies-
  Both India and Pakistan are strong patriarchal societies. Cultures in both the countries confine women to household works and discourage from entering into the public life. Because of it, women have been treated with inferiority complex and opportunities for equality have been denied over the period of time in both the countries. It has resulted into low female labor force participation rate in both the countries.

- Poor socio-economic indicators-
India—
Gender inequality index, 2015 – 0.530, ranked 125th out of 188 countries.
Global gender gap index, 2016- 0.683, ranked 87th out of 144 countries.

Pakistan—
Gender inequality index, 2014- 0.535, ranked 121st out of 157 countries
Global gender gap index, 2016- 0.556, ranked 143rd out of 144 countries

- **Transformation despite odds**-

Much has been changing in the social, cultural and demographic position, and lives, of women in India and Pakistan over the last two decades. Despite patriarchy, institutional and state prejudices and restrictions, women are changing their condition, and redefining social sensibilities.

Pakistan-
In some key categories women perform unexpectedly better than men. And that the rate of change in women’s improvement is faster/higher than that it is for men — that is, women are improving their situation faster than are men.

Data from girls’ and boys’ enrolment also show that girls’ enrolment at the primary school level, while still less than it is for boys, is rising faster than it is for boys. Girls enrolment at the primary school level increased by 34% between 2002-03 and 2011-12, while in the same period, it increased only 13.5% for boys.

Boys’ enrolment at university level had increased by 258% over this decade, but for girls the increase in these ten years had been 432%! In fact, by 2011-12, there were more girls enrolled in universities than boys.

India—
In India too, women have taken strides particularly in education. Their literacy has increased to more than 65% from 8% at the time of independence. The literacy rate is increasing faster for women than men.

Many states like Kerala, Mizoram etc have achieved the universal primary education for girls.

More and more number of women are inducting into the higher education and educational barriers are being reduced for them.

- **Safety of women**-

Both the countries have passed numerous laws to protect and ensure the safety of women. However poor implementation of laws has resulted in high number of incidences of violence against the women.

- **Women in public life**-

Both countries are promoting and encouraging the women to occupy spaces in public life. Though overall participation of women in both the countries are low, India fares better in ensuring greater role for women in public life through different legislations. India has ensured 33% reservations to women at local bodies. Also many states in India have offered reservations to women at government services. Also Indian armed forces have almost granted treatment equality to women in all spheres.

Women’s share in politics is yet to rise fair level in Pakistan and also there is need to open employments that are totally limited to men.

**Conclusion**-

The emergence of women as role-models depicted on urban billboards and in social media — from cricketers, to scientists, academics, writers of fiction, mountaineers, pilots even of fighter jets, an Oscar-winning film-maker, help in breaking the older stereotypes of women being relegated to domesticity.
**Topic: Poverty and developmental issues**

Q) Recent research shows that prevalence of diabetes is increasing among urban poor. Discuss the causes, consequences and nature of intervention needed to address this issue. (200 Words)

*The Indian Express*

**Introduction**-

Diabetes is becoming common among people of “Low Socio-Economic Status (SES)” living in cities and towns in the more affluent states, shows an ongoing study funded by the Indian Council of Medical Research and the union Ministry of Health.

**Extent of diabetes in India**-

![Diagram showing prevalence of diabetes in rural and urban areas across different states in India.](image-url)
Causes–

- Even among the urban poor, the physical activity is decreasing and calorie intake through the junk food is increasing. For eg most of them prefer to use 2-wheelers now rather than walk or cycle.
- Migrants from rural areas to cities have been found to be adopting to the urban lifestyle which promotes physical inactivity and high calorie food intake.
- A study conducted by Dr Vijay Vishwanathan, chief diabetologist at Chennai's M V Hospital for Diabetes, found that people of lower socio-economic status in urban areas had diabetes due to an increasing sedentary life, consumption of carbohydrates, and lower intake of fruits and vegetables.
- Another factor was environmental pollution, as a majority of their homes faced the road.”
- Most of the urban poor don’t go for regular medical or health check-ups, result of which is that early symptoms of diabetes are neglected and no preventive measures are taken.

Consequences-

- The treatment for the diabetes is expensive one (at least Rs 40 per day) and cannot be afforded by most of the urban poor.
- It leads to the high out-of-pocket expenditure for those who decide to undergo treatment.
- It is also leading to more numbers of premature deaths among the urban poor.
- It is leading to high number of mortality rate among the urban poor compared to other urban citizens.
- The social cost due to death of a earning person by diabetes cannot even be measured as it hampers or halts the overall progress of the whole family or persons dependent on them.

Nature of intervention needed to address this issue-

- Through policy measures-
  Adoption of a multi-pronged strategy that includes cheap diagnostics, free health checkups, counseling on healthy lifestyle, diet charts for fast recovery.

Cheap and subsidized treatment must be made available to those who have already affected by diabetes.

- Awareness campaigns-
  Spreading awareness among urban poor for taking healthy diets and need for daily physical activity.

  Importance of sports, exercises, yoga etc should be promoted and made to integrate in daily routine.

- Through school education-
  Making school goers informed and aware of the diseases like diabetes, their causes and steps needs to be taken, could make great impact on reducing the occurrences of diabetes.

- Focusing on women-
  In a society like India, a woman of the house controls the food habits and kind of food consumed in a family. Thus by educating the women large-scale difference can be made in efforts to control the spread of the diabetes.

Conclusion-

Diabetes is emerging as life threatening disease not only in rich families but also in poor and low income families. Holistic approach is needed to control the spread and extent of it. Concentrated efforts by government through strengthening ground level health delivery system and active engagement of NGOs is required to resolved the menace of diabetes.
Q) Discuss the role of sources of drinking water, income, family size, education, occupation and caste in determining the quality of drinking water and waterborne diseases in India. (200 Words)

**EPW**

**Introduction** :- Access to basic amenities such as safe drinking water and sanitation is not only an important measure of socio-economic status of the household, but also a fundamental element for the health of people. The latter is directly linked to the availability of safe drinking water and sanitation. Inadequate and poor quality drinking water not only results in severe morbidity and large-scale mortality, but also augments health costs, causes low worker productivity and declining school enrolment rates.

**The various factors affecting quality of drinking water and water-borne diseases are:**

- Source of drinking water – With Tap water and borewells being major sources of water in rural and urban areas, the source of water plays a vital role in its quality. Though Borewell is considered safest source for water; over-exploitation and contamination by waste have brought down its quality. Tap water & hand-pumps too faces issues of contamination at source and at end. Water from lakes, ponds etc. too are susceptible to water-borne diseases.

- Income – The income level of a citizen affects decisions like purification-method used, source of water, availability of water etc. Better sanitation and quality drinking water takes up a large chunk of low-income household’s expenditure that, eventually they are forced to use water of lesser quality.

- Family size – Large families in areas prone to water shortage have to recourse to inferior sanitation and drinking water; leading to lower living standards.

- Education – Studies have shown that educated people tend to spend more on better sanitation and better drinking water. They invest on superior water purification methods, since they are aware of the health benefits.

- Occupation – The occupation of the person too plays a vital role as professional or those in formal sector, are provided with better sanitation and drinking water facilities; while those in informal sector are usually denied to such benefits.

- Caste – Caste-system dominated society like India affects the water availability. The upper caste usually has access to good quality of water while lower caste (SC/ST/OBC etc.) face discrimination as the latter are prohibited by the former from using public wells and other utilities.

**Conclusion** :- As the HDI of World Banks points out, better sanitation and drinking water continues to play a vital role in a nation’s development. Thus, govt. and other utility-providers should focus on providing such a basic necessity; thereby not only improving the health of the disadvantaged but eventually leading to development of the nation.

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

Q) “The risks from climate change are serious enough to require grass-roots action, rather than waiting for a grand international agreement.” What are these grass roots actions? How can the fight climate change? Illustrate. (200 Words)

**Livemint**

**Introduction**-

Soon after US President Donald Trump pulled his country out of the Paris Agreement on climate change, leaders of many businesses, universities, states and cities said that they would continue to be committed to battling climate change. Their positive response is appreciable because it opens up the possibility of a green strategy that begins from the bottom rather than the top.

**Grass-root actions to fight climate change**-

Climate change is one of the greatest tragedy of commons, affecting all. The indicators have reached a level where damages caused due to climate change are irreversible and thus warrants actions at grass-root level rather than a grand international agreement. The grass-root actions can be divided into following way-
**Actions to arrest the pace of climate change**
- Renewable energy: Dedicated efforts to move towards renewable energy by using solar rooftops in all houses, use of biomass. This will lower the footprint of greenhouse gases promoting climate change.
- Energy efficiency- people should progressively reduce the wastage of electricity and at the same time revert to the energy efficient bulbs, electronic appliances etc.
- Corporate sector must adopt the climate friendly practices like constructing green buildings, transport facilities for employees to reduce usage of private vehicles, using energy efficient lighting and air conditioning system etc.
- By adopting to the climate friendly life-style which reduces green-house gases emission, produces less waste and promotes the energy savings.

**Actions for mitigating the impact of climate change**
- Building resilience of the communities- people should spread awareness about the climate change and its ill effects on the communities. They must integrate adaptation measures such as water harvesting, reforestation with native species, protection of biodiversity and prevention of forest fires and overgrazing.
- Carbon sequestration through tree planting and ecosystem conservation and management. Efforts to increase afforestation at grass-root level and every possible attempt to avoid deforestation by adopting better and environmental friendly practices can help address climate change. This will lead to more rainfall, better temperatures with more oxygen in air.
- By eliminating or reducing the unsustainable agricultural practices such as slash and burn, and replacing of indigenous forests with commercial monocultures.

**Actions for adapting to the changes brought by climate change**
- Rainwater harvesting: Climate change shall make rainfall erratic and with the soaring temperatures raise the demand of water. So rainwater harvesting can help us avoid water issues by its better utilization.
- Public transport: People should adopt public transport and avoid private one. Use of energy efficient means like electric vehicles can go a long way in tackling climate change.
- Climate smart agriculture- It is Agriculture that sustainably increases productivity, enhances resilience (adaptation), reduces/removes GHGs (mitigation) where possible, and enhances achievement of national food security and development goals”.
- Promoting tree planting and sustainable agricultural techniques including growing of indigenous food crops to enhance food security, harvesting rain water and curbing soil erosion to build resilience.

**Conclusion**
Climate change is the classic tragedy of the commons. Nobody owns environmental stability even though everybody depends on it. So everybody’s property is actually nobody’s property. The same dynamic that leads to the overgrazing of common grasslands or overfishing in the high seas also ensures that every person has an incentive to pollute even though the collective burden of such individual action can be catastrophic. Thus people themselves have to overcome this tragedy and work in preserving the purity and serenity of the mother-earth.

**Topic: Urbanization – problems and remedies**

Q) Why did Bengaluru emerge as information technology (IT) hub? How has IT industry transformed Bangalore? Examine. (200 Words)

**EPW**

IT industry contributes significantly in terms of economy and Bengaluru has emerged as the hub of IT in India, sometimes called the Silicon Valley of the East.

**Reasons for Bengaluru to emerge as the IT hub**
- **History**: British had already set up their cantonment board in the area.
- **Geography**: When the R&D industries were looking for an ideal location for chip industry, Bengaluru was identified as a location with ideal temperature and environment for the development with least expenditure for laboratories.
- Talent base: The industries are hugely attracted towards the talent that the city and country has to offer.
- Competition: With new industries forming their base, the government has enabled for a healthy competition and innovation.
- Early Start: After Independence, Bangalore became home to 6 PSU’s. In 1972, ISRO was established in the city to have a synergistic relationship with HAL.
- Start-up hub as well: With the right environment, thousands of start-ups have splurged and many mergers and acquisitions have occurred.
- Y2K problem: The Y2K problem, which had the potential to affect computers worldwide helped to bring the city into sharp focus and ride the IT boom like never before.

**Transformation of Bengaluru with the growing IT industry** –

- Socio-economical: The cost of living has gone up and the lifestyle has seen a transformation.
- Cultural: With the city attracting talent from all over the country, a mix of culture and languages can be seen.
- Language barrier: As also mentioned in the Economic Survey, language does not seem to be a barrier for those choosing to move to the city.
- Psychological: People are open to new ideas, and exploring a new kind of living hitherto unknown.
- Educational: With the IIM, IISc and the technical universities focusing on research, the policies directed at promoting innovation are being transformed into actions producing a skilled resource for the industry as well.
- Planning and building the city: It is important to know that faster growth at such speed has led to ill-planned building of the city.
- Ecological: With an enormous growth in the vehicles, the pollution has surpassed previous baselines.

**Way forward** –

It is important to consider planning as an important precursor to building the city and various measures have to be incorporated in the policy for planned actions. More emphasis must be laid on R&D in the industry and a mere outsourcing and services without production led growth is not desirable. Bengaluru has the chance to be a model city for other cities to follow, provided it chooses to follow a planned and a sustainable eco-friendly growth.

Q) Discuss the features of new urban agenda (NUA) of UN-Habitat. Examine what lessons can India’s Smart Cities Mission learn from NUA. (200 Words)

**Livemint**

**What is the New Urban Agenda?**

The New Urban Agenda is the outcome document agreed upon at the Habitat III cities conference in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016. It will guide the efforts around urbanization of a wide range of actors — nation states, city and regional leaders, international development funders, United Nations programmes and civil society — for the next 20 years. Inevitably, this agenda will also lay the groundwork for policies and approaches that will extend, and impact, far into the future.

**What does the New Urban Agenda cover?**

The New Urban Agenda, coming on the heels of the crystallization of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, seeks to create a mutually reinforcing relationship between urbanization and development. The idea is that these two concepts will become parallel vehicles for sustainable development.

The agenda thus seeks to offer guidelines on a range of “enablers” that can further cement the relationship between urbanization and sustainable development. This includes, on the one hand, “development enablers” that seek to harness the multiple, often chaotic forces of urbanization in ways that can generate across-the-board growth — national urban policy; laws, institutions and systems of governance; and the broad urban economy.

“Operational enablers”, on the other hand, aim to bolster sustainable urban development — or to allow it to take place at all. When implemented, they result in better outcomes for patterns of land use, how a city is formed and how resources are managed. The New Urban Agenda underscores three operational enablers, collectively being referred to by the UN-
Habitat leadership as the “three-legged” approach: local fiscal systems, urban planning, and basic services and infrastructure.

**What priorities guide the New Urban Agenda?**

Beyond the specific technocratic solutions of economics and governance, several core ideas form the ideological underpinnings of the New Urban Agenda. Democratic development and respect for human rights feature prominently, for instance, as does the relationship between the environment and urbanization.

Similarly, the New Urban Agenda includes significant focus on equity in the face of globalization, as well as how to ensure the safety and security of everyone who lives in urban areas, of any gender and age. Risk reduction and urban resilience likewise play prominent roles. And the new agenda places key importance on figuring out how to set up a global monitoring mechanism to track all of these issues and concerns although the specifics on this remain up in the air pending debate by the U. N. General Assembly in 2017-18.

Meanwhile, the core issues of the Habitat Agenda — adequate housing and sustainable human settlements — remain on the table, as the number of people worldwide living in urban slums continues to grow. Indeed, in the time since the Habitat Agenda was adopted the world has become majority urban, lending extra urgency to the New Urban Agenda.

There is also an increasing recognition that cities have morphed into mega-regions, urban corridors and city-regions whose economic, social and political geographies defy traditional conceptions of the “city”. The New Urban Agenda thus was forced to address these trends in urbanization while also recognizing that cities and metropolitan areas are the major drivers of national economies.

**Features of the New Urban agenda (NUA) of UN habitat-**

- Providing basic facilities to citizens like safe drinking water, sanitation, healthcare, nutritious food, education etc.
- Ensuring that the needs of women, children, senior citizens, differently-abled people, marginalized sections is being taken care of by the local authorities.
- To protect the rights of refugees, migrants, internally displaced people and ensure that they receive timely access to basic facilities.
- Promoting renewable energy, greener and better public transport, sustainable management of resources.
- Better quality infrastructure, local response etc. to improve resilience of cities to reduce the risk and impact of disasters.
- Take measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to combat climate change by involving local government and civil society.
- Innovation to be the main driver of urban development
- Sustainable development through building of sustainable economies and environmental conservation
- Right to City a LeFebvrian concept which propounds equal access of all facets of urban life to all its dwellers marks a paradigm shift in the way Urban development be approached
- Devolution of powers for local governance and financial independence so as to truly reflect the demands of the society
- Resilient Infrastructure build so as to withstand the pressures of immigration, natural disasters, security concerns etc.
- Good governance be made integral part of city by judicial mix of technology in administrative and political reforms
- Disaster preparedness: Urban should include Disaster preparedness and infrastructure should include disaster resistance.

**Lessons for India’s Smart cities mission-**

- SCM does not pay much emphasis on strengthening local level governance, which it can incorporate from the NUA.
- With an emphasis on promoting civic engagement and strengthening participatory local governance, the NUA mirrors the commitment of the smart city for civic participation—where the citizens of the city have been involved in the mission at every step through polls and calls for suggestions to redevelop their cities.
- The emphasis on “inclusivity” and “sustainability” by the NUA can be integrated into the civic participation aspect of SCM.
The NUA objective of establishing measures to help the migrants, internally displaced people, women, children, marginalized sections etc. can be included in SCM.

More focus be given to the development basis the local requirements and funding rather than complete dependence on Center as one size fit all would not be the best way for development of Indian cities.

The NUA aspires to integrated and vulnerable section—responsive housing policies, aspects that many of India’s smart cities need to pay close attention to.

**Conclusion**

As India strives to leave a mark on a world that is becoming increasingly urban, it would do well to follow a comprehensive and well chalked out strategy for our cities. Though a commendable step in the right direction, the SCM has its own pitfalls and shortcomings. With urbanization gaining prominence in the global policy discourse, it is important, now more than ever, to focus on local governance. Currently, there is an inadequate emphasis on the functioning of urban local bodies when it comes to centrally motivated schemes like the SCM. India is a signatory of the SDGs. Paying further attention to the aspects of resilience and local governance outlined in the NUA and the allied action framework can ensure that Indian cities respond to more than just competitive sub-federalism. Indian cities, catalysed by learnings from the NUA, can become competitive global cities.

**Topic: Location of industries, Resources;**

Q) For many years, fires in coal deposits under the surface of the Jharia coalfields in Jharkhand’s Dhanbad district have become a common occurrence. Discuss the causes, consequences of these fires and solutions needed to stop these fires. (200 Words)

_The Indian Express_

**Introduction**

The Jharia coalfield in Bihar is an exclusive storehouse of prime coke coal in the country, consisting of 23 large underground and nine large open cast mines. The mining activities in these coalfields started in 1894 and had really intensified in 1925. The history of coal-mine fire in Jharia coalfield can be traced back to 1916 when the first fire was detected. At present, more than 70 mine fires are reported from this region.

**Causes**

- Coal, a non-renewable source of energy, is found in several parts of the world. The coal layers are mined by two methods: open cast mining and underground mining. Coal is formed from organic matter with a high carbon content, which when exposed to certain conditions (temperature, moisture, oxygen etc.) tends to ignite/ burn spontaneously at rather low temperatures. This may occur naturally or the combustion process may be triggered by other causes.

- However, once a coal seam catches fire, and efforts to stop it an early stage fail, it may continue to burn for tens to hundreds of years, depending primarily on the availability of coal and oxygen. Coal fires have occurred in nearly all parts of the world like India, the US, Indonesia, South Africa, Australia, China, Germany and many other countries. However, the nature and magnitude of the problem differs from country to country. In India, the fire in the Jharia coalfield has mainly been due to unscientific mining and extraction of coal in the past.

- Fires may occur in coal layers that are exposed to the surface of the earth or areas close to it. These are visible to the naked eye.

- Also, fires erupt in the underground seams, which have large cracks that serve as channels for oxygen to the burning coal. The main cause of natural coal fires are lightening, forest fires, bush fires, etc.

- Among human causes are accidents, negligent acts, domestic fires, lighting fires in abandoned underground mines for heating or distilling alcohol etc. Besides, burning away of an important energy resource, it creates problems for exploitation of coal, poses danger to humankind, raises the temperature of the area, and when present underground, can cause land to subside.

**Consequences**

The pollution caused by these fires affects air, water, and land.
Smoke, from these fires contains poisonous gases such as oxides and dioxides of carbon, nitrogen and sulphur, which along with particulate matter are the causes of several lung and skin diseases.

High levels of suspended particulate matter increase respiratory diseases such as chronic bronchitis and asthma, while the gases contribute to global warming besides causing health hazards to the exposed population.

Methane emission from coal mining depends on the mining methods, depth of coal mining, coal quality and entrapped gas content in the coal seams.

These fires also pollute water by contaminating it and increasing its acidity, which is due to a certain percentage of sulphur that is present in coal. These fires lead to degradation of land and does not allow any vegetation to grow in the area.

Forest fires lead to shifting of basic transportation routes like rail and road because of threat of cave ins. Indian government has already spent over 3000 crores in shifting the rail network of the area. It leads to loss of revenue, increase in expenditure and also affects livelihood of people associated with the routes.

Migration – In hospitable condition because of gas spills, and cave-ins which can be a death trap too, compels people to move out affecting economy and livelihood of the area.

**Solutions—**

- The measures for controlling coal mine fires include bull dozing, leveling and covering with soil to prevent the entry of oxygen and to stabilize the land for vegetation.
- A mix of nitrogen and water can be sprinkled to ensure that the fires are dampened if not extinguished to give time for the authorities to act.
- Cutting off Oxygen supply – Cavities on the ground are filled with sand and mud to cut off the oxygen supply.
- Reducing Temperature – Water is sprinkled in the affected mine to reduce the temperature which may stop the fire to spread.

Fire fighting in this area requires relocation of a large population, which poses to be a bigger problem than the actual fire-fighting operations.

**Conclusion—**

The urge to produce more and earn more is becoming a virtue of human nature in this race of urbanization. The government should tighten up the screws and intervene at all steps to make sure the safety procedures are followed in any sector which has a huge risk factor involved.

Q) What is commons? It is said that from land to creative spaces, our commons are being fenced by encroachers and even the state. Do you agree? Discuss critically. (200 Words)

*The Hindu*

**Introduction :-** A common is a shared resource managed by a community who create rules to make the resource durable. The resource cannot be monopolised by one or a group of individuals; it has to be as opened as possible. The resource is not private or public; it is a third thing: a common. These can vary from global commons as space, the Antarctica continent to local commons such as wetlands, ponds, parks and beaches. While global commons are protected under various treaties, the local commons are suffering for deliberate encroachment by the private citizens as well as government apathy.

**Types of common**

**Environmental**

The examples below illustrate types of environmental commons.

**European land use**

Originally in medieval England the common was an integral part of the manor, and was thus legally part of the estate in land owned by the lord of the manor, but over which certain classes of manorial tenants and others held certain rights. By extension, the term “commons” has come to be applied to other resources which a community has rights or access to. The older texts use the word “common” to denote any such right, but more modern usage is to refer to particular
rights of common, and to reserve the name “common” for the land over which the rights are exercised. A person who has a right in, or over, common land jointly with another or others is called a commoner.

**Mongolian grasslands**

Based on a research project by the Environmental and Cultural Conservation in Inner Asia (ECCIA) from 1992 to 1995, satellite images were used to compare the amount of land degradation due to livestock grazing in the regions of Mongolia, Russia, and China.

**Community forests in Nepal**

Implemented in the late 1980s, Nepal chose to decentralize government control over forests. Community forest programs work by giving local areas a financial stake in nearby woodlands, and therefore increasing the incentive to protect them from overuse.

**Irrigation systems of New Mexico**

Acequia is a method of collective responsibility and management for irrigation systems in desert areas. In New Mexico, a community-run organization known as Acequia Associations supervises water in terms of diversion, distribution, utilization, and recycling, in order to reinforce agricultural traditions and preserve water as a common resource for future generations.

**Cultural and intellectual commons**

Today, the commons are also understood within a cultural sphere. These commons include literature, music, arts, design, film, video, television, radio, information, software and sites of heritage. Wikipedia is an example of the production and maintenance of common goods by a contributor community in the form of encyclopedic knowledge that can be freely accessed by anyone without a central authority.

**Digital commons**

Mayo Fuster Morell proposed a definition of digital commons as “an information and knowledge resources that are collectively created and owned or shared between or among a community and that tend to be non-exclusivities, that is, be (generally freely) available to third parties.

**Civil society and state has time and again responded to such stresses.**

- Chipko movement and such environmental protection movements have time and again forced the world to think and act upon conservation and sustainable utilisation of resources.
- WHO’s call to western world to delink life saving drugs from IP laws is one of many government’s and civil society’s calls to prevent fencing of Intellectual properties.
- New Middle Income scheme of Supreme Court, democratic decentralisation (73rd and 74th amendments) can be called as step in right direction to give access to justice, legislative processes and executive posts of the government.
- Land Encroachment :- E.g. Lately in Chennai sea beach, a soccer tournament was going to be conducted for underprivileged children but authorities concerned rejected the application by giving a mere excuse that it will harm the activities of Olive Ridley Turtles, But irony here is that ,the time when soccer tournament would have taken place, Olive Ridley turtles were no where to be seen.

As per rules, Construction near 8000 acres of area near Water spread region will be considered illegal but 1089 acres of area is currently being used by Thermal power plants, oil companies.

- Intellectual Property :- while surfing internet we can see that there are intellectual property norms which bars everyone to use some contents. This internet space should be common to enable innovative ideas.
- Some states to show their supremacy encroach upon water bodies. e.g South China Sea. This will have a long term devastating impact on the ecology of flora and fauna in world’s deepest sea.
- Conquering forests ,wildlife and more interference with nature by this encroachment lead to a disturbed environment.

**However these developments have been coupled with the following developments too**

- Governmental initiatives: Planned infrastructure like Smart Cities Mission have been incorporated with specific focus on creating commons like playground for recreational purposes.
- Arctic Council, CLCS (Commission on Continental Shelf): Have been put in place to ensure that commons are not apportioned by any specific entity and is open to all in just manner, maintaining ecological balance.

In today's world of dwindling resources subjected to ever increasing pressure of burgeoning population, it is of vital importance that we avoid “free riding of resources” to avoid "nature's curse" by charting out roadmaps for use of commons and adhering to it like true global citizens.

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