

INSTA Revision Plan 2.0

Framework for Answers of Static MAINS Questions given from Day 16 to 30

Day-16

Social deprivations and exclusion, privatization of health services and changing pattern of morbidity affect the elderly most. Discuss. (250 words)

Why this question:

‘Vulnerable sections and their issues’, is an important topic for GS-2 CSE Mains examination. In recent years, this topic has more focus. Students must build content and statistics regarding the issues of the vulnerable population.

Key demand of the question:

Explain how senior and elderly citizens are disempowered due to deprivations, lack of savings and finances and rising cost of healthcare that puts disproportionate burden on them. Bring out points that enumerate how they are affected the most.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Start with the issues of vulnerability of the elderly.

Identifying vulnerable older people and understanding the causes and consequences of their vulnerability is of human concern and an essential task of social policy. To date, vulnerability in old age has mainly been approached by identifying high risk groups, like the poor, childless, frail or isolated.

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Body

Elderly citizens and Issues: Background

- The lives of many older people are more frequently negatively affected by the social and economic insecurity that accompany the demographic and developmental process.
- The growth of **individualism** and desire for the independence and autonomy of the young generation affect the status of the elderly.
- The studies show that the socioeconomic condition of **older women is more vulnerable** in the context of the demographic and sociocultural change.
- The condition of **elderly poverty** has been a consistent phenomenon in the Third World as the older population is deprived of the basic needs.
- The eight diminutions of deprivation among the elderly are **poverty, social inferiority, social isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, seasonality, powerlessness and humiliation of the aged.**
- Poverty is sought to be a major risk of ageing in developing countries and study by the World Bank reveals that in the most of the developing countries, older people are vulnerable due to **ostracisation, lack of care and abandonment.**

Next, explain each issue

Problems faced by elderly populations

- **Social-deprivation:** Deprivation and exclusion are one of the common phenomena in almost all-ageing societies.
 - The aged does not have adequate income to meet basic needs.
 - The majority of the elderly work in the **informal sector with low levels of wages** and **deficient working conditions** and this has also put the aged in a state of deprivation, vulnerability and distress in old age in terms of both health and economic security
 - **Women** are most deprived. More than 52 per cent of rural males and 56 per cent of urban males manage their own financial needs (without any support) while the corresponding proportions are **15 and 18 per cent in the case of females.**
- **Privatisation of health-care:** Morbidity risk and lack of access to health care are among the factors causing physical and health insecurity among the elderly.
 - Give statistics from NSSO survey.
 - In India, 22.31 per cent of rural male and 26.62 per cent of the females in the rural sector perceive bad health status. In the urban areas, it is 19.01 and 23.22 per cent.
 - Talk about, privatisation making health-care inaccessible. First mile connectivity to health care facilities are absent in villages.

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- Lack of care-takers makes their suffering invisible.
- **Changing patterns of morbidity:** Recent pandemic throws light on risk of morbidity faced by elderly. With age co-morbidities have become the new-norm. However, in most cases in rural India, this goes undiagnosed and untreated.
 - Medicines for common ailments such as hypertension and diabetes are not accessible at affordable costs.
 - Generic medicines are yet to penetrate rural areas deeply.

Measures needed

Explain about “National Policy for senior citizens” and its components.

- Non-institutional services by voluntary organizations should be promoted and assisted to strengthen the capacity of senior citizens and their families to deal with problems of the ageing.
- All senior citizens, especially widows, single women and the oldest old should be eligible for all schemes of government. They must be provided universal identity under the Aadhar scheme on priority.
- Larger budgetary allocations must be earmarked to pay attention to the special needs of rural and urban senior citizens living below the poverty line.
- Ten percent of housing schemes for urban and rural lower income segments must be earmarked for senior citizens.
- Twice in a year the PHC nurse or the ASHA must conduct a special screening of the 80+ population of villages and urban areas and public/ private partnerships should be worked out for geriatric and palliative health care in rural areas recognizing the increase of non – communicable diseases (NCD) in the country.

Conclusion

Conclude on below lines.

It is clear that the levels of deprivations of the elderly are mostly conditioned by the social and demographic characteristics of the elderly and the household. There is high relativity between economic and health components of deprivation and economic and social aspects of deprivation. Welfare schemes must target these aspects to provide better quality of life for the elderly to live with dignity.

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Day-17

Despite the consistent efforts by the government manual scavenging is still practiced in India. Critically analyze the various reasons behind it. (250 words)

Why this question:

In 2019 many deaths were reported due to illegal manual scavenging activities. Especially no safety or protective gear is given to workers who die from asphyxiation. Safai Karmacharis comes under vulnerable section prone to exploitation and is a part of GS-2 topic for mains.

Key demand of the question:

Bring out holistic picture of manual scavenging scenario in India. Highlight the reason for its continued existence and how the government is tackling the problem. Present statistics and a strategy to combat the problem.

Directive word:

Critically analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgment.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Start with factual data and law

Despite a ban on manual scavenging from 1993, there were still 12,226 manual scavengers in 12 states. Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) released in 2015, states that there were around 18 million manual scavenging households in rural areas.

It is invariably linked to the caste system and untouchability (abolished under Article 17).

Body

Manual Scavenging: Brief Background

- Manual scavenging refers to the practice of manually cleaning, carrying, disposing or handling in any manner, human excreta from dry latrines and sewers.
- In 1993, the Government of India enacted the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act.

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- The act prohibited the employment of manual scavengers for manually cleaning dry latrines and also the construction of dry toilets (that do not operate with a flush).
 - It provided for imprisonment of up to a year and a fine.
- Manual scavenging is now regulated by the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013.
 - Explain features of this act briefly.
- Since 1993, **a total of 926 deaths** related to the manual scavenging is reported in the country, out of which 172 families are yet to receive compensation.
- According to the **National Commission of Safai Karamcharis (NCSK)**, a total of 53,598 people, of which 29,923 were in Uttar Pradesh alone, had been identified as engaged in manual scavenging after surveys in 2013 and 2018.
- **Tamil Nadu** reported the **highest number of deaths** but has paid compensation in all but seven of the 234 cases.

Reasons behind continuation of manual scavenging

- **Prejudice and ingrained caste hierarchies:** Despite the most stringent penal provisions in the law against manual scavenging, it continues in parts of India largely **due to governmental indifference and social prejudice.**
- **Insanitary latrines:** The continued presence of insanitary latrines, of which there are about 2.6 million that require cleaning by hand, according to Safai Karmachari Andolan.
- **Unscientific beliefs:** Many communities still regard the presence of a sanitary toilet inside the house as physical pollution.
- The entrenched belief in the **caste system** that assumes people belonging to a particular caste group will readily perform the stigmatised task of emptying latrines.
- **Drudgery on women:** Most manual scavengers in rural areas are women.
- The state governments are not keen to demolish and rebuild old facilities lacking sanitation, or conduct a full census of both the latrines and the people engaged in clearing such waste.
- **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan** is targeting construction of latrines but still under the pit system in many villages. This invariably required cleaning manually.
- Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation had itself acknowledged that in rural areas, mechanical pumps to clear septic tanks are not available.
- And so on

Strategy to combat the problem

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- Ministries such as Housing and Urban Affairs should be looking into the **complete mechanisation of sewage cleaning**, which is the only way to eliminate the practice of getting people to clean it manually.
- **Bio-toilets:** Bio-digester toilets are designed to convert human waste into **gases and manure**.
- The **zero-waste biodigester technology** uses psychotropic bacteria to break down human excreta into usable water and gas. Once applied, the bacteria can work for a lifetime.
- If the law on manual scavenging is to be effective, the penalties must be uniformly and visibly enforced.
- It is equally important for State governments to address the lack of adequate machinery to clean septic tanks.
- Toilet designs proposed by the government include those in which fully composted waste must be removed from pits every two years.
- Write more innovative solutions and examples like initiatives from sulabh international and robotic cleaners like **Bandicoot**.

Conclusion

Talk about how the practice goes against human dignity and ways to alleviate their lives.

There is a need to ensure discrimination-free, secure and alternate livelihoods by providing skill development and livelihood training for manual scavengers. Political will is equally necessary to prevent the practice from existence. As a society, we must be humane towards the sufferings of the lowest rung of the society.

Day-18

Discuss the reasons for poor state of legal justice in India. To what extent e-governance can help in deliver fair and equitable justice to poor? (250 words)

Why this question:

In recent times pendency of cases and vacancies have been discussed very often in the news. Justice delivery system is the backbone of a democratic country and must function smoothly. From exam perspective this forms part of GS-2 and is important for CSE mains.

Key demand of the question:

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Enumerate and explain with data regarding the problems of the justice system in India. Then go on to explain how a switch to e-governance can help deliver justice to the poor. Address each part accurately.

Directive word: Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Body

Reasons for poor state of legal justice in India

Explain each point

- **Corruption:** The Indian judicial system is also marred by corruption. There is no provision for registering an FIR against a judge taking bribes without taking the permission of the Chief Justice of India.
 - The prevalence of corruption in lower courts is closely connected to corruption in higher courts.
 - As higher court judges are selected from the ranks of lower court judges and lawyers, there is always a possibility of corrupt judges making it to higher courts.
- **Huge Pendency:** The major challenge facing the judiciary is the huge backlog of over **2.7 crore pending** cases. There are also significant capacity issues.
- **Undertrials:** In Indian jails, most of the prisoners are undertrials, who are confined to the jails till their case comes to a definite conclusion. In most of the cases, they end up spending more time in the jail than the actual term that might have had been awarded to them had the case been decided on time and, assuming, against them.
- **Vacancies:** Paucity of judges and court staff, delaying justice further.
- **Inefficiency** of case management system- Improper case listing -as a result of which quality of adjudication is compromised, cases delayed due to adjournments, and cases listed out at last are not heard.
- **Social inequalities:** While rich is able to access and mould the legal and judicial system in their favour, poor suffer at the hands of corrupt and inefficient system. The poor also have no access to legal assistance.
- **Police behaviour:** Custodial torture, extra-judicial encounters, not adhering to rule of law are among various problems that has eroded trust from minds of people in police.
 - Eg: Jayraj-Bennicks case recently in Tamil Nadu.
- And so on

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E-governance: Fair and equitable justice to poor

e-Governance which also known as electronic governance is basically the application of Information and Communications Technology to the processes of Government functioning in order to bring about 'Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent' governance.

Write how e-governance will achieve fair and equitable justice

- **Participation:** People will be able to voice their own opinions through legitimate immediate organizations or representatives. This includes men and women, vulnerable sections of society, backward classes, minorities, etc.
- **Rule of Law:** The discretion power of the officials will be reduced when services are delivered online and it decreases avenue for wrongdoings. The most marginalised are benefitted with faster service and on time delivery as well.
- **Equity and Inclusiveness:** Irrespective of the people's background, e-governance helps in adhering to the process, making service delivery equitable and objective. Effectiveness and Efficiency: Resources of the community should be used effectively for the maximum output.
- **Accountability: It will lead to good governance and** aims towards betterment of people, and this can not take place without the government being accountable to the people.
- **Transparency:** Information is made accessible to the public. It also means free media and access of information to them.
- **Responsiveness:** Institutions and processes will serve all stakeholders in a reasonable period of time.

Examples of e-governance initiatives

- **Tele-Law:** In its effort to make legal aid easily accessible to the marginalized communities and citizens living in rural areas, the Government of India has launched the 'Tele-Law'.
 - 'Tele-Law' will enable people to seek legal advice from lawyers through video conferencing available at the Common Service Centres (CSC).
- **e-Court**, an integrated MMP, has a clear objective - to re-engineer processes and enhance judicial productivity both qualitatively and quantitatively to make the justice delivery system affordable, accessible, cost effective, transparent and accountable
- **Streamlining case management** processes in courts, so justice delivery can be swift, efficient and cost-effective. The courts need to streamline their case management processes with technology or external expertise that will help reduce pendency.
- **Police reforms:** Initiatives such as e-FIR's and tracking the case status will help people easily file cases.

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- Having one beat constable to an area and citizens having easy access to such person using social media will bring police and people closer. **Eg: Jan-Maitri initiative in Kerala**
- It would not only ensure that the police are accountable, efficient and effective but also change this perception.
- **e-District:** The MMP aims at delivery of high volume, citizen-centric services at the District level such as the issue of birth/death certificate, income and caste certificates, old age and widow pension, etc.
- Give more such examples

Conclusion

There is need to ensure that every pillar of the justice system starting from police to judiciary come together to improve the justice systems. Isolated reforms and policies will not work in silos. While there is a need to increase efficiency with e-governance, major changes need to be implemented.

Day-19

Discuss the key features of National Education Policy, 2019. Critically analyze the lacunae's and necessary strategy to address the issues. (250 words)

Why this question:

Issues related to the development and management of the social sector/Services relating to Education is a major and most important topic for CSE mains. Each dimension of education must be thoroughly prepared by candidates.

Key demand of the question:

Explain the key points of NEP, 2019. Next explain the gaps in the policy with appropriate explanation. Write measures to address the issues.

Directive word: Discuss and critically analyze - This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. Next critically analyse and write both advantages and disadvantages.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

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Body

Key features of NEP, 2019

- The policy **covers school education, higher education and professional education** which in turn include agricultural education, legal education, medical education and technical education.
- The policy also tries to focus on certain foundational skills that children should have in the **proposed new structure of 5+3+3+4**.
 - Explain each stage
- It also looks at the verticals of vocational education by **including teacher education and the research and innovation**.
- **Higher education:**
 - Restructuring of the higher education system into **Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3**.
 - Explain each Tier
 - The idea is to spread 'research culture' at the undergraduate level.
- Promotion of classical and regional languages have been emphasised upon.
- The policy also proposes to increase the class of **compulsory education up to grade 12 (age-18)**.
 - The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act - RTE, 2009 (represents Article 21-A of the Indian Constitution) made education, a fundamental right of every child between the ages of 6 and 14.
- The policy aims to **achieve a fully literate society** where all adults are literates by 2030 or so.

Gaps that needs to be addressed

- The draft policy is silent on the Institutions of Eminence and agencies like the Higher Education Funding Agency
- The policy does not address with sufficient clarity curricular, pedagogical and teacher education-related issues that plague the teaching and learning of early literacy in many Indian classrooms
- It misdiagnoses the causes behind the severe learning crisis - namely poor school and teacher accountability. There is no fundamental reform proposed for revamping the accountability structures for schools. Instead, the NEP provides school management committees (SMCs). SMCs already mandated under the RTE Act are ineffectual
- With the democratization of knowledge and availability of technology for easy access to information, the draft should have focused more on how to teach and not only on what to teach

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- Also, increasing the limit on higher side i.e. up to the age of 18 is not consistent with the limits across the world.
- There is **not enough capacity in the country to provide for teachers' education**. Also, M.Ed has been given less importance under the policy. The focus has been more on B.Ed.

Addressing the gaps

Write strategy for each of the lacunas discussed above.

- Apart from a consensus between the centre and the states, all the other stakeholders including institutions, public and academicians should also be consulted.
- **Natal and prenatal studies should also be included** in the country's education system to ensure awareness about the issues related to mother and infants, considering the high MMR and IMR in the country.
- There should be a **course of Masters of Teacher Education**. Also, there is a need to build good teacher training institutions.
- The education policy **should maintain a symbiotic relationship between the different regions of the country** through the study of different languages.
- The quality of education provided in the country shall be such that it not only delivers basic literacy and numeracy but also creates an analytical environment in the country.
- Equally serious is the concern about the division between research-intensive 'premier' universities; teaching universities; and colleges.
- And so on.

Conclusion

Write about how education must be treated as public good rather than a commodity that is accessible to the wealthy few. And conclude as following

Education policy, in essence, must aim to produce sensitive, creative and upright citizens who are willing to take the less-travelled path and whose professional "skills" will endure revolutions in thinking and technology.

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Day-20

Examine the opportunities provided by Covid-19 to plug the gaps in India's healthcare system and Infrastructure. (250 words)

Why this question:

Ongoing pandemic has overwhelmed the country's health infrastructure which was already under pressure. The unprecedented crisis has once again brought the focus back on the glaring gaps in the India's healthcare.

Key demand of the question: One must discuss in what way the Covid-19 crisis provides for an opportunity to plug the gaps in our health infrastructure, in rural and urban areas. And explain the prospects of making Indian health-care self-reliant.

Directive word: Examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Set the context of the question.

Decades of neglect have left India's public health system with a very weak arsenal to fight and eliminate contagious diseases. The costs of such inaction, even if not fully visible, were already quite high, even before the novel coronavirus landed up on our shores.

The **2019 Global Health Security Index ranks India at 57** out of 195 countries, indicating that we may be more vulnerable than China (at 51) and Italy (at 31), which have seen the highest number of Covid-19 related deaths till now.

Body

Provide brief scenario on healthcare status

Healthcare status in India: Problems

- **Mortality:** According to the National Health Profile 2019, over 50 percent of all deaths due to communicable diseases in 2018 were because of respiratory diseases and pneumonia, symptoms common with those of COVID-19.
- **Health expenditure** by the government is only 1.5% of GDP.
- **Doctor: Population 1:1800** and 78% doctors cater to urban India (population of 30%).
- **Absence of primary care:** First mile connectivity to a primary healthcare center is broken. **For eg, in Uttar Pradesh there is one PHC for every 28 villages.**

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- **Out of pocket expenditure high:** 60 million Indians every year are pushed to poverty due to this.
- **Rural medical practitioners (RMPs),** who provide 80% of outpatient care, have no formal qualifications for it. People fall prey for quacks, often leading to grave disabilities and loss of life.

Opportunities provided by pandemic to plug gaps

- **Capacity Building:** At least 500 bed capacity to be set up in each 250 districts of the country.
- **Infrastructure:** Ensure that district hospitals are well equipped in transforming the facility into isolation unit for dedicated treatment of contagious diseases.
- Setting up **infectious disease hospital blocks** in every district, integrated public health labs in every district, and health labs in every block and public health unit to manage pandemics in the future.
- **Become Atmanirbhar:** Not only by building more health and wellness centres, but also procurement of medical equipment and filling up vacant specialists' positions at various levels of the rural healthcare system.
- **National Health Mission:** Strengthening the NHM, especially its rural component, i.e., National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) is crucial as rural poor rely primarily on public health care that comprises of sub-centres (SC) and primary health centres (PHC) for immediate health needs, and community health centres (CHC) and district hospitals are opted for in case of complicated procedures and specialist care.
- Making the Atmanirbhar initiative's health component functional would require at least **2.5% of GDP to be spent on public health expenditure** in a time-bound manner, as suggested in the National Health Policy 2017.
- **Incentivising private sector** for setting up new hospitals in rural areas by providing single-window clearances for regulatory requirements and allocating land at concessional rates;
- Regular social auditing of health infrastructure, and enhancing the incentive structure and ensuring timely payment to the Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) and other health workers would significantly improve health sector preparedness and make it atmanirbhar in true sense.
- **Smart City mission** must provide importance to healthcare. Artificial intelligence, **integrated command and control centre for monitoring citizens** during pandemics (Arogya Setu) will go a long way in controlling the spread.

Conclusion

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The fight against COVID-19 can only be won when we get a preventive vaccine or a therapeutic drug on hand. Until then, the threat of the virus returning when conditions are conducive to its spread cannot be ruled out. Only a measured public health approach with gaps plugged will help the government in ensuring a sustained response to stem its tide.

Day-21

'Poverty Alleviation Programmes in India remain mere show pieces until and unless they are backed by political will'. Discuss with reference to the performance of the major poverty alleviation programmes in India. (250 words)

Why this question:

An important topic for mains is 'Issues relating to poverty and hunger' and in recent times many questions have been asked for mains examination. Candidates are expected to know diverse content regarding the topic, especially when India is still reeling under the poverty and at the same time successful in removing 270 million from poverty in last decade.

Key demand of the question:

One must start with different poverty alleviation programmes and their performance. Provide with relevant data and figures relating to the same and discuss their efficacy. Give a good way forward.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Define poverty and set context for the question.

Poverty is the general scarcity of a certain amount of material possessions or money (< \$1.25/day) and includes social, economic, and political concepts. Absolute poverty (as defined by UN) is "a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information."

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In the last 15 years, India has seen the adoption of an 'alphabet soup' of ambitious national anti-poverty programs. However, the effectiveness of these programs has always been questioned.

Body

Poverty alleviation programmes in India

- **Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP):** It was introduced in 1978-79 and universalized from 2nd October, 1980, aimed at providing assistance to the rural poor in the form of subsidy and bank credit for productive employment opportunities through successive plan periods.
- **Jawahar Rozgar Yojana/Jawahar Gram Samriddhi Yojana:** The JRY was meant to generate meaningful employment opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed in rural areas through the creation of economic infrastructure and community and social assets.
- **Rural Housing – Indira Awaas Yojana:** The Indira Awaas Yojana (LAY) programme aims at providing free housing to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families in rural areas and main targets would be the households of SC/STs.
- **Food for Work Programme:** It aims at enhancing food security through wage employment. Food grains are supplied to states free of cost, however, the supply of food grains from the Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns has been slow.
- **National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS):** This pension is given by the central government. The states contribution may vary depending on the state.
- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005:** The Act provides 100 days assured employment every year to every rural household. Under the programme, if an applicant is not provided employment within 15 days s/he will be entitled to a daily unemployment allowance.
- **National Rural Livelihood Mission: Ajeevika (2011):** It evolves out the need to diversify the needs of the rural poor and provide them jobs with regular income on monthly basis. Self Help groups are formed at the village level to help the needy.
- **National Urban Livelihood Mission:** The NULM focuses on organizing urban poor in Self Help Groups, creating opportunities for skill development leading to market-based employment and helping them to set up self-employment ventures by ensuring easy access to credit.
- Write more recent schemes as well – Jan Dhan, Ayushman Bharath, Garib Kalyan Yojana etc.

Performance of these programmes

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- **Number remain high:** As per the Tendulkar Committee method, 37.2 per cent people were living in poverty.
- **Lack of cohesion:** While a large number of poverty alleviation programmes have been initiated, they **function in silos**.
 - There is no systematic attempt to identify people who are in poverty, determine their needs, address them and enable them to move above the poverty line.
- **Based on old data:** Welfare programmes are based on 2011 census and beneficiaries remain stagnant.
 - **Below Poverty Line card**, traditionally the main point of access to government welfare schemes has turned out to be a failure.
 - According to reports as many as half of India's poor households do not even possess a BPL card as their allocations have been discretionary.
- **Centre-State gap:** For example, the Centre has provisioned Rs 200 per person per month for old age pension, with the understanding that states would add to this amount. But there is a substantial difference in the amount that different states add to the pension. Thus, old age pension depends on where you live—Rs 200 per month in some states and Rs 1,500 or more in others.
- **No social audit:** There is no method to ensure that programmes reach everybody they are meant for.
- **Jobless growth and not inclusive:** Despite rapid growth and development, an unacceptably high proportion of our population continues to suffer from severe and multidimensional deprivation.
- Incidence of extreme poverty continues to be much higher in rural areas than in urban areas.
- Despite rapid growth and development, an unacceptably high proportion of our population continues to suffer from severe and multidimensional deprivation.
- And so on

Way Forward

- **Accelerating rural poverty reduction:** It's **not just about agricultural growth**, which has long been considered the key driver of poverty reduction. In fact, rural India is not predominantly agricultural and shares many of the economic conditions of smaller urban areas.
- **Capitalizing on growing connectivity between rural and urban areas**, and between the agriculture, industry and services sectors, has been effective in the past two decades and holds promise for the future.
- **Creating more and better jobs:**

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- The road out of poverty in India has been built on the performance of the labor market, but also benefited from rising transfers and remittances, and favorable demographics among other factors.
- Future efforts will need to address job creation in more productive sectors, which has until now been lukewarm and has yielded few salaried jobs that offer stability and security.
- **Focusing on women and Scheduled Tribes:-**
 - The most worrying trends are the **low participation of women in the labor market (23.3%)** and the **slow progress among scheduled tribes**.
 - **India's women** have been **withdrawing from the labor force since 2005** and less than one-third of working age women are now in the labor force. As a result, India today ranks last among BRICS countries, and close to the bottom in South Asia in female labor force participation.
- **Creating good economic spaces:-**
 - Where people live largely shapes their prospects in life. India's states continue to see large and growing differences in poverty levels and basic opportunities.
 - More and more of India's poor are concentrated in the poorest states, and even within relatively prosperous states, certain pockets of deprivation persist where people are unable to share in the state's successes.
- **Improving human development outcomes for the poor:**
 - This is central to improving their quality of life and income earning opportunities.
 - The recent past shows that some problems, such as **undernutrition and open defecation**, are endemic and not only confined to the poor but others too, and have not improved with economic growth.
 - **Better health, sanitation and education** will not only help raise the productivity of millions, they will also empower the people to meet their aspirations, and provide the country with new drivers of economic growth.
- Banking and credit sector reforms.
- We need to **start taxing wealth** and not only income.

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Day-22

Discuss how e-governance can enhance quality of service delivery in public offices. Critically analyze the limitations of implementing various e-governance projects in infrastructure deficit states. (250 words)

Why this question:

With increasing focus on 'Digital India programme', e-governance becomes an important topic in GS-2. In recent years, at least one or two were directly asked from this topic. One must know all contours and examples of e-governance thoroughly.

Key demand of the question:

Explain the qualitative aspects that will be improve in public service delivery with the implementation of e-governance. Next, talk about limitations/Challenges of e-governance projects. Conclude with a way-forward.

Directive word: Critically analyse – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgment.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Start with the definition of e-governance

e-Governance can be defined as the application of information and communication technology (ICT) for providing government services, exchange of information, transactions, integration of previously existing services and information portals.

Body

E-governance: Enhancing service delivery

- Enhancing the public awareness of existing e-government services through a targeted promotion and marketing effort to motivate and increase use.
 - **One nation one ration** will need Fair price shops onboarded to E-POS.
- **Administration:** Developing a strong and effective channel-management strategy to support e-government initiatives across the whole public sector.
 - **Eg: Bhoomi is a self-sustainable e-Governance project for the computerized delivery of 20 million rural land records to 6.7 million farmers of Karnataka.**

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- **Ease of doing business:** Incorporating in public service design and delivery the views of businesses' in order to reflect their needs and raise the services' increased effectiveness, quality and responsiveness.
 - **Eg: MCA21 aims to provide electronic services to the Companies registered under the Companies Act.**
- **Cross-government collaboration:** Improving **data standardisation** and the use and flow of public sector information within and across levels of government to better meet the needs of citizens, business or government and improve cross-governmental collaboration.
 - **Eg NATGRID** for intelligence collection and access to nation-wide database on criminal activity.
- **Information Dissemination:** Faster and verified information regarding monsoon forecast, cyclone prediction, emergency rescue relief operations etc.
 - **SMS-based alert system** for general public for disseminating weather forecast and disaster related info.
- **Reduced corruption:** As public-official interface is reduced, there are less chances of misuse of powers and hence corruption can be reduced.
- **Feedback** – Users/citizens can provide the valuable feedback to further improve the quality of services. Any grievances, complaints can also be handled without revealing the identity of the complainant. **Eg: CPGRAMS**
- **New era of technological innovation:** India as a result of digitization and e-governance, is gearing up for an era of increased digitalisation, heralding the advent of **Industry 4.0**, powered by new age technologies like the Internet of Things (**IoT**), **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **Robotics**.

Challenges in Implementing E-government initiatives

- **Infrastructure:** There is lack of basic infrastructural facilities like electricity, internet, etc. Especially in north-east India. There is also a huge disparity between states and between mainland and hinterland regions.
 - Initiatives like **BharatNet** and **Saubhagya** are steps taken in this regard.
- **Cost:** The e-Governance measures requires huge public expenditure to increase its footprint in underserved areas.
 - In developing countries like India, the cost of projects is one of the major impediments in the implementation of e-Governance initiatives.
- **Privacy and Security:** India still **doesn't have a data protection law**.
 - Recent spark in data leak cases has threatened the peoples' faith in e-governance. **Eg:** Questions on recent data usage from **Arogya Setu app**.

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- Therefore, the implementation of e-governance projects must have security standards and protocols for safeguarding the interest of all classes of masses.
- **Working in silos:** At present there are innumerable datasets which would have yielded better information if they were merged together. This was highlighted by the Economic Survey 2019.
- **Digital Divide:** Huge gap between users and non-users of e-govt. services.
 - The digital divide takes form in rich-poor, male-female, urban-rural etc segments of the population.
 - The gap needs to be narrowed down, then only the benefits of e-governance would be utilized equally.

Way Forward

- Developing a national e-strategy, making ICT adoption and network readiness a national priority.
- Undertaking innovative projects that make a difference, to lead by example, adopting best practices.
 - **Eg: Meghraj- GI Cloud** is a step in the right direction. The focus of this initiative is to accelerate the delivery of e-services in the country while optimizing ICT spending of the Government.
- Reforming government processes covering areas such as revenues, expenditures, procurement, service delivery, customer grievances etc;
 - **Eg: GeM, Public Finance Management system etc**
- e-Governance through regional languages is appreciable for the nations like India where people from several linguistic backgrounds are the participants.

Conclusion

Conclude with a positive focus on e-governance

e-Governance is about transforming the way governments work and reinvent people's participation in the democratic process. e-Governance provides a platform to integrate solutions and services between Government-to-Citizens (G2C), Government-to-Business (G2B) and Government-to-Government (G2G), empowering both the government and the citizen like never before.

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Day-23

“Transparency and accountability are the critical aspects of good governance”. Comment. (250 words)

Why this question:

One of the major topics of GS-2 syllabus is ‘Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability’. Especially with e-governance and digital initiatives on the rise, focus on transparency and accountability had increased. Keeping this in mind, students can expect question from this topic in CSE mains. This also overlaps with governance ethics in GS-4.

Key demand of the question: One must start with defining what is good governance and how transparency and accountability are critical and most important part of governance system. Explain how to improve these aspects. Give examples of recent initiatives regarding the same.

Directive word: Comment- here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

In the 1992 report entitled “Governance and Development”, the World Bank set out its definition of Good Governance. It defined Good Governance as **“the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development”**.

Body

- **Transparency:** Transparency means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations.
 - It also means that information is freely available in easily understandable forms and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement.
 - It means that enough information is provided and that it is provided in easily understandable forms and media.
 - **For example**, in India the **Right to Information (RTI) Act** has been a powerful instrument in the hands of people to ensure transparency in the decision-making process of executive.
 - Information should be accessible to the public and should be understandable and monitored.
 - It ensures that government will answer to each and every question asked by citizens regarding its work.

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- Transparency upholds **Rule of law**.
- **Accountability:** The term refers to "**the obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions.**"
 - Good governance aims towards betterment of people, and this cannot take place without the government being accountable to the people.
 - Governmental institutions, private sectors, and civil society organizations should be held accountable to the public and institutional stakeholders.
 - The components of accountability are **answerability, sanction, redress and system improvement**.
 - Accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of law.
 - **Rajasthan's Jan Sunwai**, was an important initiative that made government accountable to the citizens and beneficiaries.
 - It unearthed the discrepancy and corruption that had led to usurping public money under the garb of ghost beneficiaries.
 - **Meghalaya became the first state to make Social Audit** mandatory by passing a legislation. This will go a long way in ensuring that the welfare expenditure is spent optimally.
 - The **citizen's charter initiative** was a step in the right direction. However, it is marred by inaction and has not been updated regularly.
 - Grievance redressal mechanism such as **CPGrams** have been implemented by the government for timely resolution of problems faced by people.

Likewise, give examples and significance of governance being transparent and accountable to the people. Bring out how it leads to good governance.

- Good governance has 8 major characteristics. It is **participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law**.
- More importantly, transparency and accountability ensure that the rest 6 characteristics are upheld. It minimises the discretion of the authority and makes them more receptive to the needs of the people.
- It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making.
- It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society.

Challenges to Transparency and Accountability

- **Corruption** is a major obstacle in improving the quality of governance.

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- While human greed is obviously a driver of corruption, it is the structural incentives and poor enforcement system to punish the corrupt that have contributed to the rising curve of graft in India.
- According to the Corruption Perception Index - 2019 (released by Transparency International, India's ranking has slipped from 78 to 80.
- **Delay in grievance redressal:** A citizen has the right to avail timely justice, but there are several factors, because of that a common man doesn't get timely justice.
- **Lack of empathy** to the sufferings of the people.
- Secrecy in awarding contracts, issuing tenders is a major hindrance. **Nepotism** and **crony capitalism** are the main drivers for this problem.

Conclusion

There is a need to reformulate our national strategy to accord primacy to the Gandhian principle of 'Antyodaya' to restore good governance in the country. India should also focus on developing probity in governance, which will make the governance more ethical. The government should continue to work on the ideals of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas which will lead to inclusive and sustainable development.

Day-24

Do you think that 'politicization of the civil service' is rising in India? Critically analyze. (250 words)

Why this question:

This question has significance as students will encounter similar questions in both GS-2 and GS-4 paper of CSE mains examinations. Role of Civil Services in a Democracy and Foundational values of civil service is an important topic for students and must be well prepared.

Key demand of the question:

Explain the term politicization of civil service and focus on neutrality as a core value. Address the demand by saying how the phenomenon is happening and suggest measures for the same.

Directive word:

Critically analyze – When asked to analyse, you have to examine methodically the structure or nature of the topic by separating it into component parts and present them as a whole in a

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summary. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, one needs to look at the good and bad of the topic and give a fair judgment.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Introduce how bureaucracy touted as steel frame need to uphold neutrality

Bureaucrats need to maintain political neutrality and impartiality to ensure the triumph of democracy. Politicisation of Bureaucracy (civil services) refers to undue political influence in the governance due to nexus between bureaucracy and politics resulting in government appointing their own people to sensitive positions and higher offices.

Body

Politicisation of civil service phenomenon

Bring out how this is happening

- Most developing countries are engaged in nation building and bringing about socio-economic development, i.e., providing social services such as health, education, infrastructure like roads, electricity, productive activities in agriculture, industry etc.
 - Thus, public administration becomes the key agency for development. Bureaucracy can immensely contribute to development by serving as adviser, inventor, and decision-maker.
- Politicisation of bureaucracy is not a new phenomenon in democracy. However, the intensity of application and reasons for politicisation vary from country to country.
- There are some levels of political involvement in personnel matters in all countries.
 - For instance, the **United States has over 4,000 political appointments** at federal level.
 - Even Britain, which was considered to have a strong tradition of neutral civil servants, has shown evidence of greater politicisation.
- For instance, the undue political interference of the government in power in the functioning of the **central bureau of investigation** has led to severe criticisms about the institute.
 - Supreme Court even called CBI as caged parrot which speaks for its masters.
 - There is also a perception in the country that CBI has become a tool of political vendetta of government to suppress voice of opposition.

Reasons for increasing politicization of bureaucracy:

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- Over the years, whatever virtues the IAS possessed – integrity, political neutrality, courage and high morale – are showing signs of decay. Some civil servants are deeply involved in partisan politics: they are preoccupied with it, penetrated by it, and now participate individually and collectively in it.
- There is **lack of independent institution** for transferring, posting, and other service conditions. As a result, the civil servants align with one or the other political party to get their favourite postings and other perks.
- **Secrecy in official functioning**, as a result there develops nexus between the political executive and civil servants to fulfil their **illegitimate gratifications**.
- **In-service and intra-service rivalry**: In each government-service, there are various factions based on language, religion, caste and region. **To gain promotion** and perks for their faction, **they'd bend to the wills of politicians**.
- **Transfers** have been used as instruments of **reward and punishment**, as tools for controlling and taming the bureaucracy. There is no transparency, and in the public mind transfer after a short stay is categorised as a stigma.
- Officers who are victimised are not in a position to defend themselves. Internally the system does not call for any reaction to explain one's conduct, while externally public servants are debarred from going public to defend themselves.
- In the present environment prevailing in the States there is no incentive for a young civil servant to acquire knowledge or improve his skills. There is thus an exponential growth in both, his ignorance and arrogance.
- For instance, it is said that in the house of an IAS officer one would find only three books – the railway timetable, because he is always being shunted from one post to the other, a current affairs magazine because that is his level of interest, and of course, the civil list – that describes the service hierarchy.
- An important factor which contributes to the surrender of senior officers before political masters is the total lack of any market value and lack of alternative employment potential.
- Of late, some senior officers are being hired by the private sector, not so much for their professionalism, but for their ability to influence government in favour of the hiring company.

Way forward

- As a civil servant, one has the responsibility towards public and must adhere to constitutional principles keeping his conscience intact. His primary job is to perform **Nishkama Karma** (selfless and desire less duty).

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- Independent Civil Services Board should be set up, as it directed by the Supreme Court to take care of all service matters with objectivity and independently of political consideration.
- Earnestly implementing RTI Act, especially the pro-active disclosure clause so as to bring transparency in official functioning, breaking the unholy nexus.
- Effective performance appraisal of civil servants by independent body and aligning it with their promotions, incentives and other service conditions.

Conclusion

Conclude by saying how neutrality and important and end as below.

The political leaders should be able to spell out their requirement to the bureaucracy and distinguish the jurisdiction of the bureaucracy in the affairs of the state. Only then will the bureaucracy remain confined within their jurisdiction and consider themselves as the servants of the people.

Day-25

Critically examine the significance of the friendly maritime neighbourhood for India. To what extent, neighbourhood first policy of India would help to build friendly neighbours. (250 words)

Why this question:

Maritime domain and maritime security have been garnering focus since 2008 attacks and India has increased its capabilities and institutionalising defence mechanisms since then. This is an important topic for GS-2 CSE mains and candidates are expected to be well versed with the same.

Key demand of the question:

Bring out the importance of having a friendly maritime neighbourhood and its advantages. Also bring out challenges India faces with maritime security. In this context talk about how neighbourhood first policy can help India.

Directive word:

Critically examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any . When ‘critically’ is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, all you need to do is look at the good and bad of something and give a fair judgement.

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Structure of the answer

Introduction:

India's rising economic and political profile, increasing stakes and dependence on Indian ocean, coupled with India's ambition to be recognised as regional, global power gives India commensurable responsibility. India is touted as the net security provider in the maritime domain in the Indian ocean region.

Body

Significance of friendly maritime neighbourhood for India

- **Countering terrorism from maritime routes:** Post 2008 attacks, maritime security has become more important for India. It is imperative to have good neighbourhood relations with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives and other littoral states for security.
- **String of Pearls:** China's growing presence in India's sphere of influence is a cause of worry as it tries to encircle India through strategic investments and take overs in the maritime neighbourhood.
 - **Eg:** Hambantota in Sri Lanka, Gwadar in Pakistan among others.
- **Crisis in Maldives and opposition in Seychelles parliament to the Assumption Island project** have shown that India needs to have better cooperation with its maritime neighbours.
- **Disaster Management:** The 2004 Tsunami underscored the need for cooperation in disaster management. Post this Tsunami warning centre has been set up, where nations exchange information on disasters.
 - **Eg:** India conducted **Operation Samudra Maitri** to help victims of Tsunami and Earthquake in Indonesia.
- **Trade:** Today, almost 90,000 vessels in the world's commercial fleet transport 9.84 billion tonnes per year. This represents an almost four-fold increase in the volume of commercial shipping since 1970.
- **Sea Lines of Communication:** The Indian Ocean has vital sea lanes of communication crisscrossing it and which feeds Asia's largest economies.
 - Around 80 per cent of the world's seaborne oil trade passes through the choke points of this ocean and therefore it literally connects the east to the west with 40 percent passing through the Strait of Hormuz, 35 percent through the Strait of Malacca and 8 percent through the Bab el-Mandab Strait.
- **Blue Economy:** The Indian Ocean is rich in natural resources.

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- **Oil and Natural Gas:** Forty per cent of the world's offshore oil production takes place in the Indian Ocean basin.
- Energy security and resources are absolutely critical. The Indian Ocean Region is immensely rich in that. 28 million barrels per day—or nearly 80 per cent of India's crude oil requirement—is imported by sea via the Indian Ocean.
- Taking into account India's offshore oil production and petroleum exports, India's sea dependence for oil is about 93 per cent, according to the Indian Navy.

Challenges India faces in the maritime region

- **China factor:** China challenges India's status in the Indian Ocean through its BRI, String of pearls (acquiring ports in Indian ocean) and also in unprecedented ways as demonstrated by the crisis in the Maldives.
 - China inaugurated its first overseas military base in Djibouti, increasing India's anxiety about China's growing profile in Indian Ocean.
- **Capacity of Indian defence industry:** Inefficient production rates hinder the export potential of Indian military equipment.
 - Hence, even while other nations approach India for military hardware, India has limited ability to deliver.
 - **Eg:** India needs more anti-submarine warfare technology to counter Chinese submarine in Eastern Indian ocean.
- **Territorial dispute heavy-weight:** Due to its pending territorial disputes with China and Pakistan, the Indian military is still largely focused on its borders. It results in less of an emphasis for dealing with situations outside its immediate neighbourhood.
- **Opposition from other countries:** Crisis in Maldives and opposition in Seychelles parliament to the **Assumption Island project** have shown that India needs to have better cooperation with its maritime neighbours.
- **Interagency coordination and cooperation:** Many have argued for urgent institutional reforms in India's national security agencies.
 - There is a lack of clarity and ownership over issues like military assistance, out of area contingencies and overall political-military-diplomatic strategy.

Neighbourhood First Policy: Impact in cultivating friendly bilateral relations

It is part of India's foreign policy that actively focuses on improving ties with India's immediate neighbours which is being termed as Neighbourhood first policy in the media

- Indian Prime Minister's first international visit in his second term to the Maldives and Sri Lanka, which certifies the traditional diplomatic emphasis on "Neighbourhood first"
- This move reaffirms the Indian Ocean island states into India's strategic geography. A beginning of which was made in 2015 when Indian PM travelled to **Seychelles**,

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Mauritius and Sri Lanka and outlined an Indian Ocean strategy called **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)**.

- The region has huge scope for marine tourism and trade opportunities. Strategically important passages like **Strait of Malacca and Strait of Hormuz** are part of India's extended maritime neighbourhood.
- Write about Bangladesh and how we resolved maritime issues.
- Mention the Kaladan Multi-modal transit that will aid in trade between the three nations, i.e. Myanmar, Bangladesh and India.
- Focus on India's agreement with Oman in Duqm Port, Sabang in Indonesia and Changi in Singapore and highlight their importance.
- And so on.

India's way-ahead

- In the western Indian Ocean: India can form a coherent group that must be dealt within an integrated framework.
 - Also, India must expand its ambit of Neighbourhood policy to draw in Madagascar, Comoros, Reunion and Diego Garcia.
- In the east, India should focus on a number of small islands which are geo-politically important as they lie at heart of sea lines of communication
 - The Cocos and Keeling Islands belonging to Australia come readily to mind
- Tri-services command at the Andaman and Nicobar must be strengthened with advance equipment for patrol, survey and reconnaissance mission.
- India needs to develop its own national capabilities — especially in the delivery of strategic economic and security assistance to the island states. Without that the SAGAR vision will remain elusive
- Strengthen institutional cooperation through RIMES, IONS in the maritime neighbourhood.

Conclusion

Conclude along following lines.

India can formulate a new maritime neighbourhood policy, signalling its intent about the future course of action. This will bring together the likeminded nations and littoral states to form a multilateral grouping, upholding peace, security, sustainable development and freedom of navigation in the maritime domain.

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Day-26

Can the China's growing economic and diplomatic clout in Africa be curbed by the India's initiatives in Africa? (250 words)

Why this question:

In recent years, India is increasingly focussing on its partnership with African nations. Indian leaders have visited for the first time many African nations. This signals a strategic change to improve relations with Africa. India has to face China as the latter has made huge inroads into this. Thus, it forms an important topic in current affairs under Foreign policy and International Relations.

Key demand of the question:

Talk about China's growing economic and diplomatic clout in Africa. Also explain what India is doing in this regard. Compare the two nations' objectives and weigh in the benefits that India has and can leverage in the future.

Directive word:

Here the question is in the form a statement and is asking candidates' stand on the same. Explore the contours of the question arguing objectively and finally give a stance.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

The multidimensional rivalry between India and China looks set to grow more acute following the death of 20 Indian soldiers in a border skirmish with Chinese forces. Africa, as a continent of increasing importance to both China and India, stands to see another manifestation of this competition.

Body

China's economic and diplomatic clout in Africa

- **China's strong presence in the continent:** China is a strong competitor for India in Africa. Africa China trade amounts to **US\$220 billion**.
- China even built up its first overseas **military base in Djibouti**.
- China's aggressive economic approach has caused it to achieve more influence in Africa than any other country. However, the African nations are increasingly realizing that though Chinese investments are attractive, there are certain issues like:
 - Chinese companies, instead of employing locals use Chinese workers.

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- It is also seen that these companies don't pay much attention to environment protection.
- Chinese loans come with strict conditions that only Chinese technology will be utilized.

India's growing presence in Africa

- **Economic:** Trade between India and Africa has increased more than eight-fold from US\$7.2 billion in 2001 to US\$59.9 billion in 2017, making India Africa's fourth-largest trading partner.
 - It further has the potential to grow threefold to \$150 billion in next five years.
 - India is the fifth largest country investing in the continent, with investments over the past 26 years amounting to \$54 billion.
- **People to people contact:** There has been a surge in people-to-people contacts as large numbers of African entrepreneurs, medical tourists, trainees and students have started coming to India and Indian experts and entrepreneurs have headed there.
- Business-to-business links between India and several African nations have become increasingly important and are driving the government-to-government relationship.
- Indian generic drugs, due to their relatively cheap prices, are used heavily to fight HIV/ Aids in Africa.
- **Indian foreign aid to Africa:** Through various developmental initiatives like ITEC, Pan-African e-network etc.
- **Asia-Africa Growth Corridor:** It is an economic cooperation agreement between India and Japan that envisages closer engagement between Asia and Africa for "sustainable and innovative development" and will be anchored to four pillars.
 - Building quality infrastructure.
 - Enhancing capacities and skill development.
 - People to people partnership
 - Development and cooperation in public health, pharmaceuticals, disaster management among others.

Can India overcome China in Africa?

- In terms of cheque book diplomacy, India cannot compete with China or U.S. Some of the African countries, even the richer ones like Nigeria, expect India to bear gifts for them under India Africa Forum Summit.
 - However, India asserts for joint endeavour for better development.
- **Development not extraction:** Much of India's initiatives, as it relates to engagement with Africa, has focused on capacity-building. This is a key tenet for the government's

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engagement strategy with Africa: **building local capacity to increase leverage and agency among African nations, to be largely directed against Chinese interests.**

- A recent survey also suggested that Africans trusted Indians more than Chinese regarding their intentions in the continent.
- The ambitious India-Japan-Africa Growth Corridor (IJAGC), a developmental project conceived through converging Indian and Japanese interests, aims to achieve closer developmental cooperation with Africa.
 - It will be perhaps India's largest undertaking in Africa, as well as a bold move at counteracting Chinese influence in the continent.
 - The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which also extends to Africa, is not recognized by India.
- By 2020, Indian lines of credit totaling \$11 billion had been extended to 41 African countries. This makes Africa India's largest regional destination of overseas aid.
 - This is a huge increase from previous governments, which did not prioritize Africa.
- Indian aid has also been augmented with digital initiatives focusing on education and medicine. The e-Vidya Bharati and the e-Aarogya Bharati initiatives focus on awarding 15,000 scholarships to African students from its inception in 2019 through to 2024.
- In contrast, Chinese interests have been in extraction of minerals, precious metals and other natural resources such as timber among others. Clearly the contradiction between development partnership of India and extortionary partnership of China has become evident.
- In fact, India was the first responder to Mozambique's cyclone Idai, despite Chinese presence in Africa with a military base.

Way-forward

- For China, three aspects are critical: money, political influence and elite level wealth creation; strong state-to-state relations as opposed to people-to-people ties; and hard-infrastructure projects and resource extraction.
- India's approach on the other hand is one that focuses on building local capacities and an equal partnership with Africans and not merely with African elites concerned.
- As these two powers rise in Africa, their two distinct models will come under even greater scrutiny. And both New Delhi and Beijing might find that they need to adapt to the rising aspirations of the African continent.

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Day-27

Discuss the impact of US's withdrawal from the Afghanistan. How will it strain on regional security structure in South Asia? Critically Examine. (250 words)

Why this question:

The recent Taliban deal with USA was in the news and has been in the works for over an year and half. Yet the violence in the region has not reduced, neither has peace materialised. This becomes more important for India security in Kashmir. As part of GS-2, the topic is significant for CSE Mains.

Key demand of the question:

Set the context regarding the deal and examine the major impact of withdrawal of USA on various geopolitical and geo-strategic interests. Focus on the consequences for India. The effect on regional security in South Asia must be elaborated.

Directive word:

Critically examine – When you are asked to examine, you have to probe deeper into the topic, get into details, and find out the causes or implications if any. When 'critically' is suffixed or prefixed to a directive, all you need to do is look at the good and bad of something and give a fair judgement.

Structure of the answer

Introduction

Set the context of the question.

After more than eighteen years of war in Afghanistan, the United States and the Taliban reached an agreement in what were both sides' most intensive efforts yet to end the war. Central to the deal is a significant drawdown of U.S. troops and guarantees from the Taliban that the country will not become a safe haven for terrorists.

Body

Background

- The **US policy on Afghanistan in 2017** was considered a paradigm shift.
- Its core objectives were to help the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces stabilize the security situation, gain the momentum against the Taliban, and prevent the Islamic State from gaining a foothold in Afghanistan.
- However, last year there was a decision to withdraw the troops.

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- Such decisions have once again underscored Trump's unmatched tendency to shock his own administration for **pursuing an isolationist and anti-interventionist foreign policy** to appease its core political base.

Impacts of America's withdrawal:

- **Rise of Taliban:**
 - India has two main interests in Afghanistan, which are, **preventing any extremist group from taking over Afghanistan**, and **maintaining economic cooperation with the Afghan government and civil society**.
 - The Taliban has **refused to negotiate with the current Afghan regime**, deeming it to be illegitimate.
 - The fears of Afghanistan returning to its **heroin-sustained war-lord era** are high probability.
- **Geopolitics in Asian Heartland:**
 - China is already making inroads into Afghanistan with her BRI project. The process will be further easier.
 - Russia is also a major player in negotiating with Taliban, especially with Moscow talks.
 - India cannot alienate itself from the process and at the same time we have re-iterated for an **Afghan-led and Afghan-owned solution** to the problem.
 - Turkey is also eyeing an opportunity to play its role to safeguard the interests of Afghanistan's Turkmen-Turkic community
- **Commercial Interests:**
 - India's Afghanistan policy's another objective is **to gain access to vast energy markets in Central Asia**, is also at stake.
 - India has presence in Afghanistan after the construction of the Chahbahar Port in Iran and the highway that links it to Kabul.
 - Indian infrastructure projects of Salma dam, Parliament building, infrastructure projects will be at stake.
 - The recently started trade initiative between Afghanistan and India will be wiped out.
- **On Afghanistan's demography**
 - There has been rise in violence against civilians and Afghan security forces. Thousands were left dead due to barbaric violence by Taliban.
 - With coming of Taliban, people fear that there will be curtailing of liberty and going back to a period of orthodoxy.
 - Women's voices will be further suppressed.

Strain in regional Security Structure

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- Increased Pakistan leverage in the region. It is said that Pakistan is hunting with America and running with Taliban.
- The dual policy of differentiating between **Good Taliban and Bad Taliban** can be detrimental to India's security interest, with increase in violence.
- The reason for Taliban's resilience is the support and succour it receives from Rawalpindi. Pakistan's leverage in Afghanistan is set to grow.
- India's Afghanistan policy has a major objective **to curtail Islamabad's influence in Kabul** and deny Pakistan's state and non-state agents leverage to plot against Indian interests.
- Instable Kashmir, due to infiltration from terror outfits. During the Taliban era, AL Qaeda activities were increasing. This time around, situation will be more precarious with ISIS as well.
 - There is already evidence of ISIS infiltrating Sri Lanka, Maldives and Bangladesh. Many youths from these nations went to Syria to fight the civil war.
- The US withdrawing troops from Afghanistan could affect the Kashmir Valley as **terrorist outfits may feel empowered.**
- **Kashmir** may become a launching ground for violence.
- The IC-814 hijack is a testament to the violence that will be incurred by India.
- And so on.

Conclusion

The U.S.'s eventual pull-out as Afghanistan's peacekeeper is inevitable, close bilateral consultations should be made to help Afghanistan according to its own needs. India has always supported for Afghanistan's democracy. Use of her 'soft power' – ranging from telecommunications to education, community development programmes can be pushed forward. India's best course with Afghanistan remains its own regional strategy, not becoming a part of any other country's strategy.

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Day-28

What do you understand by Asian Century? Discuss the opportunities for India amidst the growing significance of Asia. (250 words)

Why this question: The concept of the Asian Century gained credence following the rapid economic growth of China and India since the 1980s, which propelled both of them to the ranks of the world's largest economies. India can capitalise on the opportunities to propel forward.

Key demand of the question: Discuss the meaning of the term Asian Century and what it means. Elaborate on the many opportunities that India can make use to become a strong economic power, globally. Also highlight how it will aid geo-strategically in India's favour.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

The Asian Century refers to the dominant role that Asia is expected to play in the 21st century due to its burgeoning economy and demographic trends. Asian economies are on track to become larger than the rest of the world combined in 2020, in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms.

Body

Asian Century: Meaning

- Asia is already home to more than half the world's population.
- Of the world's 30 largest cities, 21 are in Asia, according to UN data.
- By next year, Asia will also become home to half of the world's middle class, defined as those living in households with daily per capita incomes of between \$10 and \$100 at 2005 purchasing power parity (PPP).
- Since 2007, Asians have been buying more cars and trucks than people in any other region — by about 2030 they will be buying as many vehicles as the rest of the world combined, according to LMC Automotive.

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- Growth is being powered by China and India, now two of the biggest global economies, as well as smaller nations, such as Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Bangladesh.
- By 2030, Standard Chartered expects the world's 10 biggest economies to largely be made up of current emerging markets.
- New research from the McKinsey Global Institute finds that Asia could generate more than half of the world's GDP by 2040 as cross-border flows shift toward the region, which is rapidly integrating; with 60% of goods traded, 56% of greenfield foreign direct investment (FDI) and 74% of journeys by Asian air travelers taking place within the region.

Opportunities for India

India is at an inflection point. Its recent period of significant growth—faster than the global average—has stalled in the face of global headwinds. Through adding the Asia focus, India could expect to target four opportunities to help drive its next chapter of growth.

- **Part of global supply chain:** First, as more advanced Asian countries like China move up the economic development ladder, phasing out manufacturing in favour of a shift to R&D and more knowledge intensive manufacturing, there is **room for India to seize the baton** and become a larger sourcing base for global supply chains.
 - Just the global sourcing value of mobile handsets is over \$500 billion in scale, and India could aspire for a 15-20% share of this footprint.
 - Some inroads are being made. **For example, India is less reliant on imports of intermediate inputs and final goods**, with inputs peaking at 9.6% in 2011 and dropping to 6.2% in 2017.
- **Capital flow:** Second, there are opportunities for India to benefit from the flows of capital and investments powering development as Asia integrates more closely.
 - So, whilst India is beginning to attract investment from firms across Asia—Softbank, for example, has led several rounds of funding for Indian unicorns—more needs to be done to realize the potential opportunity of investment flows from other countries, and this may mean 'looking East'.
- **Innovation:** Nearly 65% of global patents stemmed from Asia between 2015 and 2017, derived from the 50 fastest rising innovation cities in Asia, with an opportunity for Indian firms to be a part of this Asia-wide innovation arc.
- **Hubs of businesses:** Finally, a rapidly growing Asia is catapulting its major cities into leading consumption centres, that offers a ripe market opportunity for Indian businesses **ranging from IT services, tourism services, generic pharmaceuticals, automotive components, agrochemicals**, and so forth.

Challenges persist

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- In reality, from **Japan to India**, the nations of Asia struggle to maintain growth, balance their economies and fight slowdowns.
- Uneven development, asset bubbles, malinvestment, labour issues and state control over markets are just some of the features of economic risk in the Asia-Pacific.
- And because Asian economies are increasingly interlinked, problems in one country spill over to others. Eg: Disruption of value chains in the wake of COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Even if Asia's economies manage to muddle through, the world must ask what will happen to global trade and investment if growth in Asia simply cools off.
- The rapid transformation of Asia's security environment threatens to undo the work of decades.
- China's rise is upsetting the political and military equilibrium and causing other nations to build their own military power.
- The immediate cause of rising insecurity is **China**, as it has become more **assertive**, even **coercive**. Beijing has embraced the **role of a revisionist power**, seeking to define new regional rules of behaviour and confronting those neighbours with which it has disagreements.

Write a few points about how India can overcome challenges. Include Indo-Pacific cooperation, QUAD and about rules-based trade order.

Conclusion

The Asian century is well and truly underway. As globalization gives way to regionalism, and Asia takes a leading position, India could look to many of the opportunities arising out of the region's rapid integration and shifting networks and flows to help drive its next chapter of growth.

DAY-29

“If the UN still shies away from reforming the Security Council, the possibility of the institution being side-lined by emerging powers cannot be ruled out”. Comment (250 words)

Why this question: Indian Prime Minister said, the fury of the COVID-19 pandemic provides the context for the “rebirth and reform” of the United Nations and called on nations to pledge to reform the global multilateral system to enhance its relevance and make it the basis of a new type of “human-centric globalisation.” The most important of all reforms is the Security council reforms.

Key demand of the question:

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Bring out the necessity for reforms of the UNSC, which is the only organ with teeth to bite. Talk about the how the council does not represent and reflect the reality of current times. Focus on India and its vocal support for reforms from a long time. Briefly outline challenges for reforms.

Directive word:

Comment- here we have to express our knowledge and understanding of the issue and form an overall opinion thereupon.

Structure of the answer

Introduction:

Start with UNSC, it's mandate and powers.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations and is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security.

Its powers include the establishment of peacekeeping operations, the establishment of international sanctions, and the authorization of military action through Security Council resolutions; it is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states.

Body

It's much-sought after Security Council (UNSC) was redesigned slightly only in 1965 and its overhaul has been stuck in a political and bureaucratic maze with several false starts and setbacks. Ban-ki-Moon who was the secretary general of UN said that, emerging powers will side-line the UNSC, if reforms do not happen.

Need for Reforms in UNSC

- Certainly, the Council's structure **reflects the frozen realities post Second World War**. Since then the world has moved on and the **power dynamics have changed**.
- The global order has seen massive changes, **from American unilateralism to the rise of multilateral institutions such as BRICS**. Whereby, the developing nations now play a larger role in both international economy and politics.
- **Reforms Long Overdue**: It was expanded only once in 1963 to add 4 non-permanent members. Although the overall membership of the UN has increased from 113 to 193 but no change in the composition of the UNSC happened.
- **Inequitable economic and geographical representation**: While Europe is over represented, Asia is underrepresented; Africa and South America are not represented at all.

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- **Crisis of legitimacy and credibility:** Stalled reform agenda and various issues including its Interventions in Libya and Syria in the name of responsibility have put the credibility of the institution in jeopardy.
- **North South Divide:** The permanent UNSC membership of portrays the big North-South divide in the decision making of security measures. For instance, there is no permanent member from Africa, despite the fact that 75% of its work is focused on Africa.
- **Emerging issues:** Issues such as transnational threats, deepening economic interdependence, worsening environmental degradation also call for effective multilateral negotiations based on consensus yet all critical decisions are still being taken by the veto-wielding permanent members of the Security Council.

India and UNSC reforms

- India has adopted a multi-layered strategy to assume the long-awaited permanent seat in the Security Council consisting of two components: Maximising support in the UN General Assembly and Minimising resistance in the UN Security Council.
- India hopes that its continued engagement at various Global South forums such as G 77 and NAM, African Union would garner much needed numbers in the UNGA. This is reflected in India's strong defence of the principle of sovereignty and the constant voluble criticism of the "Responsibility to Protect."
- India's growing strategic partnerships with the P5, growing economic strength, including the nuclear deals with US, Russia, rapprochement with China paints a favourable picture for Indian Explicit public declarations supporting India's candidature as a permanent member in the Council are reiterated by countries like France, UK.
- India has also formed the G4 with Brazil, Germany, and Japan, its "coalition of the willing", and a "collaborative strategy" to negotiate reforms of the Council. The four nations support each other's bids for permanent seats on an expanded Security Council.
- Talk about, why India being the largest democracy, should have a seat on the Security Council. And so on

Challenges for reforms

- While Russia and US have said they would support India's UNSC bid, but when it comes to the UN proceedings, their positions represent a far cry from the promises they make at bilateral meetings.
- While the US favours only a modest expansion of the UNSC, Russia doesn't want any change in the veto arrangement.
- Besides, the 13 country Coffee Club which includes Pakistan (led from outside by China) has canvassed countries across the world to oppose adoption of the decision on expansion of the P5 Club.

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- Besides, the Group of 4 - India, Japan, Brazil and Germany - which are staking claims for a P5 seat, the African Union and Arab League States also feel that one of their members also deserve a seat.
- Consequently, with the permanent members not on board, any consensus on reforms in the General Assembly is certain to be shot down.

Conclusion

In the current circumstances it has become crucial for the UNSC to reform itself and uphold its legitimacy and representativeness in the world. However, for that to happen political will, especially of P-5 nations and strong consensus among all the nations is the need of hour.

Day-30

With reference to National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) guidelines, discuss the measures to be adopted to mitigate the impact of the floods in Northern and North-Eastern regions of India. (250 words)

Why this question:

Following the enactment of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, (DM Act, 2005) the Government of India (GOI) constituted the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) as the apex body for Disaster Management (DM) in India with the mandate, inter alia, for laying down policies and guidelines on DM. Since then many guidelines for mitigation prevention and rehabilitation has been released. Hence it is a significant topic in GS-3 for CSE Mains.

Key demand of the question: Set the context with recent Assam floods or bigger flood events in India. Talk about the guidelines given by NDMA and enumerate the same. Focus must be on the north-eastern regions of India.

Directive word:

Discuss – This is an all-encompassing directive – you have to debate on paper by going through the details of the issues concerned by examining each one of them. You have to give reasons for both for and against arguments.

Structure of the answer

Introduction

Give some facts on flood situation.

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Floods have been a recurrent phenomenon in India and cause huge losses to lives, properties, livelihood systems, infrastructure and public utilities. India's high risk and vulnerability is highlighted by the fact that 40 million hectares out of a geographical area of 3290 lakh hectares is prone to floods

Recently, floods in Assam and other north-eastern states have caused devastation of life and property, which is an annual problem in the region. However, floods are not restricted to North-eastern India, rather it affects many other areas in the country.

Body

Vulnerability to Floods in India

- Flood Hazard Vulnerability of India Floods occur in almost all the river basins of the country.
- Our country receives an annual rainfall of 1200 mm, 85% of which is concentrated in 3-4 months i.e. June to September.
- Due to the intense and periodic rain, most of the rivers of the country are fed with huge quantity of water, much beyond their carrying capacity leading to mild to severe flood situations in the region.
- **Northeast prone to floods:**
 - **Brahmaputra** is braided and unstable in its entire reach in Assam except for a few places. The main reasons behind the instability of the river are high sedimentation and steep slopes.
 - **High percentage of flood prone region:** 31.05 lakh hectares of the total 78.523 lakh hectares area of the state is prone to frequent floods. And the reasons behind this high flood prone area percentage are both man-made and natural.
 - **Earthquakes/Landslides:** Assam and some other parts of the north-eastern region are prone to frequent earthquakes, which causes landslides. The landslides and earthquakes send in a lot of debris in the rivers, causing the river bed to rise.
 - **Bank erosion:** Assam has also faced bank erosion around the Brahmaputra and Barak rivers as well as their tributaries. It is estimated that annually nearly 8000 hectares land is lost to erosion. Bank erosion has also affected the width of the Brahmaputra river, which has increased up to 15 km.
- **Dams:** Among the man-made reasons, the key cause of floods in north-east region is releasing of water from dams situated uphill. Unregulated release of water floods the Assam plains, leaving thousands of people homeless every year.

Write the guidelines given by NDMA for flood management

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NDMA guidelines: Measures to be adopted

It has been recognised that, while floods cannot be prevented, they can certainly be managed to minimise loss of lives, livelihood systems, property and damage to infrastructure and public utilities.

Structural Measures

- **Reservoirs, Dams, Other Water Storages:** By constructing reservoirs in the courses of rivers could store extra water at the time of flood. Such measures adopted till now however, have not been successful
- **Embankments/Flood Levees/Flood Walls:** By building flood protection embankments, floods water can be controlled from overflowing the banks and spreading in nearby areas. Building of embankments on Yamuna, near Delhi, has been successful in controlling the flood. Same can be **emulated in the north-eastern region.**
- **Drainage improvement:** Drainage system is generally choked by the construction of roads, canals railway tracks etc. Floods could be checked if the original form of drainage system is restored.
- **Channel Improvement/Desilting/Dredging of Rivers:** A channel can be made to carry flood discharge at levels lower than its prevailing high flood level by improving its discharge carrying capacity. It aims at increasing the area of flow or the velocity of flow (or both) to increase its carrying capacity.

Non-Structural measures

- **Flood Plain Zoning:** It is to regulate land use in the flood plains in order to restrict the damage due to floods, while deriving maximum benefits from the same.
- **Flood Proofing:** It helps in the mitigation of distress and provides immediate relief to the population in flood prone areas.
 - It is a combination of structural change and emergency action, not involving any evacuation.
 - It includes providing raised platforms for flood shelter for men and cattle, raising the public utility installation especially the platforms for drinking water hand pumps and bore wells above flood level, promoting construction of double-storey buildings wherein the first floor can be used for taking shelter during floods.
- **Flood Management Plans:** All government departments and agencies must prepare their own FMPs.
- **Integrated Water Resources Management** aiming at integrating management of water resources at the basin or watershed scale.
- **Flood Forecasting and Warning in India:** Real time discharge and rainfall data is the basic requirements for the formulation of a flood forecast. Most of the hydro-

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meteorological data are observed and collected by the field formations of **Central Water Commission**; IMD supplies the daily rainfall data.

Way Forward

- **Studying the river and the impact of climate change** is a must to understand why the state gets flooded every year.
- **Water flow information shared by China on the Brahmaputra with India**, for which India pays a certain amount, should also be shared with the public, as this will help in understanding the river better and therefore help people better prepare for floods.
- **More accurate and decentralised forecasts of rain** can help in improving preparedness. Weather reports should be made available on district level and should be accessible to public.

Conclusion

As the economy of North-eastern is largely dependent on natural resources, what happens with agriculture and forests has direct effects on the livelihood of its people. During floods, water becomes contaminated, and climate change has a direct impact on the water resources by increasing the scarcity of freshwater, which is a constant problem in summer. Hence an integrated approach to manage floods as well as droughts is the way forward.

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