



# **VAJIRAM & RAVI**

Institute for IAS Examination

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**GENERAL STUDIES - 2**

# **Civil Services (Main)**

# **Examination, 2023**

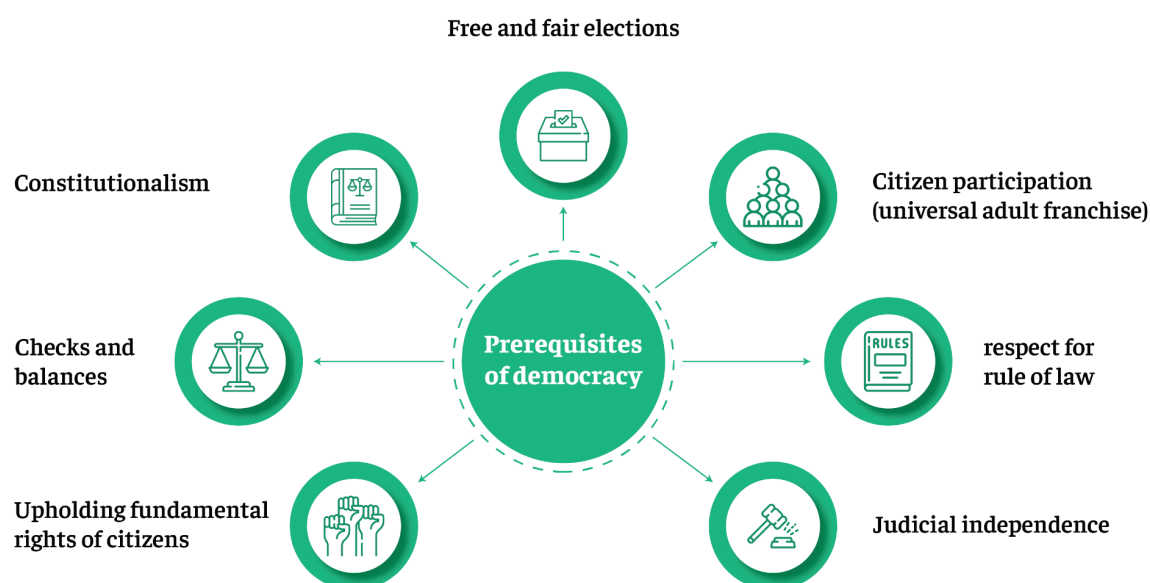
**Model Answers**

**Q.1) “Constitutionally guaranteed judicial independence is a prerequisite of democracy”.  
Comment. (10 Marks, 150 Words)**

**Answer:** The concept of an independent judiciary is a fundamental pillar of democracy. It allows courts and judges to execute their responsibilities free from external influences. This principle plays a pivotal role in preserving the rule of law. It also safeguards the rights and freedom of individuals. This is essential for preserving the essence of democracy within a nation.

**Constitutionally guaranteed judicial independence:**

- **Security of Tenure:** Judges hold office until the age of 65 for Supreme Court judges (Art. 124(2)) and 62 for High Court judges (Art. 217(1)).
- **Removal of Judges:** Supreme Court and High Court Judges can only be removed by a process of impeachment for proven misbehavior or incapacity as given under Article 124(4).
- **Salaries and Allowances of Judges:** Judges enjoy independence as their salaries, allowances, and pensions are charged on the Consolidated Fund of India.
- **Powers and Jurisdiction of Supreme Court:** Parliament may expand the powers and jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, but cannot diminish them.
- **Power to Punish for Contempt:** Article 129 empowers the Supreme Court to punish for contempt of itself, while Art. 215 grants every High Court the same power for contempt of itself.
- **Separation of the Judiciary from the Executive:** Article 50 mandates that the state must take measures to separate the judiciary from the executive in public services of the state.



**Constitutionally guaranteed Judicial Independence is a prerequisite of democracy**

- **Ensuring Accountability and Good Governance:** Constitutionally guaranteed security of tenure imparts judicial independence that acts as a check on the executive and legislature. Independent judiciary confidently promotes good governance, without fear or fervour, by ensuring that government actions align with constitutional principles.
- **Interpretation of the Constitution:** An independent judiciary is essential to serve as the final authority in constitutional matters, ensuring that the Constitution is upheld as the supreme law of the land.
  - For example, in **Kesavananda Bharati vs. State of Kerala case**, the Supreme Court established the basic structure doctrine, interpreting the impervious aspects of constitution

- **Upholding the Rule of Law:** Judicial independence ensures that all actions, including those of the government, are bound by legal principles and the Constitution. This prevents arbitrary exercises of power.
  - In **Nandini Sundar and Others Vs. State of Chattisgarh**, Hon'ble Supreme Court has iterated the majesty of rule of law in upholding democracy.
- **Safeguarding Individual Rights and Liberties:** Only an impartial and independent judiciary can ensure that citizens receive equal justice and are shielded from potential abuses by the government.
  - For instance, in **KS Puttaswamy Judgement**, the judiciary has delivered landmark judgment strengthening the protection of fundamental rights like Right to privacy.
- **Prevention of Autocracy and Authoritarianism:** Judicial independence acts as a safeguard against the concentration of power, preventing the executive from dominating all branches of government.
  - For instance, in **Minerva Mills case (1980)**, Supreme Court adjudged the limited power of Parliament to amend the constitution
- **Ensuring Checks and Balances:** To ensure that no branch oversteps its constitutional authority, the judiciary has the power of **judicial review** over the actions of the executive and the legislature. The judiciary can strike down any law if it is unconstitutional or arbitrary as per **Article 13** (if it violates Fundamental Rights).

The independence of the judiciary, a fundamental pillar of the Indian Constitution, was affirmed in **S.P. Gupta v. Union of India**. The court emphasized that this principle is not only significant but also integral to the constitutional framework, forming the bedrock of India's democratic system. Entrusted with the crucial role of ensuring all state organs adhere to legal boundaries, the judiciary vitalizes the essence of the rule of law in the nation.

**Q.2) Who are entitled to receive free legal aid? Assess the role of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) in rendering free legal aid in India. (10 Marks, 150 Words)**

**Answer:** Article 39-A of the Constitution in Directive Principle of State Policy mandates universal access to free legal aid, aiming to establish a legal framework that upholds justice without regard to social or economic distinctions. This constitutional provision led to the enactment of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, giving rise to the formation of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).

**Eligibility for Free Legal Services:**

- Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
- Victims of Trafficking or Begar
- Women and Children.
- Mentally Ill or Disabled Persons
- A person who is going through **tough times**, like being affected by a big disaster, violence based on ethnicity or caste, a flood, drought, earthquake, or a big industrial accident.
- **Industrial Workmen**
- Individuals in **custody**, including those in protective homes as defined in the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, juvenile homes as defined in the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986, or psychiatric hospitals or nursing homes as defined in the Mental Health Act, 1987, can avail free legal services.
- **Income-Based Eligibility:** Individuals with an annual income less than the specified amount (as mentioned in the schedule or higher amount prescribed by the State Government) are eligible for free legal services if the case is before any court other than the Supreme Court. For cases before the Supreme Court, the income threshold is less than Rs 5 Lakh.

**Role Of The National Legal Services Authority(NALSA) In Rendering Free Legal Aid In India:**

- **Expanding Reach and Accessibility**
  - NALSA has been instrumental in establishing **legal aid clinics**, Lok Adalats (People's Courts), and legal awareness camps to bring legal assistance closer to the grassroots level.
- **Targeting Vulnerable Groups**
  - Assistance to women in cases of domestic violence during lockdown (**National Legal Aid Helpline-15100**), legal services for transgender rights (**NALSA Judgement**).
  - For legal awareness among prisoners, **Haq Hamara bhi to hai** campaign was recently launched by NALSA.
- **Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism**
  - NALSA's efforts in organizing **Mega Lok Adalats** have resulted in the amicable settlement of a significant number of cases, reducing the burden on regular courts.
- **Awareness Campaigns and Education**
  - For example: The "**Legal Literacy Clubs**" in schools and colleges is to instill legal awareness among students. The "**Women Empowerment through Legal Literacy**" program aims to educate women about their legal rights. **Nyayadeep** (the official newsletter of NALSA )for sharing views and ideas).

Despite its commendable efforts, the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) faces a range of formidable challenges in its mission to provide free legal aid to all segments of society.

### **Challenges faced by NALSA in ensuring Free Legal aid for all:**

- **Resource Constraints and Budgetary Limitations:** Budget constraints hinder NALSA's efforts in underserved areas.
  - For instance, as per **India Justice Report 2019**, expenditure on legal aid has been only Rs 0.75 per capita spent in 2018 and Rs 1.05 in 2019-20 – the lowest figures globally
- **Inaccessibility Of Legal Aid:** According to **India Justice Report 2019**, more than 80% of India's 1.3 billion people are eligible for legal aid. But only 15 million have benefitted from it since NALSA was established in 1995.
- **Shortage of Qualified Legal Professionals:** According to **India Justice Report 2019**, out of 629 posts for full-time secretaries approved for India's 669 District Legal Services Authorities (DLSA), only 573 are currently occupied. This poses a significant challenge in meeting the diverse legal needs of the populace.
- **Complexity of Legal Procedures and Lack of Legal Awareness:** This keeps rural and marginalized communities uninformed about their rights of free legal aid services.
  - In the case of **Hossainara Khatun**, Justice P.N. Bhagwati emphasized that a majority of rural residents lack awareness of their legal rights, leading to their exploitation and deprivation of entitled benefits.
- **Social Stigma and Discrimination:** Victims of domestic violence or LGBTQ+ individuals may face social ostracization, creating reluctance in approaching legal authorities for assistance.
- **Underutilization of Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) Mechanisms:** It hinders NALSA's efforts to resolve cases swiftly and cost-effectively. "Legal services cover only 1% of all pending court cases." - **Justice U.U. Lalit, NALSA Chairperson**

To address the challenges faced by NALSA, promoting Alternative Dispute Resolution methods like mediation and conciliation can expedite the resolution process while reducing costs. Additionally, establishing, strengthening and digitising State and District Legal Services Authorities at various levels can enhance accessibility to justice. However, to optimise NALSA's efforts, a collaborative effort between government institutions and civil society is crucial, ensuring a more inclusive and effective delivery of legal aid services to those in need.

**Q.3) "The states in India seem reluctant to empower urban local bodies both functionally as well as financially." Comment. (10 Marks, 150 Words)**

**Answer:** The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 aimed to empower urban local bodies (ULBs) for democratic decentralization. However, ULBs still grapple with challenges in funds, functions, functionaries, and functionality. This has hindered their effective functioning and limited their empowerment in various states.

### **Reluctance Of States To Empower Urban Local Bodies:**

- **Functional Reluctance:**

- Limited Devolution of Functions:
  - Many states have been slow in transferring functions listed in the Twelfth Schedule to ULBs, impeding their ability to effectively govern urban areas.
  - Parallel Bodies: The establishment of parallel bodies like Special purpose vehicle overseeing significant urban functions weakens the role and significance of ULBs.
- **Non-transparent Appointment Procedures:** In some states, ward committees are not constituted transparently, leading to delays and potential compromises in the democratic process.
- **Mayoral Authority:** In states where mayors are directly elected, their authority is often nominal due to Municipal commissioners wielding more decision-making power inadequate power devolution, limiting their effectiveness in local governance.

- **Financial Reluctance:**

- **Dependency on State Grants:** ULBs rely heavily on grants from state governments, which limits their financial autonomy and leaves them vulnerable to changing state priorities.
- **Inefficient Revenue Collection:** Many ULBs face challenges in efficiently collecting property taxes and other local dues, resulting in strained financial resources.
- **Lack of Diversified Revenue Sources:** A significant portion of revenue for ULBs, up to 60%, is derived solely from property taxes, indicating a lack of diversification in revenue streams like public-private partnerships, municipal bonds, or user charges.
- **Ineffective State Financial Commissions:** As per RBI report, State governments often fail to establish State Financial Commissions (SFCs) as mandated every five years. Consequently, SFCs largely fall short in guaranteeing a systematic and rule-based allocation of funds to Local governments

### **To tackle these obstacles, following steps can be implemented:**

- **Enhancing Financial Autonomy:**
  - **Devolve More Taxes:** State governments should allocate a greater share of taxes to ULBs, reducing dependence on higher levels of government for funding.
  - **Promoting Innovative Financing:** Encourage ULBs to explore alternative financing mechanisms to diversify revenue sources. **For Ex:** Municipal Bonds
- **Strengthening Devolution of Powers:** Periodic reviews should be conducted to ensure that the provisions of the 74th Amendment Act are effectively implemented, empowering ULBs to carry out their functions.
- **Capacity Building:** States should invest in capacity-building programs for local bodies, as exemplified by successful initiatives in Karnataka and Mizoram. This would enhance the competence and efficiency of ULBs.
- **Streamlining Accounting Practices:** ULBs should implement improved accounting practices, ensuring accurate budget preparation, maintenance, and timely presentation of accounts.

States like Karnataka, Mizoram focus on capacity building for local bodies. Some states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh have granted financial autonomy. The 74th Amendment's vision needs consistent empowerment efforts and political commitment for effective urban development.

**Q.4) Compare and Contrast the British and Indian approaches to Parliamentary Sovereignty. (10 Marks, 150 Words)**

**Answer:** Parliamentary sovereignty is a principle of the UK constitution. It states that the supreme law making authority in the country is the parliament which can make or unmake laws without interference from other institutions or authorities. Though, India and Britain follow Parliamentary form of Democracy but have certain differences over approaches in terms of parliamentary sovereignty.

Aspect	British Approach	Indian Approach
<b>Constitutional Framework</b>	The UK possesses an <b>uncodified or unwritten</b> constitution. It is shaped by various sources, such as conventions, statutes, historical documents, and judicial precedents. For instance, the <b>Magna Carta of 1215 laid foundational principles still relevant today.</b>	India, in contrast, boasts a written constitution embodied in a comprehensive single document. Articles like Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty) and Article 19 (Freedom of Speech and Expression) explicitly define fundamental rights and principles.
<b>Amendment Process</b>	In the UK, <b>its constitution enjoys flexibility</b> , permitting amendments through a simple majority in Parliament. Notably, there is no clear distinction between ordinary and constitutional laws.	India's constitutional framework features both flexibility and rigidity, necessitating special majority support in Parliament ( <b>Article 368</b> ).
<b>Separation of Powers</b>	The UK <b>does not adhere to a formal separation of powers doctrine</b> ; Parliament maintains supremacy.	In India, a <b>well-defined separation of powers</b> prevails within the constitution. Articles like <b>Article 50</b> (Separation of the judiciary from the executive) establish the separation, while <b>Article 13</b> empowers the judiciary to review laws that violate fundamental rights.
<b>Federal vs. Unitary State</b>	The UK functions as a unitary state, with <b>sovereignty centralized at Westminster</b> . Devolved governments exist in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, deriving powers from Parliament.	India operates as a federal state, where authority is distributed between the central government and state governments, as expressly outlined in Articles like <b>Article 245</b> (Distribution of legislative powers) and <b>Article 246</b> (Subject-matter of laws made by Parliament and Legislatures of States).
<b>Judicial Review</b>	Traditionally, <b>British courts have wielded limited authority in reviewing and invalidating legislation on constitutional grounds due to parliamentary supremacy.</b>	India's judiciary holds the power of judicial review, permitting the examination and, when necessary, the annulment of laws enacted by Parliament or state legislatures in cases of constitutional violations. <b>This principle was firmly established in the Kesavananda Bharati case (1973) and is enshrined in Article 13</b> (Laws inconsistent with or in derogation of the fundamental rights).

<b>Basic Structure Doctrine</b>	The UK <b>lacks an equivalent concept to the Basic Structure Doctrine.</b> Consequently, there is no legal doctrine empowering courts to scrutinize and annul constitutional amendments.	In contrast, India has embraced the Basic Structure Doctrine, empowering its judiciary to assess and strike down constitutional amendments that compromise the fundamental structure or essence of the Constitution.
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Our Constitutional makers adopted the constitutional framework which had a mix of both Separation of power as well as Checks and balances which makes our democracy more inclusive, accountable and upholds the principle of Constitutional morality.

**Q.5) Discuss the role of Presiding Officers of state legislatures in maintaining order and impartiality in conducting legislative work and in facilitating best democratic practices. (10 Marks, 150 Words)**

**Answer:** Article 178 of Indian Constitution establishes the office of Speaker and Deputy Speaker in State legislative assemblies. Their role is pivotal in ensuring that the legislative process functions smoothly and upholds the principles of democracy.

**Role of Presiding Officers of state legislatures in maintaining order and impartiality in conducting legislative work:**

- **Conducting Sessions:** Speakers preside over legislative sessions, overseeing debates and ensuring members adhere to legislative rules.
  - For Example: Adjournment of sessions.
- **Orderly Debates:** These officers play a vital role in ensuring that debates remain civil and respectful. They can call members to order if they engage in personal attacks, use offensive language, or disrupt proceedings, contributing to the quality of discussions.
- **Rule Enforcement:** State legislatures have established rules governing debate and discussion procedures. Presiding Officers are responsible for enforcing these rules, such as addressing points of order, motion admissibility etc.
- **Facilitating Discussion:** Presiding Officers strike a balance between encouraging robust debate and maintaining order by allocating speaking time and recognizing members who wish to speak, ensuring inclusivity.
- **Committee Appointments:** They often participate in appointing members to various committees, ensuring fair and balanced representation to facilitate effective legislative work.

**Role of Presiding Officers of State Legislatures in Maintaining Order and Impartiality in Facilitating Best Democratic Practices:**

- **Applying Precedents:** Presiding Officers refer to past rulings and precedents to make consistent and fair decisions ensuring accountability of legislators towards citizens of the democracy.
- **Impartiality:** In the case of a tied vote, Presiding Officers typically possess the casting vote, which can be decisive in legislative matters, underscoring the importance of their impartiality. This is essential for building trust among lawmakers and imparting objectivity
- **Consulting with Party Leaders:** Presiding Officers often hold meetings with leaders of different political parties to discuss the agenda and maintain consensus on conducting proceedings. This ensures participation of all the political voices in democracy.
- **Empowerment:** Presiding Officers in various states work towards capacity building of local bodies to improve their functioning, as seen in Karnataka and Mizoram.

### Concerns relating to Presiding officer

- **Partisanship:** Despite the expectation of impartiality, Presiding Officers may sometimes exhibit bias towards their own political party, leading to concerns about fairness in the conduct of legislative proceedings.
- **Lack of Independence:** In some cases, Presiding Officers are perceived as being influenced by the executive branch or party leadership, compromising their ability to act independently and in the best interests of the legislature..
- **Abuse of Power:** There are instances where Presiding Officers have been accused of using their authority to stifle debate, limit opposition voices, or advance their own political agenda, undermining the principles of democracy.
- **Lack of Transparency:** Concerns may arise about the transparency of the Presiding Officer's decisions and actions, especially when it comes to matters such as committee appointments or setting the legislative agenda.
- **Limited Accountability:** In certain cases, there may be inadequate mechanisms for holding Presiding Officers accountable for their actions or decisions, raising questions about accountability in the legislative process.
  - **For Example:** Delay in proceeding regarding Anti-Defection in Manipur State Assembly.

Our constitutional maker envisaged integrity and impartiality from the Presiding Officers of state legislatures. Conventions, like in Britain, where speaker resigns from his party after joining the office (which increases credibility and impartiality) can be implemented as well. Democratic ethos should be upheld as suggested in lines of NCRWC to empower this office which forms bedrock of our Parliamentary Democracy.

### **Q.6) The crucial aspect of development process has been the inadequate attention paid to Human Resource Development in India. Suggest measures that can address this adequacy. (10 Marks, 150 Words)**

**Answer:** Development refers to a multidimensional and holistic process aimed at improving the well-being and quality of life of a society's population. **Development processes** are the systematic and organized steps, actions, and strategies taken by governments, institutions, communities, and individuals to achieve and sustain development goals.

#### **Inadequate Attention to Human Resource Development in India**

- **Education Disparities:** there is unequal access to quality education and resources. There is rural-urban, and male-female divide in access to education.
- **Skill Shortages:** Skill gaps in the workforce hinder employability and productivity.
  - **For example**, only around 5 % of the workforce in India has received formal skill training.
- **Lack of Lifelong Learning Culture:** Absence of continuous skill development culture leads to redundancy of skills in a dynamic work environment.
- **Insufficient Investment:** Historically, there has been inadequate public and private investment in education, healthcare, and skill development. This has hindered the development of human capital.
  - **For example**, only 0.7% of GDP is spent on R&D.
- **Insufficient Policy Focus:** There is a lack of comprehensive and coordinated policies specifically addressing HRD challenges and opportunities in India.

#### **The measures that can address the inadequacy of attention to Human Resource Development (HRD) in India:**

- **Education and Skill Development:** Transform the education system to prioritize practical skills and problem-solving over memorization through early vocational training.
  - **For example**, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) in India provides skill development



courses across sectors, promoting employability and practical learning.

- **Skill Development and Workforce Enhancement:** Extend skill development programs across industries and offer credible certifications.
- **Research, Innovation, and Technology Adoption:** Invest in research to drive innovation and foster ties between academia and industry.
  - **For example,** ISRO established the National Research Foundation.
- **Gender Equality and Social Inclusion:** Promote gender equality in education and employment through policies and incentives.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** Ensure affordable, quality healthcare with robust infrastructure.
  - For example, the Ayushman Bharat program can be broadened to create health infrastructure, especially for economically vulnerable populations.

Addressing the inadequacy of HRD in India requires a multi-pronged approach involving government policies, educational institutions, the private sector, and civil society. Continuous commitment and sustained efforts are necessary to bridge the gap and ensure the development of a skilled and capable workforce.

**Q.7) Discuss the role of the Competition Commission of India in containing the abuse of dominant position by the Multinational Corporations in India. Refer to the recent decisions. (10 Marks, 150 Words)**

**Answer:** The Competition Commission of India (CCI), formed under the **Competition Act, 2002**, is India's primary authority for enforcing competition law, replacing the MRTP Act, 1969. The recent integration of the National Anti-Profitteering Authority (NAA) into the CCI enhances its role in upholding competition and protecting consumer interests.

**Role of CCI in Containing Abuse of Dominant Position by the MNCs in India:**

- **Initiating Inquiries:** Section 19(1) allows the CCI to initiate inquiries either on its own motion or based on complaints, information from various stakeholders, or references from government authorities.
  - **WhatsApp's Privacy Probe:** CCI initiated an investigation into WhatsApp's privacy policy, citing a prima facie case of abuse of dominance, ensuring data privacy and fair competition in the digital space.
- **Review of Mergers and Acquisitions:** CCI reviews mergers and acquisitions involving MNCs to ensure they do not cause adverse impact on competition in the market.
- **Ensures fair competition:** by encouraging new entrants and preventing the abuse of dominant position by MNCs.
  - **Google's Dominance Exploitation:** CCI ruled against Google, directing it to remove restrictions on device makers to promote fair competition in the Android OS market.
- **Consumer awareness:** CCI educates consumers about their rights and encourages them to report any anti-competitive practices that they encounter.
- **Orders and Directions:** Section 19(4) enables the CCI to pass orders, issue directions, and impose penalties when it determines that a company has abused its dominant position.
  - **Axis Bank's Unnotified Acquisition:** CCI imposed a Rs 40 lakh fine on Axis Bank for not notifying its acquisition of CSC e-Governance, violating competition regulations.
- **Binding Decisions:** Section 19(5) underscores that the orders and directions of the CCI are binding on the parties involved. This ensures compliance with the CCI's decisions and promotes a competitive environment.
  - **Coal India's Dominance Fine:** CCI imposed a Rs 1,773-crore fine on Coal India for abusing its dominant position, addressing anti-competitive behavior in key industries.

**Challenges Ahead for CCI:**

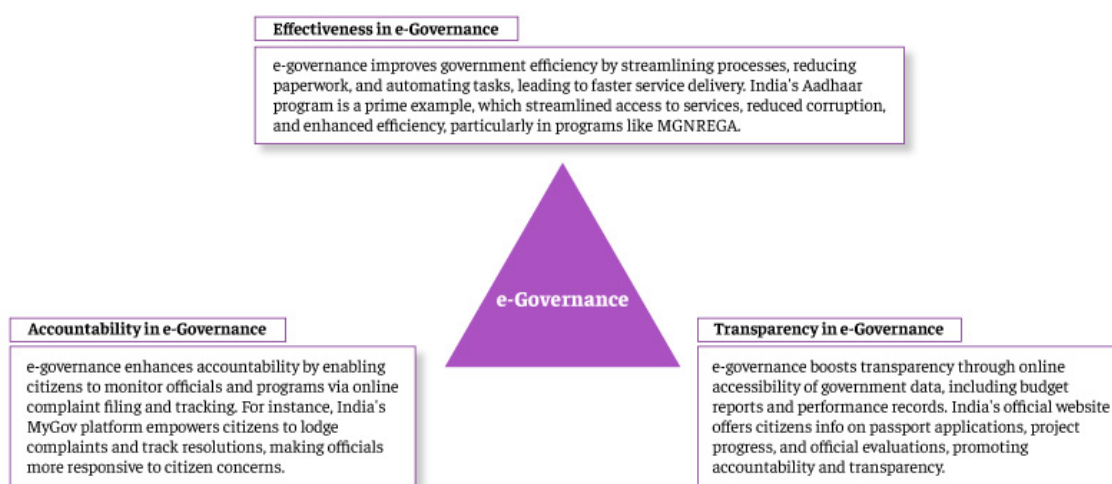
- **Digital Economy Oversight:** Adapting to the evolving digital landscape and aligning with new digital legislations.
- **Addressing Pending Orders:** Resolving pending orders and formulating regulations for new provisions.
- **NAA Cases Examination:** Examining cases previously handled by the National Anti-Profiteering Authority.
- **Global Antitrust and Technology:** Staying current with global antitrust practices and technological advancements.

Despite challenges, CCI's proactive actions and landmark decisions show its vital role in preserving competition, consumer interests, and innovation in India's evolving market. Committed to adapting and fulfilling its mandate, CCI is ready to promote a competitive economic environment in the digital age.

**Q.8) e-governance, as a critical tool of governance, has ushered in effectiveness, transparency and accountability in governments. What inadequacies hamper the enhancement of these features? (10 Marks, 150 Words)**

**Answer:** e-governance is the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve the delivery of government services and information to citizens. It enhances the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of government operations.

**e-Governance: Enhancing Government Effectiveness, Transparency, and Accountability**



**Inadequacies Impeding the Enhancement of e-Governance Features:**

Inadequacies	Rural	Urban
<b>Digital Divide</b>	The NFHS provides data segregation based on the rural-urban divide. Whilst 72.5% of the urban males and 51.8% of the urban females have ever used the internet, only 48.7% of rural males and 24.6% of the rural females qualify for this condition.	
<b>Cybersecurity Concerns</b>	Rural areas face heightened cyber threats due to limited digital literacy and cybersecurity awareness.	Urban areas, while more equipped to invest in cybersecurity, also require increased awareness and robust security measures to counter cyberattacks.
<b>Incomplete Digital Transformation</b>	Reliance on paper-based and outdated systems.	Mix of digital and traditional systems.
<b>Privacy Concerns</b>	Citizens in both rural and urban areas have concerns about data protection and privacy. This is especially true in the wake of recent data breaches and privacy scandals.	

<b>Bureaucratic Resistance</b>	Resistance to digitalization within agencies.	
<b>Limited Accessibility</b>	Only 20.26% of rural India and 64.84% of urban India population have internet access presently.	
<b>Digital Infrastructure</b>	India's 80% rural population and 35% urban population is yet to adopt a digital mode of payment.	
<b>Language Barriers</b>	Limited access to services in regional languages.	Access to services in multiple languages.
<b>Fragmentation</b>	Multiple portals and platforms lead to confusion.	

### **Government efforts and programs to address inadequacies**

Government initiatives to address inadequacies include PMGDISHA for digital literacy, BharatNet for rural internet, e-KRANTI for e-Governance, MyGov for citizen engagement, UMANG for mobile services, DigiLocker for document storage, e-Office for paperless workflows, CERT-In for cybersecurity, Cyber Surakshit Bharat for best practices, and promoting digital payments through infrastructure like One Nation One Digital Platform.

Even though government digital literacy initiatives like NDLM and PMGDISHA exist, efforts must be further intensified. Infrastructure should improve for wider access and underprivileged groups should be motivated to embrace technology with skill training.

### **Q.9) 'Virus of Conflict is affecting the functioning of the SCO.' In the light of the above statement, point out the role of India in mitigating the problems. (10 Marks, 150 Words)**

**Answer:** The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which was established in 2001, has expanded to include countries with populations equal to roughly half of the global total. However, internal conflicts frequently stand in the way of the military cooperation, mutual trust, and shared development that it seeks to achieve.

#### **'Virus of Conflict' is affecting the functioning of the SCO:**

- **Bilateral Tensions:**
  - Tensions between India and Pakistan due to historical animosity and disputes like Kashmir.
  - Border disputes and mistrust between China and India, especially after the 2017 Doklam standoff.
- **Conflict in resource sharing:**
  - China has disputes over large areas of land with several Central Asian countries like Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.
  - Water sharing and border issues between Central Asian countries like Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.
- **Terrorism:** There is a lack of agreement among Central Asian countries on how to handle threats to regional security from Afghanistan's rising extremism.
- **Great power rivalry:** The SCO is seen by some as a platform for great power rivalry between China and Russia. This can make it difficult for the SCO to reach consensus on important issues.

#### **Role of India in mitigating the problems:**

- **Promote dialogue and cooperation:** India can leverage its diplomatic capabilities to encourage dialogue and cooperation among SCO member states, especially on security and counter-terrorism issues.
  - **For example,** the Heart of Asia conference, where India and Pakistan jointly participated, can be a model for constructive dialogue within the SCO framework.
- **Connectivity initiatives:** India has also been actively involved in the **Ashgabat Agreement**, which seeks

to establish an International transport and transit corridor connecting Central Asia to South Asia and the Middle East.

- **Anti-Terrorism Initiatives:** India has also participated in joint military exercises with other SCO member states. These exercises help to build trust and cooperation among SCO militaries and improve their ability to respond to regional security threats.
  - **For example,** “Peaceful Mission” series of exercises.
- **Multilateralism:** India’s commitment to multilateralism and its long history of peaceful coexistence with its neighbors make it well-positioned to promote dialogue and cooperation among SCO member states.
  - **For example,** PM Narendra Modi expressed India’s commitment to a rules-based international order at the 2019 Bishkek summit.
- **Promote cultural exchanges:** Cultural exchanges and people-to-people interactions can help to foster mutual understanding and reduce tensions.
  - **For example,** India hosted the SCO Food Festival in 2019 in New Delhi.

India can certainly play a key role in bridging gaps within the SCO through its elements of **Panchsheel and Non-Alignment**. India can help reroute the SCO’s trajectory towards its founding principles of trust and mutual benefit by infusing its engagements with practical initiatives and a cooperative spirit.

**Q.10) Indian diaspora has scaled new heights in the West. Describe its economic and political benefits for India. (10 Marks, 150 Words)**

**Answer:** India has the largest diaspora in the world, according to the **World Migration Report, 2022**. This diaspora serves as an essential communication channel and strategic tool to advance India’s foreign policy objectives and strengthen its soft power.



**Economic Benefits:**

- **Remittances:** Indians abroad send large amounts of money back home to support families.
  - **For instance,** in 2022 India received over \$83 billion in remittances. This helps boost foreign reserves and consumer spending.
- **Investments:** Non-resident Indians (NRIs) and people of Indian origin (PIOs) invest heavily in India. This

foreign direct investment helps fund infrastructure, technology, and other projects.

- **For example**, Vinod Khosla (Indian-American businessman and venture capitalist) has funded numerous Indian startups.
- **Knowledge transfer:** Indian professionals returning from abroad bring back valuable skills, expertise and global outlook. This facilitates technology development and modernization of various sectors.
  - **For example**, Sridhar Vembu (Founder of Zoho)
- **Philanthropy:** Indian immigrants donate generously to causes in India like education, healthcare, poverty alleviation etc. This supplements India's domestic spending on social sectors.
- **Trade ties:** The Indian diaspora promotes India's exports and helps forge trade links between India and their countries of residence. This boosts India's international trade.

### **Political Benefits:**

- **Lobbying:** Indian ethnic organizations lobby local governments in foreign countries to adopt policies favorable to India. This gives India more global influence.
  - **For example**, the US-India Civil Nuclear Deal.
- **Improved reputation:** Success of NRIs and PIOs helps counter negative stereotypes about India. This elevates India's stature internationally.
  - **For example**, Indra Nooyi and Sundar Pichai
- **Strategic ties:** Presence of a prosperous Indian diaspora enables stronger strategic partnerships between India and select foreign countries
  - **For example**, Rishi Sunak (UK's PM)
- **Soft power:** Cultural events, festivals, yoga promotion by immigrant groups spread awareness of Indian culture abroad. This expands India's soft power globally.

The Indian diaspora presents notable benefits yet concurrently encounters distinct obstacles pertaining to cultural identity, assimilation, and societal integration within Western communities.

Nevertheless, the growing clout of the Indian diaspora boosts India's economic progress, increases its global standing, and expands its strategic options. Leveraging these external assets remains an important focus area for India.

**Q.11) "The Constitution of India is a living instrument with capabilities of enormous dynamism. It is a constitution made for a progressive society." Illustrate with special reference to the expanding horizons of the right to life and personal liberty. (15 Marks, 250 Words)**

**Answer:** The Constitution of India, a "living document", adapts to the nation's evolving needs, with Public Interest Litigation (PIL) enhancing its impact. Its dynamism has broadened fundamental rights, empowered marginalized groups, and fostered a more inclusive society, affirming its foundational role in democratic India.

### **Constitutional Dynamism and the Expanding Horizons of the Right to Life and Personal Liberty:**

1. **Right to Live with Dignity:** In **Maneka Gandhi vs. Union of India (1978)**, the court expanded the concept of life beyond mere existence to living with dignity, reflecting the Constitution's progressive nature.
2. **Right to Livelihood:** **Olga Tellis vs. Bombay Municipal Corporation (1985)** underlined the essentiality of livelihood, equating it with the right to life, showcasing the Constitution's adaptability to socio-economic realities.
3. **Right to Health:** Through **State of Punjab vs. Mohinder Singh Chawla (1997)**, the judiciary recognized health as crucial to life, reflecting a progressive approach to societal well-being.
4. **Right to Clean Environment:** The judgment in **M.C. Mehta vs. Union of India** embedded environmental rights within Article 21, underlining the Constitution's dynamic response to environmental challenges.
5. **Right to Shelter:** **Shantistar Builders vs. Narayan Khimalal Totame (1990)** affirmed shelter as

integral to the right to life, showcasing the Constitution's evolution in recognizing basic human needs.

6. **Right to Privacy:** With **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) vs. Union Of India (2017)**, the Court integrated privacy within Article 21, adapting to contemporary challenges and societal demands.
7. **Right against Bonded Labour:** The judgment in **Bandhua Mukti Morcha vs. Union of India (1984)** illuminated the Constitution's commitment to eliminating archaic and dehumanizing practices, reinforcing its progressive essence.
8. **Right to Food:** In **People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) vs. Union of India (2001)**, the Court highlighted food as essential, reflecting the Constitution's living nature by addressing fundamental human rights.

The continual broadening of Article 21's scope exemplifies the Constitution of India's dynamic character, ensuring every citizen's right to a dignified life and aligning with the evolving needs and challenges of contemporary times.

### Q.12) Explain the constitutional perspectives of Gender Justice with the help of relevant Constitutional Provisions and case laws. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

**Answer:** Gender justice refers to the fair treatment of all genders, ensuring equal rights and opportunities. In India, given the deep-rooted patriarchal norms, achieving gender justice is paramount. The Constitution, as India's foundational text, robustly advocates for this cause, adapting and evolving to meet the country's aspirations.

#### Constitutional Provisions for Gender Justice:

- **Preamble:** Ensures "Justice - social, economic, and political" and "Equality of status and of opportunity" for all, laying the foundation for gender justice.
- **Article 14:** Guarantees equality before the law, emphasizing gender equality in all legal and state actions.
- **Article 15(1):** Forbids discrimination solely based on sex.
- **Article 15(3):** Enables affirmative actions for the benefit of women and children.
- **Article 16:** Ensures equality of opportunity in public employment, irrespective of gender.
- **Article 23:** Prohibits human trafficking and forced labor, which disproportionately affects women and girls.
- **Article 39(a) & (d):** Enshrines the principle of equal pay for equal work and ensures an equal means of livelihood for both genders.
- **Article 42:** Advocates for just and humane work conditions and maternity relief.
- **Article 51A(e & f) (Fundamental Duties):** Mandates the renunciation of practices derogatory to the dignity of women and emphasizes respect for women.
- **73rd and 74th Amendment Acts (1992):** Provided for reservation of seats in local bodies for women, ensuring their participation in grassroots-level governance.

#### Landmark Case Laws Strengthening Gender Justice:

- **Shah Bano vs. Mohammad Ahmed Khan (1985):** Emphasized the maintenance rights of Muslim women, setting a precedent for gender justice within personal laws.
- **Vishaka vs. State of Rajasthan (1997):** Introduced the Vishakha guidelines to combat workplace sexual harassment.
- **Gaurav Jain vs. Union of India (1997):** Recognized the rights of children born to prostitutes, emphasizing the state's duty towards women in distress.
- **Joseph Shine vs. Union of India (2018):** Decriminalized adultery, underlining women's autonomy and equality in marital relations.
- **Navtej Singh Johar vs. Union of India (2018):** Promoted gender justice by decriminalizing homosexuality.
- **Shayara Bano vs. Union of India (2017):** Declared the practice of 'Triple Talaq' unconstitutional, safeguarding the rights of Muslim women.

- **Indian Young Lawyers Association vs. State of Kerala (2018):** Addressed the Sabarimala temple entry issue, emphasizing women's right to equality in matters of religion.

The Constitution, through its provisions, amendments, and reinforced by critical judicial interpretations, ensures an evolving framework for gender justice in India, responsive to contemporary challenges and societal needs.

**Q.13) Account for the legal and political factors responsible for the reduced frequency of using Article 356 by the Union Governments since mid 1990s. (15 Marks, 250 Words)**

**Answer:** The Constitution-makers intended for Article 356, 'President's Rule' to be used only as an 'emergency provision'. However, since independence, it has been used over 100 times. Perfectly legitimate state governments have sometimes been removed to either make them fall in line or to give the Union government's own party a chance at obtaining power in the state.

**Legal factors which have led to reduced frequency of using Article 356:**

- **S.R Bommai Case, 1994:** It laid down specific instances when President's Rule can be imposed and when it cannot.
- **Federalism as a part of Basic Structure:** The Supreme Court has time and again asserted that "principles of democracy and federalism are essential features" and form part of the basic structure of the Constitution.
- **Institutional mechanisms:** Centre constituted Inter-state council on the recommendation of Sarkaria Commission, to discuss matters on centre-state relations. This has also led to the reduced use of Article 356 to some extent.
- **Rameshwar Prasad vs UOI case:** The Supreme Court struck down the President's Proclamation dissolving the state Assembly of Bihar in 2005 as unconstitutional, and though it did not restore the Assembly, it defined the contours of the Governor's powers to dissolve the Assembly.

**Political factors which have led to reduced frequency of using Article 356**

- **Presence of coalition governments at centre:** There occurred a fundamental change in the nature of Union governments since mid-1990s. The government was deeply fragmented among several regional parties, which influenced the decision-making process at the centre.
- **Rise of regional parties:** The national parties were always on the lookout for new regional allies, and hence were wary of using Article 356 against their governments.
- **Rajya Sabha Composition:** A more diverse and representative Rajya Sabha over the years has made it difficult for a single party to gain the required majority to approve the imposition of President's Rule.
- **Active role of President:** In 1997, President K.R. Narayanan returned to the cabinet its recommendation to impose direct central rule in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Integrity of Governors:** Former governor of Tamil Nadu, Surjit Singh Barnala, in 1990-91, refused to send a report to the Centre recommending imposition of President's Rule in the State under Article 356(1) of the Constitution, as dictated by the Centre.

Thus, the reduced frequency of using Article 356 by Union Governments since the mid-1990s can be attributed to a complex interplay of legal and political factors. These factors reflect a growing commitment to federalism, constitutional principles, and democratic norms in India's evolving political landscape.

**Q.14) Discuss the contribution of civil society groups for women's effective and meaningful participation and representation in state legislatures in India. (15 Marks, 250 Words)**

**Answer:** The representation of women in Indian politics has been low for many years. Despite making up nearly half of

the Indian population, women have been underrepresented at various levels of politics. However, in recent years, there has been a growing movement to promote gender equality and increase the participation of women in politics in India.

### **Contribution of civil society groups for women's effective and meaningful participation and representation in state legislatures in India:**

- **Awareness and Advocacy:** Civil society groups raise awareness about gender disparities in political representation and advocate for policies that promote women's participation in state legislatures.
  - **For example, Association of democratic reforms** educates women's participation in elections, and also encourages voter participation.
- **Bring about Policy change:** Various campaigns have been launched in support of Women reservation bills which offer 33% reservation in both Parliament and State legislatures.
  - **For example, K Kavitha-led Bharat Jagruthi** has held various agitations in favour of implementing the women's reservation bill.
- **Legal Reforms:** Civil society organizations play a pivotal role in advocating for legal reforms, such as reserving seats for women in panchayats and municipal bodies through constitutional amendments like the 73rd and 74th Amendments.
- **Capacity Building:** They conduct training programs and workshops to enhance the leadership and political skills of women, enabling them to contest elections and engage effectively in legislative processes.
  - **For example, the National foundation for India** promotes leadership among women by providing awards and opportunities, providing dialogue to all stakeholders, etc.
- **Research-Based Policy Advocacy:** They conduct research to identify systemic challenges and propose evidence-based policy recommendations to improve women's participation.
  - **For example, the Centre for Social Research**, an advocacy group for women conducts research on status of women empowerment and inclusiveness. Grassroot Mobilization

Therefore, civil society groups have played a pivotal role in catalyzing women's effective and meaningful participation and representation in India's state legislatures. Their multifaceted contributions, ranging from advocacy and awareness-building to legal reforms and grassroots mobilization, have significantly reshaped the political landscape by breaking down traditional gender barriers.

### **Q.15) Explain the significance of the 101<sup>st</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act. To what extent does it reflect the accommodative spirit of federalism? (15 Marks, 250 Words)**

**Answer:** The 101st Constitutional Amendment Act introduced the Goods and Services Tax (GST), establishing a uniform taxation framework across India. It has altered the financial relationship between the central government and the states, leading to a more cooperative and collaborative framework.

#### **Significance of 101<sup>st</sup> CAA:**

- **Boost to economic integration and reduced Taxation Barriers:** GST fosters barrier-free movement of goods and helps in realising “**One nation, one market**” and “**one taxbase and one tax**”.
- **Improved Tax Collections:** The unified tax structure and increased compliance have led to better tax collections, benefiting both the Central and State governments.
- **Enhanced Transparency:** GST, a technology-driven tax system, increases transparency, reduces tax evasion, and ensures a more robust revenue collection mechanism.
- **Equitable State Revenue:** The implementation of GST also affected how revenue was distributed among States. Rules factoring in population and other criteria resulted in a fairer distribution of revenue among them.



**Reflects the accommodative spirit of federalism:**

- **The 101st CAA was unanimously** passed by the states, which reflects the spirit of cooperative federalism.
- **GST Council, as a Federal Institution:** The GST Council established under **Article 279 A** consists of representatives from both the Central and State governments.
  - **For example,** It includes the Union Finance Minister, who acts as the Chairperson, and the Ministers of Finance or Taxation from each state.
- **Constitutional support for Cooperative Federalism:** It fosters cooperation and effectively addresses fiscal federal disputes, serving as a forum for dialogue, negotiation, and mutual agreement, thus strengthening intergovernmental relations.
  - **For example, the** GST Council has allowed the Kerala government to impose additional cess to deal with the Kerala floods of 2018.
- **Consensus-based decision-making:** All decisions, including those related to tax rates, exemptions, thresholds, and administrative issues, require the approval of at least three-fourths of the GST Council members.
  - **For example,** the GST Council took all decisions by consensus in the first 37 meetings.
- **Addressing Regional Imbalances:** The GST Council acknowledges regional disparities and concerns.
  - **For example,** it has established mechanisms like the Compensation Cess and the GST Compensation Fund to address revenue shortfalls faced by certain states during the initial implementation phase.

**Challenges in Fiscal federalism:**

- **States' Demand for Compensation:** Some states expressed discontent over the delay in receiving their full compensation, leading to increased federal tensions.
- **Vertical inequity & Fiscal Asymmetry:** The central government maintains the power to levy additional excise duty on tobacco and non-shareable cess and surcharge even after GST implementation, while states lack this authority.

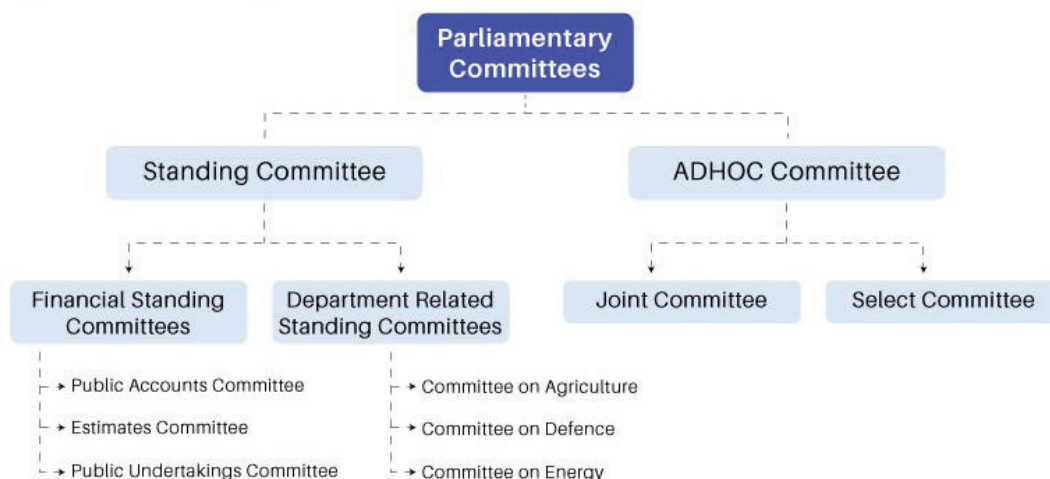
The implementation of GST has contributed to a more unified and harmonized tax regime in India while maintaining the spirit of cooperative collaboration between the central and state governments.

**Q16. Explain the structure of the Parliamentary Committee system. How far have the financial committees helped in the institutionalisation of the Indian Parliament? (15 Marks, 250 Words)**

**Answer:** Parliamentary Committees have their origins in the British Parliament. These are panels of MPs who are grouped together to study and report on specific issues related to legislation, administration, or policy. They are sometimes referred to as "mini parliament". It consists of various committees that scrutinise and analyse different aspects of government functioning.

**Structure of the Parliamentary Committee system:**

## Parliamentary Committees



### Role of Financial Committees in the Institutionalisation of the Indian Parliament:

- **Examine the Government's Accounts:** Examination of government expenditures fosters a culture of transparency and prudent financial management within the parliamentary system.
  - **For example,** the role of **PAC** concerning financial propriety and utilisation of funds.
  - The role of the **Estimates Committee** in suggesting 'economies' in public spending.
  - The role of CoPU in overseeing the accounts of PSUs.
- **Holds Government accountable:** By questioning the Government - ministers and officials on their policies, actions, and decisions.
  - **For example,** The **Public Accounts Committee (PAC)**, which has the responsibility of examining the audit reports of the CAG, has the **power to call officials to testify**.
- **Inquiry and investigation into Government policies:** Scrutinise various aspects of government policies, programs and schemes.
  - **For example,** A Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, headed by Veerappa Moily, was formed in 2016 on the **government's demonetisation move**.
- **Thorough Examination:** Strengthening the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight, even for less politically significant topics.
  - **For example,** the PAC, in a 2015 report, highlighted several concerns plaguing the defence shipyards segment, whereas no questions were asked in the Lok Sabha upon the same.

### Concerns with the performance of financial Parliamentary committees:

- **Post-Expenditure Assessment:** This limits the ability to address potential issues or inefficiencies proactively.
- **Advisory Nature of Recommendations:** They are not legally binding on the government, potentially reducing their impact on policy decisions.

So, they provide a framework for effective scrutiny of government finances, enhance accountability, and contribute to prudent financial management. Their recommendations serve as valuable inputs for policy formulation and implementation.

**Q.17) "Development and welfare schemes for the vulnerable, by its nature, are discriminatory in approach." Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer. (15 Marks, 250 Words)**

**Answer:** To uphold the value of **social justice** and to **address the many problems** faced by vulnerable sections like women, elderly, minorities, tribals, LGBTQ+ etc. government launches various targeted welfare schemes for them.

**For example,** Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojana for girlchild, Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana for elderly etc.

### **Development and welfare schemes for vulnerable sections- discriminatory in nature:**

- **Targeted Approach:** Since these schemes are targeted towards a particular section, they exclude other vulnerable sections who may also require special care.
  - **For example,** Adivasi Mahila Sashaktikaran Yojana provides financial assistance to tribal women which can also be made available to women from general category.
- **Stigmatisation:** By singling out certain groups for assistance, welfare programs can unintentionally stigmatize those groups, perpetuating stereotypes and biases.
  - **For example,** MoW&CD scheme to provide critical care and support to pregnant minor victims of sexual assault
- **Limited resources:** Prioritizing certain vulnerable groups can inadvertently discriminate against others who may also be in need but do not meet the specific criteria.
  - **For example,** Scheme of Girls & Boys Hostels for STs and SCs may deviate attention from other poorer sections who may also require Hostel facilities.
- **Top-down approach:** these schemes are formed at the top level without involvement of the vulnerable section. They may lack a detailed idea of the exact needs and requirements of the vulnerable sections.
- **Exclusion Errors:** Targeted schemes can sometimes result in exclusion errors, where deserving individuals or communities are left out due to inefficiencies.

### **Development and Welfare schemes promoting positive discrimination:**

- **Achieve equity:** The development and welfare schemes recognize that different groups may have different needs and require targeted assistance to achieve equal access to resources and opportunities.
  - **For example,** Standup India scheme to make loans easily available for SCs, STs and women.
- **Efficiency:** Targeting vulnerable groups can be more efficient in terms of resource allocation as the limited resources are directed to those who need them the most.
  - **For example,** distribution of iron-fortified rice to adivasis.
- **Human Rights and Social Justice:** Providing assistance to vulnerable groups can be seen as a way to rectify historical injustices and promote social justice.
- **Inclusive growth:** Welfare schemes promote inclusive growth by providing a safety net that reduces inequality and poverty, enabling marginalized populations to participate more fully in the economy.
  - **For example,** schemes like Nai Roshni and Nai Udaan for minorities.

Thus, the welfare schemes may seem discriminatory but if implemented properly, they can help address historical wrongs and promote social equality. Emphasis should be laid on better targeting, avoiding exclusion errors and participatory design of the schemes.

### **Q.18) Skill development programs have succeeded in increasing human resources supply to various sectors. In the context of the statement, analyze the linkages between education, skill and employment. (15 Marks, 250 Words)**

**Answer:** According to the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), over 100 million people have been trained through various skill development programs such as National Skill India Mission, PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana, etc. since 2015. This skilled human resource has contributed significantly to different sectors of the economy.

### **Linkages between Education, Skill and Employment:**

- **Education as a Foundation:** Education forms the foundation of human capital development. It equips individuals with basic knowledge, literacy, and numeracy skills, which are essential for acquiring more advanced skills.
  - The **NEP 2020** framework emphasizes skill development, to foster deeper integration between higher education and vocational training
- **Skill Development as a Bridge:** Skill development programs bridge the gap between education and employment by providing specialized training and practical skills that are relevant to specific industries or job roles.
- **Relevance to Employment:** The skills and education acquired by an individual make him/her more employable by giving them the competencies needed to perform specific tasks and roles.
- **Employability and Economic Growth:** A skilled workforce enhances employability, which, in turn, contributes to higher levels of employment and reduced unemployment rates.
  - **The India Skill Report 2023** reveals improvement in overall employability among young people, increasing from 46.2 percent to 50.3 percent this year.
- **Informed choices:** Both education and skill development train an individual to make better choices regarding their work.
- **Increase in wages:** Education and skills enhance the economic efficiency of the workforce by increasing wages and their overall value of employment.
- **Lifelong Learning:** Education and skill development are not static; they are ongoing processes. Continuous learning and upskilling are necessary to adapt to evolving job requirements and technological advancements like the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial revolution.
- **Creating employment:** Education and skills enable an individual to not just find job for himself/herself but also to create employment by engaging in entrepreneurial activities.
- **Virtuous cycle:** Education, skills and employment form a virtuous cycle where education and skills lead to better employment opportunities for individuals which in turn can lead to acquisition of better on job skills.

In summary, education serves as the foundation, skill development acts as the bridge, and employment is the ultimate outcome in the linkages between education, skill development, and employment. Governments, educational institutions, and industries must work together to ensure that education and skill development are aligned with the needs of the labour market, promoting a skilled and employable workforce.

**Q.19) 'The expansion and strengthening of NATO and a stronger US-Europe strategic partnership works well in India.' What is your opinion about this statement? Give reasons and examples to support your answer. (15 Marks, 250 Words)**

**Answer:** India a rising global player, seeks strong relations with the West to uphold a rules-based, fair, and enduring global order.

A strengthened NATO and an intensified US-Europe partnership presents both opportunities and challenges for India's evolving strategic interests in a multi-polar world.

**NATO expansion and strengthening are working well for India:**

- **Counterterrorism Collaboration:** India can gain from NATO's counterterrorism expertise through intelligence-sharing and joint operations.
  - **For example,** NATO's partnership with Afghanistan in combating terrorism and insurgency.
- **Support for International Norms:** India's alignment with NATO on international norms is evident in cooperation on maritime security.
  - **For example,** supporting India's SAGAR vision to combat piracy and illegal activities in the Indian Ocean.
- **Capacity Building and Training:** Can leverage NATO's expertise in training and capacity building for its

armed forces.

- **For example**, India has participated in NATO-led exercises and training programs.
- **Defense Technology and Cooperation:**
  - **For example**, India's acquisitions of Apache helicopters and P-8 Poseidon aircraft from NATO members.

### **Strong US-Europe strategic partnership works well in India**

- **Defense and Security Cooperation:** Closer ties between the US and Europe can lead to enhanced defense and security cooperation, which can indirectly benefit India's security interests.
  - **For example**, NATO's continued relevance can contribute to regional stability, indirectly affecting India's security in South Asia.
- **Technology and Innovation: India** can benefit from advanced technological development, fostering economic growth and innovation.
  - **For example**, India-US pact for the transfer of 80% of jet-engine technology by the value this year.
- **Climate Change and Environmental Cooperation:** India can have access to International climate funds and advanced technologies for climate mitigation initiatives.
  - **For example**, the Cooperation in Paris Agreement.
- **Global Health Initiatives:** The US and Europe can provide support, expertise, and resources to address healthcare challenges.
  - **For example**, India's production of AstraZeneca vaccine under brand name CoviShield.

### **NATO Expansion and US-Europe Partnership: Concern for India**

- **Balancing Challenges for India:** NATO's expansion may strain India's Russian defence ties, while closer US-Europe cooperation could complicate India's balancing act with China, potentially impacting defence acquisitions like the S-400 missile system.
- **Regional Dynamics:** Concerns may arise about how NATO expansion and the US-Europe partnership influence India's immediate neighbourhood.
  - **For instance**, these developments could impact India's relations with Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- **Trade and Economic Considerations:** While a stable Europe is beneficial for trade, any trade disputes or economic policies resulting from the stronger US-Europe partnership could have consequences for India's economic interests in these regions.

India's evolving strategic priorities and how these developments impact regional dynamics. India's foreign policy decisions are influenced by a multitude of factors, and it often seeks a balanced approach to safeguard its interests in an evolving global landscape.

**Q.20) 'Sea is an important Component of the Cosmos'. Discuss in the light of the above statement the role of the IMO (International Maritime Organisation) in protecting the environment and enhancing maritime safety and security. (15 Marks, 250 Words)**

**Answer:** The world's oceans, covering 70% of the Earth's surface, hold immense value for humanity. They provide resources, energy, livelihoods, and vital trade routes. The IMO entrusted with enhancing maritime safety, security, and environmental protection, plays a central role in achieving UN Sustainable Development Goal 14 for the responsible use and conservation of marine resources..

**Role of IMO in protecting environment:**

- **Providing legal and technical framework:** IMO creates the legal and technical framework within which shipping has become progressively cleaner and safer.
- **Providing various platforms:**
  - **MARPOL:** It addressed oil pollution by ships, chemicals carried in bulk, sewage discharges and reduced sulphur dioxide emission from ships and ozone depleting substances.
  - **Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas(PSSAs):** IMO can designate PSSAs with special protective measures.
    - Mandatory ship-routing systems in the Great Barrier Reef.
  - **The GloBallast Partnerships Project,** a joint initiative of GEF, the UNDP and IMO, aims to reduce the transfer of potentially harmful aquatic organisms and pathogens in ships ballast water.
  - **Global Maritime Energy Efficiency Partnership project (GloMEEP)** is working to address greenhouse gas emissions from ships.
  - **Global Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre (MTCC) Network (GMN):** A global network of five MTCCs in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific to help countries reduce GHGs emissions from their shipping sectors.

**Role of IMO in enhancing maritime safety and security:**

- **SOLAS Convention:** It sets standards for ship construction, equipment, and operation to ensure the safety of life at sea.
- **ISPS Code:** As a part of SOLAS, ISPS Code has been implemented to provide a standardised, consistent framework for evaluating risk, offset changes in threat with changes in vulnerability for ships and port facilities.
- **SUA Convention:** Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA Convention) to protect the merchant ships and passengers.
- **Piracy and Armed Robbery Countermeasures:** IMO took measures to address piracy and armed robbery at sea.
  - Example., collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
- **Search and Rescue (SAR):** SAR Plan ensures that search and rescue services are available globally, saving lives and improving the overall safety of maritime navigation.

The IMO is fully committed to working through its member States and with its partners to continue to develop, maintain and implement a set of global regulations to ensure shipping's sustainable use of the oceans.

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