

## Answer Writing Focus Group (AWFG 2020)

## ENTRANCE TEST

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Duration: 60 Minutes

## Directions &amp; Note:

1. Please answer the questions in the QCA Booklet provided by taking a print out.
2. Write the answers in the QCA booklet, Scan the QCA Booklet and upload in My Courses (AWFG 2020 - Entrance Test | 10th October | 2 PM)
3. Your Answers can be uploaded by 10PM, Saturday, October 10.
4. In case you do not have a facility for taking print outs, please write your answers in A4 Papers with margins on both sides and in the first page, clearly write your name, Mobile Number, ForumIAS Roll number ( 10 Digit, begins with 191.), and email address.
5. Please visit the link (<https://go.forumias.com/177>) for any queries and updates. No email or telephonic support is available for this program.
6. It is recommended that Students take up the MGP Batch E to benefit from professional evaluation and Mentorship.

The objective of the Test is to evaluate a candidate's writing, expression, succinctness, latitude of imagination and understanding of the examination.

There are 7 questions asked below. Answer any 4 of them. You must pick 1 question from each section A and B, both questions from Section C

## For Office Use Only

Question	Marks/Grade
Section A	
Section B	
Section C	
Total Grade	

**Section A - Answer Any 2 Questions. Answer both parts.**

#1. The Parliament has recently passed three farm legislations. Some critics argue that it is unconstitutional.

- (a) What are the arguments against its unconstitutionality?
- (b) What are arguments for and against it being anti-farmer or pro farmer?

#2. India aims to be a \$5 trillion economy. One of the key areas how this can happen is by becoming a manufacturing hub.

- (a) What stops India from becoming a manufacturing hub?
- (b) Suggest innovative measures that can be taken up to augment India's economy.

#3. India has launched a mission to Mars. There is currently a race for the Mars. In this context answer the following questions

- (a) What possible benefits could mankind get from colonising Mars?
- (b) What has the experience of mankind been with colonisation in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century?

The recently passed farm bills which evoked controversies include:-

1. The farmers produce Trade and Commerce Act, 2020
2. The farmers' Agreement of Price assurance and Farm services Act, 2020
3. The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020.

These amendments was widely circulated as per Economic Survey 2020, and Ashok Dalwai Committee to Double Farmers income by 2022

a) Arguments against its unconstitutionality:

Constitutional

↓  
Yes

1. Trade and Commerce being a part of Concurrent list (A 246/sch VII), Union can pass such laws.

2. It upholds more Liberty to farmers to choose where to sell their produce and also to rise welfare of farmers and marginalised in mandate of DPSPs under A48.

↓  
No

1. Agriculture being state subject cannot be used by Centre to issue orders as per these acts

2. Against idea of Co-operative Federalism as they lacked consultation

(b) Any new measure of reform will come up with its own advantages and disadvantages

Pro - Farmer

1. Decreases middlemen of APMCs thereby increasing price realization by farmers

2. By dismantling stock holding limits, more investments in agricultural infrastructure and storage is expected which in turn increases agricultural income/profits of farmers by decreasing wastages.
3. Promotes FPO formation → Rises bargaining Power of farmers in Contract farming.
4. Stabilizes farm prices / better price discovery as more competitive players in market.

### Anti-Farmer

1. Lack of any regulation in non-APMC mandis can lead to exploitation of farmers.
2. The past data suggests that only the retail prices have been high and Farmgate prices are consistently low → which means govt. should increase MSP lead procurement rather than promoting liberalization which can lead to further competitive lower prices.

Way forward

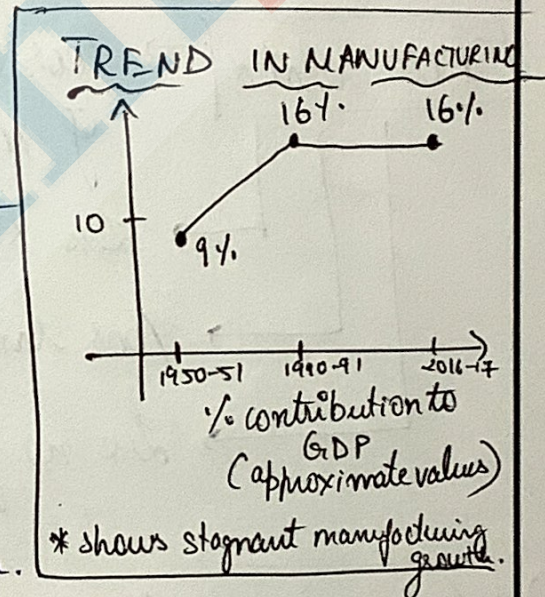
1. Increase public expenditure on agri-infra rather than privatization alone
2. Build consensus to accommodate further demands of states.

(2)

India, being the fastest growing major Economy in the world is eyeing at \$5 trillion economy by FY 2025.

\* As per experts, export led growth and manufacture led growth is very important because

- \* it ↑ employment and thereby equitable wealth
- \* more stable growth in long run.

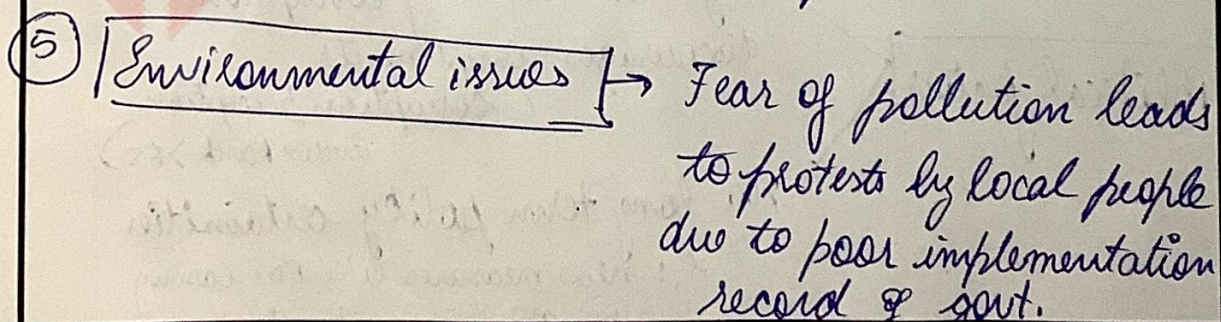
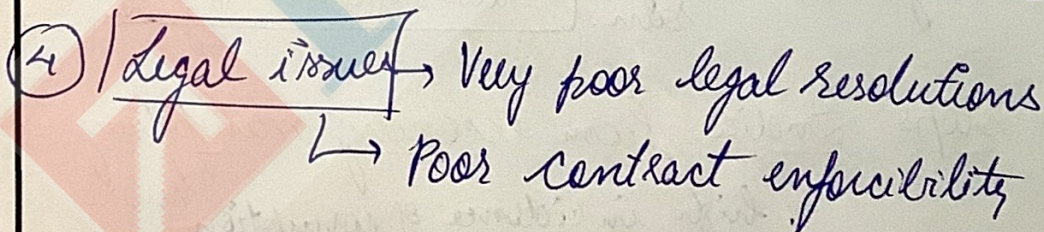
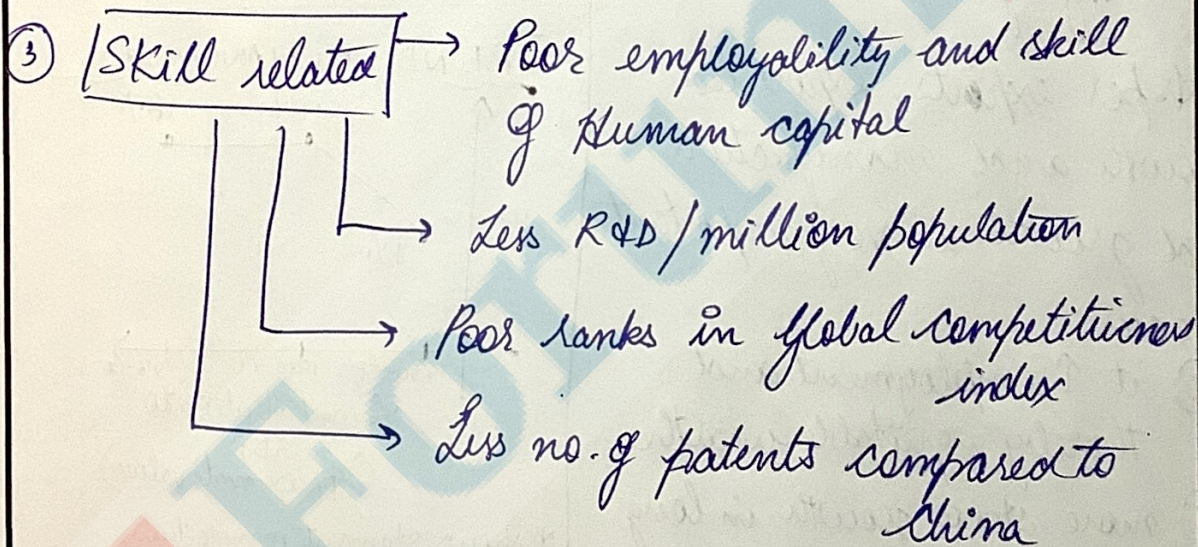
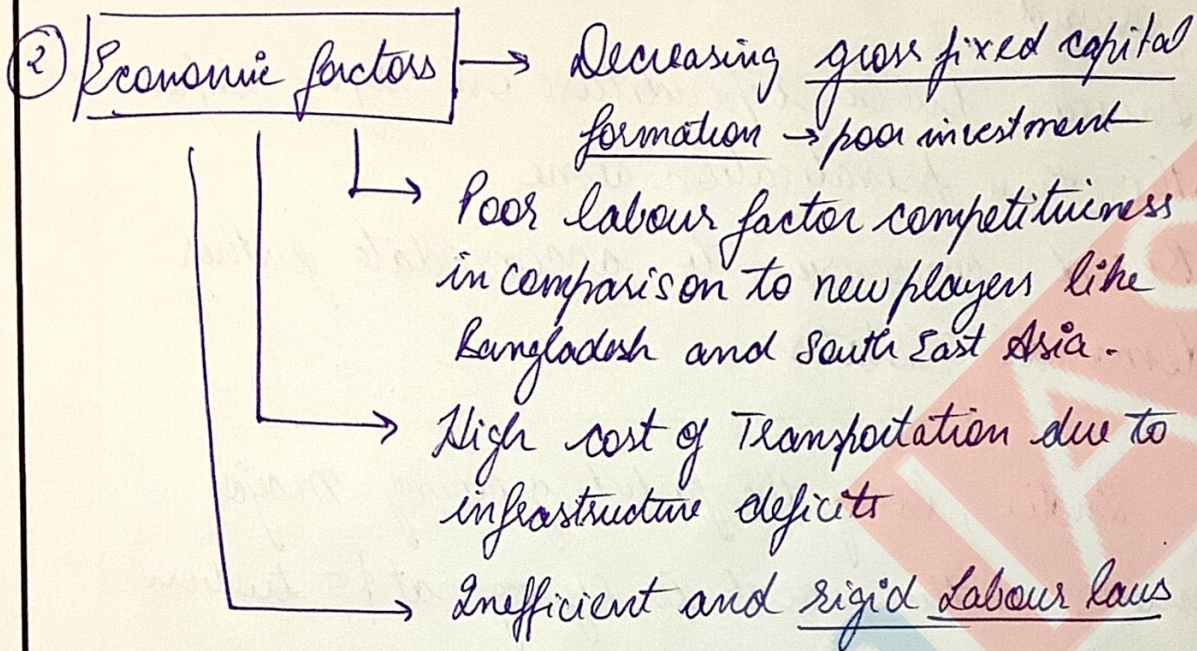


(a) what steps India from becoming manufacturing hub?

1. Political factors

high incidence of corruption  
discourages investments  
(corruption perception Index Rank > 65)

No long term policy certainties  
eg: new measures like FDI easing  
(a) app bans without prior info.



## (b) Innovative measures to augment India's economy

### I In Agricultural sector

1. Increase farm mechanisation and skilling of farmers to increase productivity  
eg: Precision agriculture, drip irrigation etc.
2. Better R&D in seeds/soil along with development of post harvest infrastructure and logistics

### II Manufacturing Sectors:-

Land  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{digitize land records} \\ \text{easier and better acquisition} \end{array} \right.$

Labour  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{strengthen transparent Labour Code for} \\ \text{easy planning and dispute resolution.} \end{array} \right.$

Entrepreneurship  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Promote start ups and innovation} \\ \text{boost R\&D/IPR along with} \\ \text{lab to market connect} \end{array} \right.$

Legal reforms  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Ease liquidity and preferential credit} \\ \text{policy} \\ \text{↓ pendency and faster case resolution} \\ \text{to increase Ease of Doing Business} \end{array} \right.$

### III Service Sector

\* Focus on new product innovations and research in AI/IOT (4<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution)

## (a) Benefits from colonising Mars:

- (1) more clear visualization of origin/evolution of Universe → can breakthrough new science and innovation
- (2) Can ease the population pressure on Earth
- (3) Can lead to more sustainable development on earth as well as Mars by better planning of available resources.
- (iv) Economic prospects of new resources on Mars.

## (b) Experience of colonization in 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> century:

### Positives

- \* Race between countries led to new inventions like mechanisation (Industrial revolution).
- \* Maximizing profits led to globalization which also led to a medium of transfer of good ideologies, education (like democracy etc).

### Negative

- \* Race led to ugly & catastrophic wars (eg: WW1, WW2 etc)
- \* Inequalities of the world due to exploitation of colonies
- \* Large scale famines/poverty in colonies.



**Section B - Answer Any 1 Question**

#1. Everyone has a story. What is your story? How did you get here?

#2. What some of the things ForumIAS can do to be India's most academically orient-ed and student friendly education company. What are we missing?

①

It all started when me and my friends started an NAO called Smile Foundations in Pondichery in 2012, that is when we all realized where a small step can bring a huge difference in others lives. Being a doctor myself, I wanted to maximize the impact I could create in this society. And I firmly believe the biggest equalizer in this society can be Health and Education.

To achieve these two twin objectives, the Indian Administrative Services will be the right platform

To serve the society at large. And in this quest to serve our country I started my UPSC preparations in January 2016.

With 4 previous failures, I am strongly motivated to make it this time. I had worked as medical officer in Ministry of Defence (2017-18) and as an Officer Trainee (2018-19) in IPTAFS; (AIR-508, CSE'17). But I was always determined to get into the top service and I resigned from my jobs to focus on full time preparation this year.

Hope I make it this time!

② To be very frank this is my first experience with ForumIAS. So I shall stick to my ideas in general to all academicians.

① Some incentivization to students who get best scores in mock tests to serve 2 purposes

- Ⓐ To ↑ efficiency further
- Ⓑ To ↓ financial burden on these real hard workers.

(at least few deserving candidates)

② One - One Progress tracking / mentorship.

Otherwise, from the reviews I have got ForumIAS is definitely a top class Institute.

**Section C - Answer 1 Question**

#1. There are two passages/newspaper articles given below (Passage 1 & Passage 2). Choose any ONE of the passages and answer the two questions (a) and (b) below

(a) Summarise the below articles in your own words extracting points that should be in you notes from the below passage/ article

(b) Frame a question that one can answer from the below passage. You can choose either passages for your question.

**Passage 1****Flagging cess non-transfer, its economic impact**

The Financial Audit Report of the Government of India by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) for 2018-19 placed in Parliament on September 23 has raised significant issues of a lack of transparency and propriety. The Opposition-ruled States have criticised the Centre on the short transfer of Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation cess revenues to the GST Compensation Fund.

The C&AG's report stated that the Government of India did not transfer ₹6,466 crore of compensation cess revenue in 2017-18 and ₹40,806 crore in 2018-19. Thus, a total of ₹47,272 crore was retained in the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI). The report also alluded to the non-apportionment of a portion of Integrated Goods and Service Tax (IGST) among the States and retaining it in the CFI.

**Boosts claim by States**

At a time when there is a raging controversy over the Union government's refusal to compensate States for the shortfall in the collection of GST as per the agreement, and, instead, giving States two options to borrow, the C&AG's report has only added more fuel to the fire of the States' claim. These States contend that when there were surplus collections, the Union government appropriated them and when there is a shortfall, it simply distances itself, instead asking States to borrow.

**Levy of cesses**

The C&AG's observations on a non-transfer of cesses, however, has a much larger macroeconomic significance. There are as many as 35 cesses levied by the government of India. These are earmarked taxes and the proceeds should be used for the purposes for which they are levied. A number of reserve funds or development boards have been created for these specified purposes and the collections from the cesses are supposed to be transferred to these funds placed in public accounts for defraying expenditures on the specified purposes. They are not a part of the CFI and cannot be used for defraying regular expenses. The transactions in public accounts are supposed to be done by the government as a trustee or a banker, and are not subject to vote by Parliament.

video-conferencing.) The Inter Parliamentary Union has documented the processes used by various national parliaments to meet during the pandemic. (India's Parliament, which prides itself as the apex representative body of the world's largest democracy, is a notable absentee from this list.)

Parliament has a central role in our system of governance. First and foremost, it is the institution that checks and challenges the government of the day. While introducing the draft Constitution, B.R. Ambedkar explained why the drafting committee had preferred a parliamentary form over the presidential system of governance. The reasoning was that while the presidential system provides a higher level of stability, the parliamentary system is better at holding the government to account on a daily basis through questions, motions and debates. Over the decades, our Parliament has evolved procedures of accountability including hearings of committees. The fact that Parliament and its committees have not met for over two months indicates the absence of scrutiny of government actions.

National laws are made by Parliament. The current steps by the central government are being taken under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, which was not designed to handle epidemics. The reasoning is that the central government had no choice as there was no other law that provide it with powers to impose a lockdown across the country, which was needed to arrest the spread of the disease. This misses the point that Parliament, which was meeting till a day before the national lockdown was announced, could have passed an appropriate Act. (This is what many other countries have done – an Act with suitable checks and an expiry date, which could be renewed by Parliament, if required.)

The Constitution requires all expenditure by the government to be approved by Parliament. The government has announced a series of measures to address the economic crisis sparked by the health crisis and the lockdown. (These have not been subject to parliamentary scrutiny or approval.)

### The pressing issues

MPs have a duty to shape policy and guide the government in national interest. They represent the concerns of people by raising issues in Parliament. The country is facing serious challenges on many fronts as a consequence of the pandemic. These include addressing questions on how to stall the epidemic from spreading, how to treat people who are infected, and how to minimise the loss of life to the virus. There is also the question of how the economy is impacted, both from the supply side due to the lockdown, and from the demand side as incomes and spending contract.

Then there is the large humanitarian question of mitigating the impact on the most vulnerable sections of the population, both the urban poor and in rural areas. There have been several news reports of migrants being mistreated, not provided transport, being harassed by the police – and being stripped of their dignity, even in cases where they have been provided with food and shelter.

There needs to be concerted action to alleviate the distress. Parliament is the forum where such issues should be discussed and a plan of action agreed upon.

Our Constitution does not prohibit meetings that may require maintenance of physical distancing or remote meetings. It states that the President may summon Parliament "to meet at such time and place as he thinks fit". The Rules of Procedure of both Houses require the Secretary-General to issue summons to each member specifying the "date and place for a session" of the House. These enabling clauses can be used to hold hybrid meetings or remote meetings. The Rules require parliamentary committees to sit within the "precincts" of the House but the Speaker may permit meetings to be held outside; indeed, subcommittees often go on study tours outside Delhi. Thus, there is no prior parliamentary action required to permit meetings through video-conferencing.)

### Secure connectivity

The question of security and secrecy may come up. The meetings of the Houses are usually telecast live, and there is no issue of confidentiality. Committee meetings, on the other hand, may require secure remote working tools. Given that large global corporations as well as parliamentary committees of several other countries seem to have solved this problem, there is no reason that the Indian Parliament cannot adapt these solutions. All district headquarters are linked with fibre optic lines, so even if there is a problem of connecting the constituency office of MPs, they could use such government facilities.

The question boils down to how our parliamentarians view themselves. If they think that they are sentinels of the people, they should find a way to perform their constitutional duties. Over the last three months, central and State governments have issued over 5,000 notifications to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. The appropriateness of these circulars need to be examined by Parliament and its committees. In ordinary times, Parliament would have its next session in the second half of July. In today's extraordinary circumstances, Parliament should meet sooner, perhaps within a couple of weeks. (India prides itself on being the world's largest democracy as well as the information technology provider to the world.) It is imperative that Parliament harnesses the country's IT strengths to buttress our credentials as a performing democracy.

(a)

India's Parliament missing in Action

Due to this newer challenge of COVID-19, Parliaments around the world are meeting, discussing, questioning as well as helping governments to find solutions. Many countries have gone for sessions with social distancing (or) video conferencing (or) a mix of both (hybrid).

India's parliament, the largest democracy's body haven't been at the apex or action. Even the founder, B.R. Ambedkar explained the need of accountability of the government which at this crisis hour is more important as many new orders are proclaimed (including the most important lockdown); many new expenditures are made too.

It is not a very difficult task to summon the Parliament as it is very implicit

in our constitution that. "The President may summon Parliament to meet at such time and Place as he thinks fit". Even the rules of the Parliamentary committees may easily permit the working of the Parliament in video conferencing / hybrid / social distancing modes.

There is <sup>also</sup> no such issue of connectivity or confidentiality as most sessions are under live telecast and all district Headquarters do have optic fibre connectivity.

For India to boast as the World's largest democracy as well as the Information technology enabler of the world, only the will of the government to become accountable is the need of the hour.



- ⑥ Should Parliament be convened at the time of crisis like the COVID-19? Also discuss measures needed to be ensured if such a session has to be conducted.