



Mains Marathon
Compilation

12th to 17th June, 2023

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of June, (Second Week) 2023

- 1. “The discretion of the Governor does not contemplate an indefinite withholding of assent to a Bill. Such an action would cause a breakdown of the constitutional machinery.” Discuss the potential consequences of a Governor indefinitely withholding assent to a Bill.**
- 2. Discuss the importance of prioritising the health and nutrition of adolescent girls in India. How can improving access to nutrition during adolescence contribute to India’s demographic dividend?**
- 3. Discuss the steps taken by the Indian government to achieve self-reliance in the fertiliser sector. How have these initiatives impacted India’s food security?**
- 4. Analyze the role of the expanding Internet economy in creating job opportunities in India. How can the government leverage this growth to address unemployment issues?**
- 5. Discuss the influence of ethnic communities on a country’s foreign policy, with specific reference to Canada. How does this influence affect bilateral ties between India and Canada?**
- 6. Discuss the role of the manufacturing sector in expanding India’s middle class. How can large-scale manufacturing drive formal employment and contribute to the growth of a prosperous middle class?**
- 7. Evaluate the impact of government spending on freebies on long-term fiscal sustainability. How can the Finance Commission lay down guidelines to restrain such spending without infringing on the sovereignty of elected governments?**
- 8. Analyze the current status of transgenic crops in India. Why is there a lack of broad acceptance for genetically modified crops in the country?**
- 9. Analyze the impact of the current ranking process on the competition among universities and colleges in India. Does it foster a culture that puts metrics ahead of excellence in education and research?**
- 10. Critically analyze the concept of a “middle-income trap”. How can India build stronger institutions and a more inclusive growth strategy to avoid falling into this trap?**
- 11. Explain the concept of Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) in WTO agreements. How can SDT provisions be strengthened to ensure more equitable trade relations between developed and developing countries?**
- 12. Discuss the recommendations of the Punchhi Commission on Inter-state Relations. How can these recommendations be used to address the current impasse in Manipur?**

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1. **“The discretion of the Governor does not contemplate an indefinite withholding of assent to a Bill. Such an action would cause a breakdown of the constitutional machinery.” Discuss the potential consequences of a Governor indefinitely withholding assent to a Bill.**

Introduction: What is the issue?

Body: What are the consequences of the Governor's decision? Suggest ways to resolve the issue.

Conclusion: State the view of the Constitution.

Recently there were issues between the Governor and Chief Minister regarding the passing of bills. The friction between the two is not healthy for parliamentary democracy. The Governor along with State Assembly is part of the State Legislature but he can act only on the “advice” of his Council of Ministers, with the Chief Minister as the head of the Council. The discretionary power of the Governor under **Article 163(2)** is significant for his decision can't be challenged in any court. **Article 200** provides for the consent of the governor concerning bills passed by the state legislature. The discretionary power of withholding the bill for an indefinite period is not in harmony with parliamentary democracy.

What are the potential consequences of a Governor indefinitely withholding assent to a Bill?

- **Multiple power centers:** Governor is only the ceremonial head while CM is the de facto head. The withholding of assent to bills by the Governor undermines the CM authority which is answerable to the people.
- **Effects on Cabinet responsibility:** A politically active Governor would lead to usurpation of the power of elected representatives which will have disastrous consequences for our constitutional machinery.
- **Violates Constitution:** In the Nabam Rebia case, the Supreme Court held that the Governor exercise discretion only in those matters in which the Constitution expressly permits it to do so, His discretion concerning bills is related only to reserving the bill for consideration of the President or not.
- **Governance in State:** The Governor's inaction on the bills creates a situation where the state is unable to function according to the constitution which affects the governance of the state.
- **Dispute between Centre and State:** The withholding of bills by the Governor may lead to a tussle between the state Government and central government which is not healthy for the principle of cooperative federalism.

Way Forward:

- **Appointment of Governor:** Governor should not be from a political background. Election of the Governor through a panel comprising the PM, Home Minister, Lok Sabha Speaker, and the CM.
- **Fixed Tenure:** The tenure of the Governor should be fixed for 5 years as suggested by the Sarkaria Commission.
- **Impeachment:** Recommendations have also been made for a provision to impeach the Governor by the Assembly.

Conclusion:

The principles of Constitutional morality should take precedence rather than power politics in the governance of the state. Framers of the constitution intended that actual governance should be done by the PM, CM & President, and Governor should act only on the advice of the Council of Ministers.

2. Discuss the importance of prioritising the health and nutrition of adolescent girls in India. How can improving access to nutrition during adolescence contribute to India's demographic dividend?

Introduction: Give an introduction to health and nutrition.

Body: State the importance of health and nutrition and how they can help in demographic dividend.

Conclusion: Conclude by giving positive directions.

Health and nutrition are pivotal for the development of a girl child. Health and nutrition during adolescence offer a second opportunity for the growth of a girl child if she is neglected during her early stages after birth. Various health reports suggest that adolescent health is also an important long-term predictor of women's participation in the labour market in India because improved nutrition increases every young girl's chances of engaging in productive activities. By funding nutrition treatments for adolescent females, the government has a tremendous chance to increase its demographic dividend.

Why is it important to prioritise health and nutrition?

- **Undernutrition & Anaemia:** Due to mensuration girls are often vulnerable to these problems. National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21) shows 59.1% of adolescent girls are anaemic. NFHS-4 numbers also reported over 41.9% of school-going girls as underweight highlighting the cause for concern.
- **Cognitive Impairments:** Insufficient nutrition and an unbalanced diet might cause cognitive problems that have an impact on a person's academic performance. Because of this, there may be fewer prospects for work and financial independence later in life, which may limit their ability to achieve higher levels of schooling.
- **Health Risk:** Undernourished Adolescent girls are also more likely to develop chronic illnesses and experience pregnancy problems, which can place a greater financial burden on families and communities and increase poverty. They are less likely to actively participate in society through work, politics, or community involvement if they are less healthy and educated.

How to improve access to nutrition which can contribute to demographic dividend?

- **Focus on the Life cycle approach:** Redefining our investment and focus on nutrition, health, and breaking the cycle of poverty can lead to potential returns in the form of well-nourished girls, healthy babies, and better care for their families.
- **Use of technology and data:** Holistic use of data and technology on linkages between nutrition and overall mental and physical well-being can raise individual productivity and overall economic growth of the country.
- **Convergence of welfare schemes:** Convergence of government initiatives such as the Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG) with (POSHAN) 2.0 can bring desired results that stem from collective endeavor and cooperation of many departments.
- **Health workers:** Focus on the training of Auxillary Nurse midwives and ASHA workers can lead to effective implementation of the scheme. They should receive adequate salaries and be given the benefits of formal employees.
- **Targeting of schemes:** Targeted adolescent-focused projects like the Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) could incorporate stronger awareness and nutrition education activities. Increased demand and the adoption of best practices will undoubtedly result from targeted and regionally contextualized Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) efforts on teenage girls' nutrition.

Conclusion:

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It is important to recognize that solving the complicated problem of nutrition among adolescent girls is an investment in the future of the country as well as a health issue. The strength of a nation is measured by its capacity to raise its future generations, and providing opportunity to every girl to reach her full potential.

3. Discuss the steps taken by the Indian government to achieve self-reliance in the fertiliser sector. How have these initiatives impacted India's food security?

Introduction: Brief introduction about the fertiliser industry.

Body: Steps taken by the government to achieve self-reliance in the fertiliser sector and its effect on food security.

Conclusion: Conclude with Vocal for Local initiative.

India is the world's second-largest consumer of fertilisers. The fertilisers department of India has made tremendous progress towards reaching sector self-reliance. During the Russia-Ukraine war, the government showed prudence by ensuring fertiliser supply in the market.

What steps are taken by the Indian government to achieve self-reliance in the fertiliser sector?

- **Strategic Partnership:** Indian Government has forged partnerships with countries such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Canada, Russia, Morocco, Israel, Senegal, Tunisia and South Africa, to secure a supply of various fertilisers like rock phosphate and potash, phosphoric acid.
- **Support domestic industry and PSU:** The government has also urged domestic businesses and government-run enterprises to negotiate long-term contracts for the import of intermediates and raw materials including ammonia, phosphoric acid, and sulphur.
- **One Nation One Fertiliser scheme:** The scheme is also known as Pradhanmantri Bhartiya Janurvarak Pariyojna (PMBJP) & is an important step towards the security of fertilisers. Only one-third of the fertiliser bags may bear a fertiliser company's name, trademark while the remaining two-thirds will have the PMBJP's emblem and the brand name "Bharat".
- **PM-Kisan Samruddhi Kendras (PM-KSK):** They aim to bolster fertiliser security by serving as centres that provide a range of agricultural inputs including seeds, fertilisers, and farming tools, alongside soil, seed, and fertiliser testing.
- **PM Promotion of Alternative Nutrients for Agriculture Management (PM PRANAM):** The scheme seeks to provide incentives to states for promoting the adoption of organic manure, organic and bio-fertilisers, nano-urea and di-ammonium phosphate (DAP).

How have these initiatives impacted India's food security?

- **Crop yield:** Due to efforts of self-reliance in the fertilizer sector, India has a cushion from the pitfalls of an increase in input cost which lower crop yield.
- **Balanced Nutrition:** Above mentioned initiatives have enabled India to diversify its fertilizer pool and produce more NPK complexes. This eventually helps farmers by providing a wide range of fertilizer options while at the same time ensuring balanced nutrition.
- **Atmanirbhar Bharat:** By ensuring a regular supply of fertilizer, India ensures that its targeted programmes like PM-POSHAN and Mid-day meal programmes are executed without any obstructions. India has cooperated with Asian Development Bank (ADB)

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to improve long-term food security by strengthening food systems against the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Conclusion:

The remarkable improvement of stocks of different fertilisers has positioned India as a vital player in the global supply chain for fertiliser & achieving PM vision of Vocal for Local to be a self-sustaining and self-generating economy.

4. Analyze the role of the expanding Internet economy in creating job opportunities in India. How can the government leverage this growth to address unemployment issues?

Introduction: Give reference to the report and its data.

Body: Role of the Internet economy and government efforts to leverage the Internet for employment.

Conclusion: Conclude by highlighting the role of the private sector also.

The Internet economy or digital economy consists of a network of economic activities, professional interactions and commercial transactions that are based on interactions that are enabled by information and communications technologies (ICT). A report titled **“e-Conomy”** projected India’s internet economy, worth \$155-175 billion in 2022 will grow to \$1 trillion by 2030.

What role will the Internet economy play in job creation in India?

- **High Economic Growth:** Reports have suggested that the online economy would contribute 12-13% of GDP by 2030. The predicted \$1 trillion economy would raise per capita income from \$2,500 (2022) to \$5,500 (2030) leading to a rise in consumption.
- **Digital platforms:** digital platforms like Aadhaar, the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), and Digilocker have acted as enablers for the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), Unified Health Interface and Open Credit Enablement Network (OCEN) and have successfully engaged people in Tier-II cities and rural households raising their per capita income and generating jobs.
- **B2C e-commerce:** Reports have suggested that B2C commerce will contribute about a third of the online economy’s value by 2030. Various sectors like fintech, health tech, online travel, and food delivery platforms will witness strong growth.
- **Overseas Presence:** Various companies will leverage the skills of employees and will try to expand their business overseas leading to new job generation and acquiring new skills.
- **Boost to start-up industry:** The Internet economy will benefit start-ups by helping them establish their presence in foreign markets. Presence in overseas markets will help generate jobs in content creation and influencers in marketing their products.

How can the government leverage this growth to address unemployment issues?

- **Skill India Mission:** Government and industry need to focus on providing skills of 21 century namely related to machine learning, AI, and digital marketing. Schools and colleges could be venues to provide webinars and awareness sessions at an early age.
- **Financial Inclusion:** Programmes like the JAM model, and UPI, enable citizens to be part of the digital economy and participate in employment opportunities. It also helps in targeting citizens with intended benefits reducing administrative burden and corruption.

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- **E-Commerce:** Government can help small businesses and MSMEs to connect with online shopping portals so that they can sell their products online. Eg is Government e-marketplace (GEM Registration) is an online platform for public procurement introduced by GoI.
- **Entrepreneurship:** The government through its various programmes like MUDRA yojana, and Start-Up India can support aspiring entrepreneurs by providing them access to funding, cooperation with industry and the creation of a supportive ecosystem for startups.
- **Online Government Services:** The use of the internet can help government deliver government services online, reducing corruption and increasing efficiency. It also helps in Ease of doing business, reduces red tape and enables faster response to process permits, registrations and certifications.

Conclusion:

The government should take the lead in leveraging the Internet economy but efforts of the private sector should be combined with the government sector to bridge the digital divide and ensure digital infrastructure in rural India to provide employment opportunities across the country.

5. Discuss the influence of ethnic communities on a country's foreign policy, with specific reference to Canada. How does this influence affect bilateral ties between India and Canada?

Introduction: What is the issue of the ethnic community in Canada

Body: Discuss their influence and how it affects India's relationship with Canada

Conclusion: What should GoI focus on to improve relations

Recently, a pro-Khalistan parade in Canada raised concern in India which led to the Foreign Minister criticizing the parade and cautioning Canada about not meddling in the internal affairs of India and highlighting India's priority to safeguard its territorial integrity. As per the 2021 Canadian census, Sikhs account for *2.1 per cent of Canada's population* and are the country's fastest-growing religious group. After India, Canada is home to the largest population of Sikhs in the world.

Influence of ethnic community concerning Canada:

- **The prosperous community:** Due to their burgeoning population and presence as lawmakers and serving in government Sikh community is well represented in Canada. Eg, Jagmeet Singh became the leader of the left-leaning New Democratic Party (NDP).
- **Geopolitics:** Khalistan movement receives backing from China and Pakistan and makes trouble for India as Punjab is a bordering state and has a history of insurgency movements.
- **Cabinet members:** Many ethnic Indians are members of the cabinet because of which Canadian politicians indulge in "vote bank politics" as seen during the farmer's agitation movement which received wide support from Canadian politicians.
- **Support to Pro-Khalistan groups:** Ethnic Indians are also associated with terrorist groups like Babbar Khalsa International and the International Sikh Youth Federation who are associated with terrorism. These radical groups control the gurudwaras in Canada which control the narrative about India in Canada.
- **Vaunted Multiculturalism:** Canada's excessive multiculturalism which boasts about its unique way is also responsible for insulating Sikhs from traditional liberal

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Canadian values and allowing anti-Indian sentiments to pass down along the generations.

How does this influence affect relations with India?

- **Khalistan demand:** Pro Khalistan organization Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) held a so-called “referendum” on Khalistan in Canada which led to a strain in the relations between both nations.
- **Free Trade Agreement:** Strain in relations due to support for Khalistan in Canada has adversely affected vital issues like Free Trade Agreement between both countries.
- **Positive effects:** Despite all this a strong vibrant, financially prosperous Indian community in Canada has led to meaningful cooperation in a wide range of areas including economy, energy, science and technology, space, information technology, and education.
- **Diaspora politics:** Leaders of countries like Canada, Australia, USA now are engaging in diaspora politics where they use PM Modi's popularity to impress domestic public opinion.

Conclusion:

India should diplomatically coordinate with Canada and find ways to urge Canadian authorities to take action against those anti-Indian elements who are indulging in violent activities and influencing domestic opinions which is a concern for the security of India.

6. Discuss the role of the manufacturing sector in expanding India's middle class. How can large-scale manufacturing drive formal employment and contribute to the growth of a prosperous middle class?

Introduction: Briefly give an account of manufacturing in India

Body: What is the role of manufacturing in India's middle class and how can it be expanded

Conclusion: Conclude with government programs for manufacturing.

India is moving towards being a significant global manufacturing centre and can export items worth \$1 trillion by 2030. The manufacturing industry contributes significantly to India's economy, accounting for 17% of GDP and employing more than 27.3 million people. The Indian government wants manufacturing to *contribute 25% of economic production by 2025* through the execution of several programmes and policies.

What is the role of the manufacturing sector in expanding India's middle class?

- **Entrepreneurship:** The manufacturing sector provides opportunities for entrepreneurship and establishing Small scale industries which are export-oriented, generate jobs and contribute to a rise in income in cities and towns. It helps people living in small towns to raise their incomes and thereby expands India's middle class.
- **Standard of living:** Reports have suggested that manufacturing helps in raising the lifestyle of people as it helps in raising their disposable incomes and generates demand for consumer items.
- **Skill Generation:** The manufacturing sector aids in developing skills and drives innovation. This generation of skill sets leads to better prospects of jobs for citizens in foreign markets and leads to higher wages.
- **High Economic Growth:** Historical insights from countries of the Western world and China show that high economic growth is fueled by an increasing share of manufacturing in the country's GDP.

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- **Employment generation:** Manufacturing is a very important source of job generation in developing countries, particularly for the middle class. It eventually leads to upward mobility and income generation.

How can large-scale manufacturing drive formal employment and contribute to the growth of a prosperous middle class?

- **Formalization of the workforce:** Informal sector is commonly estimated to account for 90% of employment, but generates only a third of the value added in the economy. Conditions in the informal sector affect the entrepreneurial spirit, have low productivity and reduce the chances of expansion of the middle class. Therefore, more formalisation of the workforce is needed combining with the benefits of labour laws, income by working with better tools, easy learning of new skills, getting the effort-multiplier benefit of teamwork, and accessing the full suite of reasonably priced and regulated financial services.
- **Focus on training and productivity:** Due to the nature of temporary or contract workers in the informal economy, employers are discouraged from investing in productivity-enhancing tools and providing training for workers to use them because the payoff time is longer than the workers' tenure. Government and industry leaders should cooperate to provide training and incentivise productivity to contribute to the growth of the manufacturing sector.
- **Finance:** The need is to increase the domestic credit to GDP ratio for informal workers and MSME which is far lower than China and USA.
- **Role of digital platforms:** Higher-skilled occupations like carpenters, tailors, and auto mechanics when part of digital platforms should receive all benefits of formal employees and such platforms should contribute to raising productivity and income generation.

Conclusion

Historically it is seen that manufacturing is the well-defined path to economic development. Government programmes like Make in India, Skill India, and Start-Up India, are crucial through which formal jobs and genuine middle-class expansion can take place.

7. Evaluate the impact of government spending on freebies on long-term fiscal sustainability. How can the Finance Commission lay down guidelines to restrain such spending without infringing on the sovereignty of elected governments?

Introduction: What is Finance Commission

Body: Give the impact of government spending on freebies and how to restrain them.

Conclusion: What can FC do further?

Finance Commission is a statutory, independent, non-political body set up by the President of India every five years (or earlier) under Article 280 of the Constitution. It was established to define the financial relations between the Centre and the state. Post 1991 reforms, fresh investment in PSU has come down and due to the abolishment of the Planning Commission, Finance Commission remains virtually the sole architect of India's fiscal federalism.

Impact of Government Spending on Freebies for long term fiscal sustainability

- **Subsidy burden:** Due to excessive spending on subsidies the state finances are stretched out. States are already in huge debt owing to Covid 19, the poor performance of DISCOMs.

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- **Fiscal health:** RBI titled report, State Finances: A risk analysis has highlighted that the fiscal health of states like West Bengal, Kerala, Rajasthan, Punjab, and Andhra Pradesh needs careful assessment on account of their large spending on social welfare.
- **No clear definition of subsidy:** Subsidies like free electricity, free water, loan waivers, and free transportation need to be differentiated from spending on education, health, PDS system, and employment generation programs as the former leads to the undermining of credit culture, distort prices through cross-subsidization and eroding incentives for private investment.
- **The burden on the exchequer:** Freebies put a heavy burden on taxpayer citizen and finally leads to an increase in taxes and debt.

What guidelines can be laid down by FC to restrain such spending?

- **Evaluate the state's fiscal health:** The Finance Commission is an independent body. The Commission, while making allocations to the States, can take into account the debts of each state and examine whether offers of freebies would be viable for them or not.
- **Cooperation with Election Commission:** Both constitutional bodies can cooperate to restrain political parties to indulge in promises of "irrational freebies" during elections. This is against the free and fair election principle.
- **Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act:** Strict implementation of the FRBM Act aims to ensure fiscal discipline for the centre by setting targets including reduction of fiscal deficits and elimination of revenue deficit. It is a legal step to ensure fiscal discipline and fiscal consolidation in India.
- **Grants be made conditional:** FC could be one of the institutional mechanisms to regulate spending on freebies, which destroys the foundation of macroeconomic stability. A crucial step to restrain freebie culture can be to link revenue deficit grants to states to curbing freebies and off-budget liabilities.

Conclusion:

The next FC faces a tough task in determining the tax proceeds to be allocated to the states and to bridge the divide which is deepening in terms of infrastructure, private investment, social indicators, and the rule of law between southern and northern states.

8. Analyze the current status of transgenic crops in India. Why is there a lack of broad acceptance for genetically modified crops in the country?

Introduction: Define Transgenic Crops.

Body: What is the current status of such crops and why is lack of acceptance regarding GM crops.

Conclusion: Conclude with way forward.

Transgenic crops are those crops that have used genetic engineering to modify their genomes by the addition or removal of genes. The modification helps the crop develop certain traits like immunity from pest attack, high yield, or herbicide tolerance. Transgenic crops were in the news recently when 3 states Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Telangana deferred the Centre's proposal for testing of transgenic cotton seed with the gene Cry2Ai, which makes cotton resistant to pink bollworm.

What is the current status of transgenic crops in India:

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- **Different types of crops:** A wide range of crops like brinjal, tomato, maize, and chickpea are in different phases of trials in India. Only 1 crop Bt Cotton has received approval for commercial cultivation in India.
- **Area:** India has the world's fifth largest cultivated area under genetically modified (GM) crops, at 11.4 million hectares (mh) in 2017. The entire GM crop area is under cotton, incorporating genes from the *Bacillus thuringiensis* for resistance against *Heliothis bollworm* insect pests.
- **GM Mustard:** The government has cleared the release of the GM variety of mustard, DMH-11, developed by the Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants (CGMCP) at Delhi University but the decision was opposed by environmentalists, and the release was put on hold.
- **Bt Brinjal:** Bt Brinjal was developed by Mahyco (Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company) in collaboration with the Dharwad University of Agricultural Sciences and the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. Its release was also put on hold regarding biosafety concerns.

Why is there a lack of acceptance regarding GM crops?

- **Precautionary Principle:** The principle argues that the absence of any scientific data and information on any innovation can cause adverse effects on health and the environment.
- **Health:** Independent research has shown carcinogenicity, neurotoxicity, reproductive health problems, organ damage, etc. as harmful effects on the health of GM crops.
- **Farmer's concern:** A particular concern of farmers is that GM crops will lead to the risk of monopoly of big corporates like Monsanto in the seed business.
- **Not universally practiced:** Only 29 out of 172 countries worldwide still cultivate GM crops. Additionally, only five nations—the United States, Brazil, Argentina, Canada, and India—continue to contain 91% of the world's GM cropland. China has also seen a decline in the usage of Bt cotton, and rapeseed and mustard are being hybridized using non-GM technologies.
- **Environment:** Activists argue that GM crops destroy soil, and impact microbes, medicinal herbs, and pollinators like bees which adversely impacts our crop diversity.

Conclusion:

The issue of GM crops is delicate as it relates to agriculture, food security, and nutrition. Central Government should consult all stakeholders involving NGOs, State Government, Farmer Groups, and Dept of Biotechnology before implementing any important decision.

9. Analyze the impact of the current ranking process on the competition among universities and colleges in India. Does it foster a culture that puts metrics ahead of excellence in education and research?

Introduction: Define NIRF.

Body: What is its impact and does it foster a culture that puts metrics ahead of excellence?

Conclusion: Conclude with the way forward.

The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) was established in 2016 by the Ministry of Education to determine the indicators on which higher education institutions (HEI) performance could be measured. NIRF rankings are based on 5 important factors namely; Teaching, Learning & Resources, Research and Professional Practice, Graduation Outcomes, Outreach, and Inclusivity and Perception.

What is the impact of rankings on competition among universities?

- **Financial health:** It is observed that institutions with high ranks get more priority in central grants. In the Union Budget 2021, the government allocation was Rs 7,686 crore to the IITs in comparison to Rs 7,643.26 crore for all Central Universities.
- **One size fits all approach:** NIRF seems to miss the diversity aspect of the Indian educational system. The diversity ranges from old institutes vs new institutes, private vs public, and arts institutes vs technology institutes which is a very important factor to acknowledge.
- **The mismatch between ranking and accreditation:** Colleges and universities compete to get NAAC, and NBA certificates but final results show a poor disconnect as colleges with NAAC A grades are also left out in the ranking system.
- **Bibliometrics:** To get good score in NIRF colleges and universities are relying too much on the bibliometrics factor where there is too much reliance on publishing research papers which does not fully capture the scientific performance.
- **Privileges:** the impact of rankings can be gauged from the fact that high rankings bring privileges like getting autonomy, the power to offer open and distance mode programs, and permission to enter into collaboration with foreign universities.

Does it foster a culture of metrics ahead of excellence?

- **Indicators:** Among other factors used in NIRF rankings Research and Professional Practice factor has the highest share (30%) in combined score. This factor is paid special attention because of bibliometrics or the publishing of research papers.
- **Funds and faculty:** There should be sufficient funds and teacher-pupil ratio to assess the parity among different institutes. Eg. IISc, with 464 faculty members for 4,000 students, has a faculty ratio of 1:8.6 and receives about Rs 350 crore in central grants, BHU with 2,000 teachers for 32,000 students has a ratio of 1:16 and receives a grant of about Rs 200 crore.
- **Transparency issues:** Reputed foreign journals have cited discrepancies in research quality and quantity of journals published in Indian universities.

Conclusion:

NIRF ranking plays a vital role in helping students, faculty, and prospective employer, to help them choose institutions for admission, enhance chances for securing research funding, and target campuses for hiring. Two important factors which need to be factored in NIRF are international faculty and students and the relationship of research to connect with the industry.

10. Critically analyze the concept of a “middle-income trap”. How can India build stronger institutions and a more inclusive growth strategy to avoid falling into this trap?

Introduction: Define Middle Income trap.

Body: Why the concept is criticized and what should India do to avoid it?

Conclusion: Show the way forward.

The World Bank defines it as the ‘middle-income range’ countries with the gross national product per capita that has remained **between US\$ 1,000 to US\$ 12,000 at constant** (2011) prices. With a per capita income of over \$2000, India is still a middle-income country. The concept suggests that after attaining a lower middle-income level a country struggles to achieve high-income status and is trapped in a period of low economic growth.

Why is the concept of a “middle-income trap criticized?

- **Excess focus on domestic factors:** Middle-income trap concept tends to ignore the external factors influencing a country's growth. Eg, the COVID pandemic's effect on the Indian economy.
- **The concept has limited value:** Critics argue that after becoming a middle-income market economy, the focus should shift to innovation, and strengthen institutional capabilities to avoid further such traps in the future.
- **Different views of economists:** Those who are pessimist about India's future predict that India is forever trapped in middle-income status and its growth is driven by top-tier people and benefits not percolating downwards. Optimists on the other hand predict that sustainable infrastructure and energy transitions will bring new investment and drive India's growth.
- **Limited empirical evidence:** The concept of the middle-income trap has been short of case studies except only for South East Asian countries and Latin American countries. Apart from economic factors, social conditions, and political conditions also played a role in generating conditions of middle-income trap for these nations.

How can India avoid the middle-income trap?

- **Strong Institutions:** India requires strong and credible institutions which can deal with present challenges transparently. These institutions should cater to the needs of citizens and create congenial conditions for investment in infrastructure and push for structural changes in the economy.
- **Export-oriented growth:** India needs to push its MSME sector for more export share in the global market. Export-led growth has been the main factor in countries escaping the middle-income trap.
- **Innovation:** The use of technologies, developing skills in citizens, and reaping the benefits of digitalization can certainly help India to avoid the trap situation.
- **Human capital:** India needs to add to its human capital in terms of highly skilled workers and professionals who are indispensable to high, valued-added, modern services and manufacturing. India needs to overcome its problem of youth unemployment (23.2%) and arrest the decline in female labour force participation.

Conclusion:

Some of the suggestions suggested by the PM-Economic Advisory Council to raise income are higher minimum income, urban jobs guarantee scheme, and universal basic income. India needs to urgently address the problem of inequality which has led to the concentration of wealth in the top 1% and prevented wealth to trickle downwards.

11. Explain the concept of Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) in WTO agreements. How can SDT provisions be strengthened to ensure more equitable trade relations between developed and developing countries?

Introduction: Explain the SDT mechanism.

Body: What are its benefits and how can WTO be strengthened?

Conclusion: Future of India in WTO.

The concept of Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) is one of the core principles of WTO. The WTO Agreements include unique clauses that grant developing nations particular rights and give wealthy countries the option to treat developing countries more kindly than other WTO Members. Such clauses form the concept of SDT. Recently, there has been a call from the developed world to make changes to the SDT definition & only LDC or Least Developed

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countries are to be accorded special treatment as India, China, and South Africa don't qualify for SDT as they are sufficiently developed.

What are the benefits of SDT?

- SDT ensures higher domestic support for agriculture in developing nations.
- For countries that have less than \$1000 per capita income, there is no prohibition on export subsidy
- SDT offers longer implementation periods for developing countries to fulfil their commitments under the WTO framework. E.g., may be given of TRIPS.

How can the provision of WTO be strengthened to ensure equitable trade?

- **Strengthen SDT framework:** The onus to reform WTO rests on middle powers" such as India, Indonesia, Brazil, and South Africa. SDT provisions are shrouded in ambiguous language which allows developed nations certain leeway to fulfil their obligations. SDT framework should be spelled out and negotiations should be done to enforce the mechanism strictly.
- **Dispute Settlement Mechanism:** It is the most important body of WTO. It hears disputes among nations for violation of WTO rules. The body has been dysfunctional since 2019 following the USA stopping the appointment of Appellate Body members. India as chair of G20 this year needs to persuade the USA to change its position or India should cooperate with like-minded nations to find an alternative.
- **Plurilateral Framework:** Since 2017, there has been a shift from a consensus-building approach towards a plurilateral approach for rulemaking. The plurilateral approach makes it easier for developed nations to pursue their subject of interest while ignoring subjects like agriculture subsidies, market access, and services. The need is to develop a framework where plurilateral frameworks are adopted after consensus among members and such a framework should be based on non-discrimination, transparency, and inclusivity.
- **Transparency:** All WTO members should notify all their laws, and regulations, to the WTO to ensure transparency else it leads to a high cost of trade for developing nations.

Conclusion

Trade multilateralism should be the core agenda of developing countries like India which is head of G20 this year and assumes responsibility for the developing world. India should work with members to be a part of WTO reform and make trade multilateralism inclusive and sustainable.

12. Discuss the recommendations of the Punchhi Commission on Inter-state Relations. How can these recommendations be used to address the current impasse in Manipur?

Introduction: Briefly describe the objective of Punchhi Commission.

Body: What were its recommendations and how can they be helpful in Manipur.

Conclusion: Way forward for Union Government.

Punchhi Commission was formed under the chairmanship of retired judge Madan Mohan Punchhi, on April 27, 2007, by UPA Government to examine Centre-state relations. The Commission submitted its report on March 31, 2010. The commission's task was to review other aspects of center-state relations, such as taxes and river linking, as well as what might be the role, responsibility, and jurisdiction of the Centre during significant and protracted outbreaks of communal violence, caste violence, or any other social conflicts. It also

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considered whether a centralized law enforcement agency should be established to conduct on-the-spot investigations into crimes that have major effects on national security, the role of a governor, or other factors.

Recommendations of the commission:

- **Impeachment of Governor:** It provided for the impeachment of the Governor on the same lines as that of the President under Art 61. It also argued that Governor should not be burdened with additional duties other than those written in the constitution. For eg, Posts of Chancellors of Universities.
- **Localised Emergency provisions:** These provisions can be adopted under Art 355 to bring a district or even part of a district under the Central rule in case of a law-and-order situation. In the rest of the areas, the same elected state government would continue undisturbed.
- **Communal Violence Bill:** The commission suggested amending the Communal Violence Bill 2014 to deal with communal riots situation by removing the clause of mandatory consent of state government in the deployment of central forces.
- **The time limit for giving assent to bills:** Commission suggested that Governor should decide whether to grant assent or to reserve the bill for consideration by the President within a maximum period of six months after submission to him. The commission added that when the State Legislature reconsiders and passes the Bill (with or without amendments) after it is returned by the Governor according to the direction of the President, the President should be bound to grant his assent.

How could these recommendations be used to deal Manipur situation?

- **Kuki-Meitei conflict:** If these recommendations were included in our constitution, it would help the Central government to deal with the Manipur conflict. Using the provisions of Localised Emergency Provisions, Centre would have taken over administration in only Kuki-dominated areas without toppling the State government. This would have gone as beneficial for both Centre and State and unnecessary mayhem would have been avoided.
- **Civil Centres:** Such types of centres could have been established in areas of insurgency to deal with insurgents and protect the villagers and establish the rule of law. Such centres could break the crucial link between Insurgent groups and the civilian population which could finally develop confidence among the villagers.

Conclusion:

Union Government should urgently hold a meeting of the Inter-State Council and discuss the recommendations which are crucial for establishing peace and harmony following the collapse of law and order. The Centre must consider the concerns of state government regarding federal principles and follow the principle of cooperative federalism.