



Mains Marathon
Compilation

September, 2023

Mains Marathon Compilation for the Month of September, 2023

1. Do you think that the system around the Right to Information Act is being made less and less effective, shutting off a crucial means to hold public officials accountable? Give arguments in favour of your opinion.
2. Despite being a major food producer with extensive food security schemes and the largest public distribution system in the world, India still grapples with significant levels of food insecurity, hunger, and child malnutrition. Analyze the statement with reference to the State Hunger Index and discuss how it is different to the Global Hunger Index.
3. Discuss the role of education in harnessing India's demographic dividend. How can the education sector drive and sustain economic growth?
4. Examine the gender-specific impacts of climate change, particularly in low-income countries. Suggest measures to mitigate these impacts.
5. Discuss the implementation of the Forest Rights Act in the Northeast. What challenges do states like Mizoram and Nagaland face in its implementation?
6. Discuss the challenges of infrastructure development in hill regions compared to plains. What policy measures can be adopted to balance development and ecology?
7. Examine the historical factors that have influenced the names "India" and "Bharat". Assess the multidimensional implications of changing the country's name from "India" to "Bharat".
8. Discuss the role of the education system and coaching centres in exacerbating mental health issues among students. Critically evaluate the government's response to the mental health crisis among students.
9. Critically evaluate the concept of jobless growth in India. Discuss the role of subsidies and safety nets in India's economic policy.
10. Analyze the significance of the India-Republic of Korea (ROK) strategic partnership in the context of the Indo-Pacific. How can it contribute to India's Indo-Pacific strategy?
11. Examine the paradox in India's digital landscape—being a leader in technology while also leading in internet shutdowns. What long-term impact could this have on India's global standing?
12. Analyze the shift in India's multilateral approach from being a rule-taker to a potential rule-maker. What are the key factors driving this change?
13. Evaluate the potential economic benefits of the IMEE-EC for India. How can this initiative enhance India's trade connectivity with Europe and the Middle East, and how does it compare with China's BRI in terms of scope and objectives?
14. Discuss the geopolitical implications of the African Union's inclusion as a permanent G20 member. How does this move position Africa in global politics, and what are its potential benefits for India?
15. Explain how the movement of tectonic plates can lead to earthquakes. Use the Morocco earthquake as a case study. What lessons can India learn from this for its disaster management strategies?
16. How crucial is the role of states in ensuring food security in India? Discuss with examples

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17. "Fraternity in India is often overshadowed by social and caste inequalities, making it a neglected constitutional value." Critically assess the statement, considering the role of political and social factors in promoting fraternity in India.
18. The MoU between India and Saudi Arabia on renewable energy can be a game-changer for India's energy security." Discuss
19. Critically analyze the role of the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) in maintaining the quality of teacher training in India.
20. Discuss the role of climate change in increasing the frequency and intensity of floods in India. Elaborate on the need for a coherent framework integrating various laws for effective flood risk management.
21. Discuss the significance of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) in the context of India's Blue Economy. Analyze its impact on the fisheries sector and its potential to transform the livelihoods of the fishing community.
22. Discuss the significance of carbon trading in the context of India's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Analyze the potential challenges and benefits of establishing the Indian Carbon Market (ICM).
23. Discuss the challenges faced in ensuring a consistent and quality water supply under the Jal Jeevan Mission. Suggest measures to address these challenges.
24. Discuss the significance of genetically modified (GM) crops in achieving global food and nutritional security. Highlight the challenges and benefits associated with GM crops.
25. Discuss the significance of scientific assessments in wildlife reintroduction projects, especially in the context of potential pathogen threats. How can such assessments ensure the long-term success of reintroduction efforts?
26. Discuss the significance of breeding for disease resistance in crop varieties, especially in the context of Basmati rice. How do government policies with regard to exports impact Basmati rice farmers in India?
27. Analyze the significance of women-focused welfare schemes in shaping the political landscape of India. How have they impacted the perception of political parties among women constituents?
28. Analyze the potential impact of PM-WANI on India's digital public infrastructure. How does it compare to other initiatives like UPI in transforming the digital landscape of the country?
29. Critically evaluate the role of self-help groups in empowering women in rural and semi-urban settings. How have these groups influenced women's participation in local governance?
30. Discuss the role of the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) in resolving the water dispute. How can transparency and public awareness aid in dispelling misconceptions related to the issue?
31. In the context of the Antarctic Treaty and the Moon Agreement, how can nations strike a balance between exploration and preservation?
32. How can India ensure that its pursuit of strategic autonomy does not lead to isolation or conflict with major global powers?

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33. What challenges and opportunities does the mandatory 'star rating' program present for the Indian fan market? How can India leverage its domestic market to promote energy-efficient products and reduce import dependence?
34. How can India balance its ambitious technological advancements with the pressing need to address socio-economic inequalities?
35. Analyze the symbolic significance of the new Parliament building in the context of India's democratic ethos. How does it reflect the changing dynamics of political governance in the country?
36. Compare and contrast mediation and commercial arbitration in India. How do recent legislative changes position them in the landscape of dispute resolution?
37. Critically analyze the role of criminal law in maintaining social order. Do you agree that the focus on individual offenders obscures the socially rooted nature of crimes?
38. Assess the impact of environmental issues like the Fukushima wastewater release on regional politics. How can India prepare for similar challenges?
39. Analyze how China is trying to increase its influence in Nepal. What are the challenges and implications for India?
40. Discuss the role of State governments in the implementation of NEP in higher education. Also, evaluate the effectiveness of the New Education Policy, especially in Jammu and Kashmir. What challenges does it face?
41. Elaborate on how habitat loss due to climate change increases the risk of diseases transferring from animals to humans. Provide examples.
42. Explain the concept of angel tax. How does it impact investments in start-ups?
43. "Many scientists also believe that when rocks such as Bennu crashed into the earth, they delivered the compounds required for the formation of life." How might the study of asteroids like Bennu reshape our understanding of the origins of life on Earth?
44. Analyze the reasons behind the recent spike in tiger deaths in the Nilgiris district. How do human-animal conflicts and habitat degradation contribute to this issue?
45. Analyze the recurring nature of inter-state water disputes in India, taking the Cauvery waters dispute as a case study. What are the underlying causes and challenges in resolving such disputes?
46. Discuss the implications of the findings of the Lancet Commission report on gender inequity in cancer care. How do societal perceptions of women's roles contribute to the disparities observed in cancer care for women?
47. Discuss the role of the Centre in ensuring reconciliation between conflicting communities in Manipur. What measures can be taken to prevent further deterioration of the situation?
48. Analyze India's stance on the investor-state-dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism. How can an appellate review mechanism benefit India in international investment law?

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1. Do you think that the system around the Right to Information Act is being made less and less effective, shutting off a crucial means to hold public officials accountable? Give arguments in favour of your opinion.

Introduction: Describe RTI Act briefly.

Body: Arguments which explain how RTI has been made less effective over the years.

Conclusion: Way forward.

The Right to Information (RTI) Act was passed by Parliament in 2005 to enable the citizens to exercise their freedom of speech and expression under Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution. The RTI Act provides for the timely disclosure of information to citizens by Union and State Public Authorities. It seeks to empower citizens and promote accountability and transparency. However, there are several arguments in favour of the opinion that the system around the RTI Act is being made less effective, thereby diminishing its ability to hold public officials accountable.

Some of these arguments are:

- **Exemptions:** Governments may introduce amendments or exemptions to the RTI Act, which can limit the scope of information that can be accessed. These changes often favour the interests of public officials and reduce the effectiveness of the act. E.g., issues related to national security and sovereignty reasons.
- **A blanket ban on disclosing personal data:** The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, of 2023 prohibits the personal data disclosure of citizens by the government which would make “social audits” impossible to carry out which would affect the implementation of welfare schemes.
- **New amendments:** The Right to Information (Amendment) Act, 2019, granted the Union Government sole discretion in determining the terms of appointment and compensation for information commissioners who consider appeals against absent or unsatisfactory RTI responses.
- **Cumbersome process:** RTI Act implementation is hindered by the subordinate rules made by the Union Government and State Governments. For eg, some states like Tamil Nadu do not accept Indian Postal Orders (IPOs), as a payment option.
- **Vacant Posts:** There is a large number of vacant posts of information commissions in CIC for the Union Government and various State Information Commissions. This has undermined the confidence of the public in the effective implementation of the RTI Act.
- **Slow transition to online system:** While the RTI portal is a welcoming step in enhancing transparency and accountability there is concern as some states have been reluctant to join the RTI portal or the number of government departments are too few to allow citizens to file complaints.

Conclusion:

The RTI Act is a landmark act that allows any citizen to make requests for access to data, documents, and other information in the government’s possession. India’s RTI Act has been commonly cited as among the most comprehensive public records access legislations in the world. There is a need to remove the loopholes in RTI to further the objectives of transparency and accountability.

- 2. Despite being a major food producer with extensive food security schemes and the largest public distribution system in the world, India still grapples with significant levels of food insecurity, hunger, and child malnutrition. Analyze the statement with reference to the State Hunger Index and discuss how it is different to the Global Hunger Index.**

Introduction: Give brief context of the question.

Body: Give comparison between State Hunger Index (SHI) and the Global Hunger Index (GHI).

Conclusion: Way forward.

The statement highlights a paradox in India's food security situation. India is indeed a major food producer with extensive food security schemes and the largest public distribution system in the world, but it continues to face significant challenges related to food insecurity, hunger, and child malnutrition. As per fifth National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) data, 18% of children between ages 6-23 months, did not eat any food whatsoever in the 24 hours preceding the survey. This paradox can be analyzed in the context of the State Hunger Index (SHI) and compared to the Global Hunger Index (GHI) to gain a deeper understanding.

How is GHI different from SHI?

- **Scope:** SHI is specific to India and measures hunger at the state level, whereas GHI assesses hunger and malnutrition globally, comparing countries.
- **Measurement:** The Global Hunger Index (GHI), 2022, ranked India 107 among 121 countries. The GHI provides a composite measurement and tracks undernourishment and hunger at the national level across three dimensions: calorie undernourishment, child malnutrition, and under-five mortality. It is jointly published by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe. The State Hunger Index (SHI) is calculated using the same indicators as those in GHI except for calorie undernourishment, which is replaced by body mass index (BMI) undernourishment among the working-age population. It is published by the International Food Policy Research Institute.
- **Indicators of comparison:** Child stunting and wasting are two indicators included in the GHI that give a more complete picture of malnutrition. SHI primarily addresses food security and hunger.
- **Policy Implications:** While both indices can inform policy decisions, the GHI is more suitable for countries looking to benchmark their progress against global standards, while the SHI is tailored to the specific regional and state-level challenges within India.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, for Indian states to progress along the SHI, and to ensure that SHI scores for Indian states are more closely aligned with GHI scores of countries with comparable economic growth, investments will be needed to strengthen agriculture, improve overall food availability and access to all population segments, and to improve child nutrition and mortality outcomes. To better understand food security for all populations in India, assessments using household-level food insecurity modules developed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation can be adapted. India must achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 of “zero hunger”, by 2030 through Mission Poshan 2.0 program while ensuring affordable access to sufficient quantity and quality of nutritionally diverse food, with a special and immediate focus on India’s youngest children.

3. Discuss the role of education in harnessing India's demographic dividend. How can the education sector drive and sustain economic growth?

Introduction: Define demographic dividend.

Body: Highlight role of education in demographic dividend and how can in further achieve goal of economic growth.

Conclusion: Way forward.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), a demographic dividend means, the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure. It occurs mainly when the share of the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working-age share of the population (<14 but >65 years). India has one of the youngest populations in an aging world.

Role of education in harnessing this potential:

- **Human capital formation:** Education is the main way that people learn new abilities, skills, and knowledge. Increased economic output results from a workforce that is more productive and flexible. According to ASSOCHAM, only 7 % of MBA graduates have employable skills in India, and only around 20-30 % of engineers find a job suited to their skills. India may not be able to take advantage of the opportunities, due to a low human capital base and lack of skills.
- **Employment:** The nation needs to create ten million jobs per year to absorb the addition of young people into the workforce. Education and skill development programs can enhance employability by aligning education with the needs of the job market.
- **Culture of entrepreneurship:** By instilling problem-solving, critical thinking, and innovative skills, a robust educational system promotes an entrepreneurial spirit. Entrepreneurs can develop new ventures, goods, and services that can boost the economy and create jobs.

How can education drive and sustain economic growth?

- **Skill development:** According to the 2015 Report on National Policy on Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, only 4.7% of India's total workforce had received formal skill training, compared to 52% in the United States, 80% in Japan, and 96% in South Korea. Skill development increases the employability of the young population. The government has established the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) with the overall target of skilling/upskilling 500 million people in India by 2022.
- **Internationalization of higher education:** NEP 2020 seeks to facilitate faculty/student exchanges & research, teaching partnerships & signing of MOUs. For eg, IIT Madras & IIT Delhi have signed MOU to set up foreign campuses in Tanzania & Abu Dhabi.
- **Collaboration with academia and global partnerships:** The focus is to make India an R&D hub and promote ease of doing research along with ease of doing business. Global partnerships with the US, Japan, and EU & programs like the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) & Quad fellowship have enhanced collaboration in high-end technology areas.

Conclusion:

India can unleash the potential of its young people, increase productivity, foster innovation, and support long-term economic growth by investing in education. The education industry

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needs extensive reforms, more funding, and a focus on quality and inclusivity to meet these objectives.

4. Examine the gender-specific impacts of climate change, particularly in low-income countries. Suggest measures to mitigate these impacts.

Introduction: Give brief context of the question.

Body: What are gender specific impact of climate change and measures to deal with it?

Conclusion: Way forward.

Climate change has significant gender-specific impacts, particularly in low-income countries, where women often face greater vulnerabilities due to their socio-economic roles and limited access to resources and decision-making. Reports of UNO & ILO have highlighted that across genders, women are considered to be highly vulnerable and disproportionately affected by climate change than men to the impact of climate change.

Some Key Gender-Specific Impacts of Climate Change in Low-Income Countries:

- **Impact on Livelihood:** In low-income nations, women are frequently in charge of agriculture, water collection, and fuel collection—activities that are extremely vulnerable to climate change. Due to droughts, floods, and shifting weather patterns, they may lose their jobs and means of subsistence. According to the ILO, over 60% of working women in southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are still in agriculture, where they are often underpaid and overworked.
- **Health:** Changing climate patterns can lead to the spread of diseases and illnesses, affecting women's health, particularly during pregnancy and childbirth.
- **Food security:** Crop yields and food availability are impacted by climate change, which may result in more food poverty. Women prepare the majority of the food for their families and frequently put their family's dietary requirements first. Despite being the backbone of the food production system, women own only about 10% of the land used for farming.
- **Displacement and Migration:** 80% of individuals displaced by climate-related disasters are women and girls, according to a UN report. Women, particularly those from at-risk populations, experience unique challenges both during and after natural catastrophes. Women who have been uprooted are more vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation, and gender-based violence. A McAllister (2023) study has highlighted how there could be 1.2 billion climate refugees by 2050.

Some measures to mitigate them:

- **Invest in education & training:** We must invest in women's access to resources, education, and training to withstand effects of climate change. By educating people on sustainable agriculture, water management, and energy production, we can lessen the detrimental effects of climate change on people's living conditions. For instance, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) teaches women farmers in India how to adapt to changing climatic trends to better sustain themselves.
- **Decision-Making:** Effective mitigation and adaptation methods for climate change, as well as finding adequate work, depend on women's engagement in climate policy decision-making at all levels. Gender equality in the bodies that make decisions is crucial since women are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The Gender and Climate Change Development Programme is one such initiative in South Asia that seeks to give women a stronger voice and thereby improve their influence in policymaking.

Conclusion:

According to estimates, 130 million people could be pushed into poverty by 2050 due to climate change risks, natural disasters, and food inflation, impacting women's inequality. Gender equality and environmental objectives complement each other, forming a positive feedback loop that can expedite the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

5. Discuss the implementation of the Forest Rights Act in the Northeast. What challenges do states like Mizoram and Nagaland face in its implementation?

Introduction: Give description of Forest Rights Act.

Body: Highlight the challenges faced by northeastern states in implementation of FRA.

Conclusion: Way Forward

The Forest Rights Act, also known as the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, is a significant piece of legislation in India aimed at recognizing and protecting the forest rights of indigenous and forest-dwelling communities. Recently, several states of the Northeast have opposed the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023 which allows the diversion of forest land for roads, railway lines, or "strategic linear projects of national importance and concerning national security" without a forest clearance under the Forest (Conservation) Act (FCA) 1980.

Overview of implementation of FRA in the Northeast:

- **Constitutional safeguards:** Special constitutional provisions like 371A & 371B for Nagaland & Mizoram prohibit the application of any law enacted by Parliament that impinges on Naga and Mizo customary law and procedure, and ownership and transfer of land and its resources.
- **Slow implementation:** Northeast India is home to numerous indigenous communities with cultural & historical ties to forests. Another reason for the slow implementation of the act is the complex topography & post-independence insurgency in the area.
- **Non-implementation:** None of the Northeast States have implemented FRA except for Assam and Tripura with the reason being that most land is owned by communities, clans, chiefs, and individuals & limited presence of forest-dwellers who are totally forest dependent.

Challenges faced by Northeast states in implementation:

- **Complicated land tenure system:** Northeast India has a complicated system of land tenure that includes communal ownership, customary land rights, and shifting farming (jhum). It can be challenging to identify and recognize forest rights because of these complications, which can result in overlapping claims and disputes.
- **Lack of infrastructure:** In rural and hilly regions of the northeastern states, a lack of adequate infrastructure, like as roads and communication networks, might make it difficult to access government services linked to the FRA and file claims.
- **Balancing "rights" with "conservation":** The northeastern region is ecologically rich and home to several protected areas and biodiversity hotspots. Balancing the rights of indigenous communities with conservation goals has led to conflicts and debates about the implementation of the FRA.
- **Natural resources:** Natural resources including timber and minerals are abundant in certain northeastern states. Conflicts over land use may result from the extraction of these resources, endangering indigenous populations' rights to their forested areas.

Conclusion:

There is a need to maintain a balance to provide tenurial security to forest dwellers and protect the forests. Both state government & Ministry of Tribal Affairs can help maintain this balance to ensure mandatory fulfillment of the FRA before diverting the land for other purposes

6. Discuss the challenges of infrastructure development in hill regions compared to plains. What policy measures can be adopted to balance development and ecology?

Introduction: Brief context of the question.

Body: Challenges of infrastructure development in hilly areas and measures to deal with.

Conclusion: Way forward.

Infrastructure development in hill regions poses unique challenges compared to the plains due to the rugged terrain, ecological sensitivity, and the vulnerability of hill ecosystems. Balancing development and ecology in these regions require careful planning, innovative policies, and sustainable practices.

Challenges of infrastructure development in hill regions:

- **Topography:** Construction and upkeep of infrastructure like roads, bridges, and tunnels are more difficult and expensive in hill regions because of the high slopes and unstable geology that characterize these areas.
- **Fragile ecosystem:** With their distinctive biodiversity and vulnerability to erosion, landslides, and habitat degradation, hill ecosystems are frequently fragile.
- **Natural resources:** Many regions rely heavily on hills as their principal source of freshwater. Reduced water availability downstream might result from infrastructure development without consideration of the influence on water resources.
- **Wildlife protection:** Many hill regions host important wildlife habitats. Infrastructure can fragment these habitats, disrupt migratory routes, and lead to human-wildlife conflicts.
- **Natural disasters:** Construction activities have the potential to weaken slopes, raising the danger of landslides and erosion. This not only puts infrastructure in jeopardy but also has an impact on nearby communities.

Policy Measures Taken to Balance Development and Ecology in Hill Regions:

- **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):** Before beginning any infrastructure projects in hilly areas, thorough EIAs should be done. These evaluations must take into account ecological, social, and cultural effects.
- **Innovative solutions:** The need is to invest in innovative engineering solutions such as elevated roads, tunnels, and eco-friendly construction materials that minimize the environmental impact of infrastructure.
- **Wildlife Corridors:** The Forest Department should design infrastructure projects to include wildlife corridors, underpasses, and overpasses to facilitate the movement of wildlife across roads and prevent habitat fragmentation.
- **Community Engagement:** The need is to engage with local communities, including indigenous groups, to seek their input and consent for infrastructure projects. This will ensure that development benefits the local population and respects their cultural practices. Local communities can further be engaged in reforestation programs and erosion control measures to mitigate the risk of landslides and soil erosion.

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- **Legal accountability:** There is a need to enact and enforce laws and regulations that prioritize ecological conservation in hill regions and hold developers accountable for any environmental damage.

Conclusion:

Central Government & state governments should formulate development plans for hilly areas based on the principle of “carrying capacity” to minimize disastrous effects as seen in Himachal Pradesh & Uttarakhand. The complicated issue of balancing development and ecology in hilly areas calls for a multi-disciplinary strategy that includes environmental scientists, engineers, social scientists, and local populations. Planning, making informed decisions, and a dedication to preserving the distinctive ecosystems and cultures present in hill regions are all necessary for sustainable development in these locations.

7. Examine the historical factors that have influenced the names “India” and “Bharat”. Assess the multidimensional implications of changing the country’s name from “India” to “Bharat”.

Introduction: Give a brief context of the question.

Body: Highlight the historical factors that have influenced the names and their implications.

Conclusion: Way forward.

The names "India" and "Bharat" both have deep historical and cultural significance in the context of the Indian subcontinent. Article 1 of the Constitution uses the two names interchangeably: “India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States. Recently, the Union government has decided to use Bharat instead of India in some official communication and documents which evoked strong reactions from opposition parties raising many implications of changing the country’s name from “India” to “Bharat”.

Some historical factors which have influenced the names “India” & “Bharat”:

- **Historical references:** Ancient texts like Vishnu Purana and Brahma Purana, Mahabharata mention ‘Bharat’ while "India" is believed to have originated from the Greek word "Indos," which referred to the people living along the Indus River. Seventh-century Chinese traveler Hiuen Tsang had referred to the country as Bharat while “India” became the official name of the country when it gained independence in 1947.
- **Cultural significance:** The name "Bharat" holds a special place in Indian culture and tradition. Bharata is also the name of the ancient king of legend who was the ancestor of the Rig Vedic tribe of the Bharatas, and by extension, the progenitor of all peoples of the subcontinent. The name “India” on the other hand has been used by foreign powers, including the British, who colonized the region. It also represents a diverse and pluralistic nation with a rich cultural heritage.
- **Constitution debates:** Several debates in the Constitution Assembly show that leaders were divided on the words India & Bharat. Leaders like Nehru, and Ambedkar favoured both ‘Bharat’ and ‘India’ while Hargovind Pant & Hari Vishnu Kamath suggested only the use of the term “Bharat”.

What are the multidimensional implications of changing the country’s name?

- **Administrative Challenges:** The name "India" is well-established in legal documents, international treaties, and administrative systems. Changing it to "Bharat" would require extensive administrative adjustments in various official documents, symbols, and infrastructure.

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- **Political implication:** The name "India" is associated with the modern, democratic nation-state established in 1947 & reflects India's identity as a secular republic. Changing the country's name to "Bharat" could have political implications, as it might be seen as an attempt to emphasize a particular cultural or historical identity.
- **Linguistic identity:** There can be an issue of national & linguistic identity with North Indian states favouring the usage of Bharat while Southern states prefer to use "India" as it is a name that transcends linguistic boundaries.
- **International Implications:** The country's official communicate or international personality continues to be denoted by the word "India" which reflects a modern, secular, and inclusive nation that strives to accommodate diverse cultures and religions.

Conclusion:

Both words are used interchangeably & have constitutional backing with India gaining its primacy from Article 1(1) & "Bharat" from the 58th Amendment empowering the President to have published under his authority the authoritative text 'in the Hindi language' of the Constitution.

8. Discuss the role of the education system and coaching centres in exacerbating mental health issues among students. Critically evaluate the government's response to the mental health crisis among students.

Introduction: Give context to the question.

Body: Highlight the role of education & coaching centre in impacting mental health.

Conclusion: Way forward.

Recently, cases of suicides among young students in Kota have raised concern regarding the role of the education system and coaching centres in exacerbating mental health issues among students in India. Although education is essential for both individual and societal growth, the Indian educational system's high competitiveness and pressure, together with a large presence of coaching centres, have serious negative effects on students' mental health.

What is the role of the education system and coaching centres:

- **Focus on the competition:** Academic achievement and competition are heavily emphasized in the Indian education system. A lot of pressure is placed on students to perform well on exams, especially board exams and competitive entrance exams for elite institutions and universities.
- **Peer pressure:** Peer pressure is very strong in India because of how competitive the educational system is. Students could feel pressured to compare themselves to their peers, which can cause anxiety and feelings of inadequacy.
- **Rote learning:** Lack of critical thinking and creativity may result from a curriculum that places too much emphasis on rote memorization. The resultant worry and anxiety among students who feel caught in a cycle of memorizing might therefore be attributed to this.

What has been the Government's response?

- **Counseling sessions:** Schools and colleges have been advised by the government to establish counseling services to help students cope with stress and mental health issues. However, these services are often under-resourced and insufficient to meet the demand.

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- **Policy initiatives:** The government has introduced policies to reduce the emphasis on board exams and promote holistic education. However, the implementation of these policies varies across states, and the pressure on students remains high.
- **Regulation of Coaching Centres:** The government has proposed regulations for coaching centres to ensure quality education and reduce the pressure on students. However, the effectiveness of these regulations remains to be seen.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** The government has launched awareness campaigns to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues. While these campaigns are important, they do not address the root causes of the problem.

Conclusion:

Suicide is the number one cause of death amongst those between 15 to 30 years of age — by far the highest in the world in this age group. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported, in 2020, that a student took their own life every 42 minutes; or, in other words, 34 students died by suicide every day. The government needs to focus more on providing budgetary support to the National Mental Health Programme.

9. Critically evaluate the concept of jobless growth in India. Discuss the role of subsidies and safety nets in India's economic policy.

Introduction: What is jobless growth?

Body: Evaluate the concept of jobless growth and the role of subsidies & safety nets in India's economic policy.

Conclusion: Way forward.

When the economy expands but unemployment holds persistently high, this situation is known as jobless growth. In other words, although the economy is growing, fewer people are employed as a result. Subsidies and safety nets play a significant role in India's economic policy, serving various social and economic objectives. They are integral to the government's efforts to address poverty, inequality, and food security, among other key issues.

Some important issues highlighting jobless growth in India:

- **Large population:** India's large population shows a large young demographic dividend with labour force expanding considerably. This large increase in the working population is not proportionate with the rate of job creation.
- **Structural challenges:** Agriculture and informal manufacturing are two labour-intensive industries that have historically characterized India's economy. Although the services sector has expanded significantly, it hasn't been able to efficiently absorb the excess labour from these sectors. Job creation has been hampered by structural issues, such as low skill levels and a lack of diversification.
- **Use of automation & technology:** The adoption of technology and automation in various industries has increased productivity and competitiveness but it has also led to job displacement in certain sectors, particularly in manufacturing.
- **Informal nature of jobs:** In India, a sizable segment of the workforce works in the unorganized sector, where there is no social safety, job security, or benefit system. Growth in the unemployment rate exacerbates the already insecure nature of work in this industry.

What is the role of subsidies & safety nets in India's economic policy?

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- **Poverty Alleviation:** Subsidies and safety nets are crucial tools for poverty alleviation in India. They aim to provide essential goods and services at reduced prices or free of cost to disadvantaged and vulnerable populations. Some of the programs like PDS, subsidies on kerosene, and cooking gas ensure that even the poorest citizens have access to necessities.
- **Livelihood Generation:** A safety net like MGNREGA provides 100 days of wage employment to rural households which also stimulates rural demand and boosts local economies.
- **Affordable healthcare & education:** Programs like Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (Ayushman Bharat) & Right to Education Act ensure affordable, accessible healthcare and education to the marginalized.
- **Support Farm income:** Subsidies on fertilizers, seeds, and agricultural inputs help support farmers and boost agricultural productivity. These subsidies are intended to keep farming costs low, making it financially viable for small and marginal farmers.

Conclusion:

The effectiveness & sustainability of subsidies and safety nets depend on careful design, implementation, and constant evaluation to address challenges and ensure resources are directed to those who need them the most.

10. Analyze the significance of the India-Republic of Korea (ROK) strategic partnership in the context of the Indo-Pacific. How can it contribute to India's Indo-Pacific strategy?

Introduction: Give a brief context of bilateral relations.

Body: What is the significance & how does it contribute to India's Indo-Pacific strategy?

Conclusion: Way forward.

In 1962, bilateral ties between India and South Korea were established. There has been an acceleration in the two nations' economic and geopolitical connections as a result of the convergence of India's Act East Policy and South Korea's New Southern Policy. India's Indo-Pacific strategy may include South Korea as a fourth pillar in addition to Japan, Australia, and Vietnam.

Significance of relations between the both nations:

- **Geopolitical:** Both India & Korea are concerned about China's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific. This has led both countries to upgrade their bilateral relationship to a 'special strategic partnership'.
- **Economic cooperation:** India and South Korea have signed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), 2010 which has facilitated the growth of trade relations. India and South Korea have set up a bilateral trade target of \$50 billion before 2030.
- **New Indo-Pacific Strategy:** The policy document lists India as its main actor in Seoul's South Asian outreach based on better communication and upgrading the defense, diplomatic, and economic security ties.
- **Maritime security:** The Indo-Pacific is crucial for both countries due to its maritime routes. Closer collaboration in maritime security, including joint naval exercises and information-sharing, can help safeguard sea lanes and maintain regional stability.

How can it contribute to India's Indo-Pacific strategy?

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- **Defense cooperation:** The defense relationship is further strengthened by Korea's willingness to partner in the Make in India program. E.g., K9 Vajra Howitzer & K2 Black Panther tanks. The two sides can also develop a 2+2 format dialogue to strengthen their relationship.
- **Nuclear cooperation:** Korea could help fulfill India's growing need for clean energy by supplying cheaper and faster nuclear reactors.
- **Like-minded ally:** ROK's location in the Indo-Pacific, close to China, while being a U.S. ally provides India with a like-minded strategic partner that could help in reordering Asian security architecture amidst the rise of China.
- **Quad Plus:** Korea expressed its wishes to be a part of the regional security framework & expand Korea's influence by providing support to Ukraine, articulation the China challenge, and a desire to play a bigger role in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Regional security:** Both India & Korea could cooperate on matters of regional security by strengthening the alliance structure AUKUS (the U.S., the United Kingdom, Australia), the Quad (India, Japan, Australia, the U.S.), or CHIP 4 Alliance (the U.S., Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea).

Conclusion:

Both countries are celebrating their 50th year of diplomatic engagement & new strategic outlook of ROK along with the U.S., Japan, and Australia, is uniquely placed to help India advance its interests in the Indo-Pacific.

11. Examine the paradox in India's digital landscape—being a leader in technology while also leading in internet shutdowns. What long-term impact could this have on India's global standing?

Introduction: Give the context of the question.

Body: Highlight the long-term impact of the internet shutdown on India's global standing.

Conclusion: Way forward.

The above paradox about India's digital landscape is being highlighted in Statista which shows that despite ranking second in the world in terms of active internet users, and also the second-largest social media user base India has imposed the maximum number of internet shutdowns for five years in a row, depriving millions of connectivity.

Issues raised in the context of this paradox:

- **Global tech hub:** India has always positioned itself as a global technology hub with immense potential for a thriving IT and software services industry, support for the startup ecosystem & large pool of skilled IT professionals.
- **Internet shutdowns:** According to the report of the Keep It On coalition and Access Now, India is the only G20 country to have shut down the internet more than twice (84 times) in 2022. These shutdowns disrupt communication, access to information, and the functioning of businesses, leading to concerns about freedom of expression and the right to access information.

What is the long-term impact of this on India's global standing?

- **Economic impact:** Regular internet outages can be detrimental to India's economic interests. It interferes with digital transactions, which are becoming more and more important in a globalized environment. It can discourage foreign investment because

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potential investors would be apprehensive about the stability of the digital infrastructure.

- **Freedom of expression:** Various civil society groups and UN reports have demonstrated the adverse effects of internet shutdowns including violation of human rights, and the right to free expression. This impacts India's reputation as a democratic and inclusive society.
- **Impact on Digital India:** Internet shutdowns risk ambitious projects like Digital India, Startup India, Aadhar, and UPI infrastructure impacting millions who depend on these services and affecting Digital Inclusion.
- **Innovation and Technology:** Internet shutdowns can stifle innovation and technological advancement. In an era where innovation relies heavily on access to information and global collaboration, frequent disruptions can impede India's progress in cutting-edge technologies.
- **Geopolitical Relations:** India's digital paradox may also affect its relationships with other nations. While it seeks to strengthen its tech ties with countries like the United States & EU, the shutdowns could raise questions about its commitment to an open and free internet.

Conclusion:

India being the chair of G20 must commit to reducing internet shutdowns in the digital age & maintain its ambition of digital growth and global leadership.

12. Analyze the shift in India's multilateral approach from being a rule-taker to a potential rule-maker. What are the key factors driving this change?

Introduction: Give brief introduction related to question.

Body: What are key factors driving India's shift in multilateral approach?

Conclusion: Way forward.

India being chair of the G20 summit this year showcases that India has leaped to be a rule-maker rather than a rule-taker in multilateral diplomacy. This also reflects the country's evolving role on the global stage.

Some of the key factors driving this change:

- **Economic Growth:** India's rapid economic growth, along with its large and youthful population, has enhanced its geopolitical significance. India is well on track to become the third largest economy in the world in the coming years, which will lead to high per capita income of the population & better quality of life.
- **Geopolitical influence:** India has positioned itself major Asian power that enjoys primacy in South Asia & Indo-Pacific & moving past the NAM grouping & inching towards alliance with the US, and ASEAN to expand its role in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Establishing alliances with diverse groups:** India has positioned itself as a reliable security & economic partner which has led to a deepening of relations with groups like QUAD, AUKUS, ASEAN, AU, etc. It has sought to assert itself as a key player in regional security and stability, and its growing military capabilities have contributed to this effort.
- **Global concerns:** India has been a foremost voice in raising concerns about global challenges such as climate change, cybersecurity, and pandemics, which require collective action and rule-setting. For eg, India has taken the lead in establishing forums like the International Solar Alliance & Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.

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- **UNSC Aspirations:** India has long sought a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). To enhance its credibility and chances of securing this seat, India has engaged more actively in UN initiatives and peacekeeping missions. It seeks to play a pivotal role in shaping global security and peacekeeping policies.
- **Soft Power:** India's cultural and soft power, including Bollywood, yoga, and its rich history, have contributed to its global appeal. By leveraging its soft power, India can exert influence in shaping cultural and educational exchanges and international norms.
- **Development Assistance:** India has expanded its development assistance and humanitarian aid to other countries, particularly in South Asia and Africa. By doing so, it aims to establish itself as a responsible and influential player in the international development landscape.

Conclusion:

Finally, as India continues to assert itself on the global stage, its ability to shape international rules and norms in accordance with its interests is likely to grow, making it an increasingly influential player in global affairs.

13. Evaluate the potential economic benefits of the IMEE-EC for India. How can this initiative enhance India's trade connectivity with Europe and the Middle East, and how does it compare with China's BRI in terms of scope and objectives?

Introduction: Give brief introduction of IMEE-EC.

Body: What are the potential economic benefits of the IMEE-EC for India?

Conclusion: Way forward.

The recently concluded G20 summit in India witnessed a historic moment when Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the launching of a connectivity corridor spanning India to Europe via West Asia. Officially called the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, it is being positioned as a modern-day Spice Route, and more significantly, as a weighty ideological alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative.

What are the potential economic benefits of the IMEE-EC for India?

- **Enhanced Trade Connectivity:** Initiatives like IMEE-EC can improve India's trade connectivity with Europe and the Middle East by developing better infrastructure, such as ports, roads, railways, and logistics hubs. This can lead to reduced transportation costs, faster transit times, and increased trade volumes.
- **Alternate transportation route:** By integrating India's hydrocarbon value chain and establishing an innovation corridor for green energy and innovative technology manufacturing value chains, this connectivity architecture could provide India with an alternative trans-regional commercial transportation route.
- **India-Arab-Mediterranean multi-modal corridor:** IMEE-EC could act as a bridge to connect important cities like Mumbai and the European mainland via the Greek transshipment port of Piraeus, the Israeli port of Haifa, and Dubai port, with a significant part of the route traversing through the Saudi Arabian mainland.
- **Boost to self-reliance:** To increase India's capacity and self-reliance, IMEE-EC would assist and improve the infrastructure in the logistics and transportation industry. It will help in achieving progress in initiatives such as Make in India, Sagarmala, and Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Comparison with China's BRI:

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- **Nature & Scope:** BRI is a massive global infrastructure and economic development initiative spanning multiple continents, while IMEE-EC may focus on a specific region (Europe and the Middle East). IMEE-EC is jointly launched by the US and India and spans connectivity and infrastructure running through India, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Israel, and the European Union while BRI is wholly a Chinese infrastructure project.
- **Geopolitical Implications:** BRI has faced criticism for its geopolitical implications, including concerns about debt dependency. IMEE-EC may have a different geopolitical dynamic, depending on the countries involved and their interests & ensuring sustainable development.
- **India's interest:** IMEE-EC will increase India's trade cooperation with countries of the Middle East & provide an alternate route to the busy Suez Canal. On the other hand, BRI entails a CPEC corridor that passes through PoK violating India's sovereignty.

Conclusion:

The new route would be an alternative to China's BRI providing an alternate supply chain route that will encourage and provide impetus to economic development through enhanced connectivity and economic integration between Asia, West Asia/Middle East, and Europe.

14. Discuss the geopolitical implications of the African Union's inclusion as a permanent G20 member. How does this move position Africa in global politics, and what are its potential benefits for India?

Introduction: Give context of AU membership in G20.

Body: Highlight geopolitical implications of AU entry in G20 & potential benefits for India.

Conclusion: Way forward.

Recently, AU was included as a member of G20 this year. The AU is an intergovernmental organization of 55 member states located on the continent of Africa. Launched on July 9, 2002, the grouping is the successor of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which was formed in 1963. The AU seeks to build "an Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens". The AU's secretariat, the African Union Commission, is based in Addis Ababa.

What are the geopolitical implications of the African Union's inclusion as a permanent G20 member?

- **Greater influence of Africa:** The African Union may represent African interests in the G20 on a variety of problems, such as economic development, trade, investment, climate change, and peace and security. The inclusion of the African Union would provide the continent with a more significant voice in global economic and geopolitical discussions.
- **Redesign global order:** The inclusion of AU as a member would have significant implications on the changing global order which would be more inclusive & based on new rules regarding global trade, finance, and investment architecture.
- **Economic cooperation:** An increase in commerce and investment in Africa may result from membership in the G20. African states will collaborate with G20 members to promote business alliances and development projects.
- **Reform in Global Governance Institutions:** The inclusion of AU offers optimism to the "Global South" regarding reforms in Global governance institutions like IMF,

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World Bank & UNO. This will make them more inclusive and representative of emerging powers and regions.

How does this benefit India?

- **Development Cooperation:** India has been involved in various development projects in Africa, including capacity building, infrastructure development, solar power generation, and healthcare initiatives. AU's presence in the G20 could provide opportunities for India to collaborate on larger-scale development projects with African nations.
- **New areas of engagement:** India's engagement with AU has diversified to new areas like energy, and defense. This can be seen as India has emerged as a key defense supplier to Africa with Seychelles, Mauritius, and Mozambique emerging as top arms importers under the Made in India program.
- **Energy security:** Africa is a significant source of energy resources, including oil and natural gas. India's energy security could benefit from closer economic ties and energy partnerships with African nations, facilitated by the AU's presence in the G20.
- **Strategic relations:** To counteract China's influence in the region, India has been working to deepen its economic and geopolitical ties with Africa. An opportunity to interact with African countries on a wider variety of issues may arise through closer cooperation inside the G20 framework.

Conclusion:

The inclusion of AU in G20 will transform the multilateral body towards a more representative, inclusive forum to address issues such as a turbulent global economy, the North-South divide, management of food, fuel, and fertilizers, and ensuring health, energy, and water security.

15. Explain how the movement of tectonic plates can lead to earthquakes. Use the Morocco earthquake as a case study. What lessons can India learn from this for its disaster management strategies?

Introduction: Give context of the question.

Body: How does tectonic plates affect the earthquakes? What lessons can India learn from disaster management strategies?

Conclusion: Way forward.

An earthquake of magnitude 6.8 struck Morocco with its epicentre located in the Al-Haouz province, in the Atlas Mountains of the historic city of Marrakech. Reports have pointed out that earthquake was a shallow-earthquakes which are generally more dangerous as they carry more energy when they emerge to the surface when compared to quakes that occur deeper underneath the surface. While deeper quakes do indeed spread farther as seismic waves move radially upwards to the surface, they lose energy while traveling greater distances.

How do tectonic plates lead to earthquakes?

- **Convergent boundaries:** Shallow quakes in Morocco occur due to the northward convergence of the African plate concerning the Eurasian plate along a complex plate boundary. The intense pressure and friction at subduction zones can cause rocks to deform and store energy.
- **Oblique-reverse faulting:** Shallow quakes also occur due to oblique-reverse faulting at shallow depths within the Moroccan High Atlas Mountain range. This type of

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faulting is common in areas like Morocco when one tectonic plate is converging into another.

- **Accumulation of Stress:** As tectonic plates interact at these boundaries, they may get stuck due to friction, irregularities in the fault plane, or other factors. This impedes their continuous movement, causing stress to accumulate along the faults.

What lessons can India learn from its disaster management strategies?

- **Seismic Assessment:** India must continue to invest in and update its seismic hazard assessment. Accurate and up-to-date information about the seismic risk in different regions is crucial for informed decision-making, building code updates, and disaster preparedness planning.
- **Early Warning Systems:** India should invest in early warning systems for earthquakes. These systems can provide valuable seconds to minutes of warning, allowing people to take cover and critical infrastructure to shut down, reducing casualties and damage.
- **Cooperation with other nations:** Earthquakes don't respect national borders. India can collaborate with neighbouring countries in the Himalayan region to share information and coordinate response efforts, especially for larger earthquakes that may affect multiple nations.
- **Post-disaster efforts:** Effective long-term recovery plans are essential for rebuilding communities and infrastructure. Collaborative efforts between government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are critical for effective disaster management. NGOs often play a significant role in providing relief and support to affected communities.

Conclusion:

India must take note of such disasters in other parts of the world & must be better prepared to mitigate the impact of quakes. The Himalayan region of 2500-km stretch from the Hindu Kush mountains to the end of Arunachal Pradesh is one of the most dangerous seismic zones in the world which requires preparedness and resilience-building as top priority for India.

16. How crucial is the role of states in ensuring food security in India? Discuss with examples.

Introduction: Describe the food security concept in above context.

Body: What role does states play in ensuring food security in India?

Conclusion: Way forward.

The 'State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World' report of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated the proportion of the population across countries who are unable to afford a healthy diet. The figure for India in 2021 was estimated at 74% of the population which shows that continuing high food-price inflation could result in people facing hardship in consuming food of adequate nutritional value. The role of states in ensuring food security in India is crucial, as they play a pivotal role in the implementation of various policies, programs, and schemes related to food production, distribution, and access.

Role of states in food security in India:

- **Varied agriculture practices:** Agroclimatic conditions and farming activities vary between states. They must create and put into effect agricultural policies that are customized to their particular requirements and environmental conditions. States like

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Kerala and West Bengal place more emphasis on crops like rice, whilst states like Punjab and Haryana concentrate on the production of wheat and rice.

- **Distribution & Procurement of grains:** State governments are primarily responsible for buying food grains like rice and wheat from farmers and distributing them through the Public Distribution System (PDS). They are in charge of making sure that food grains get to the people who live in poverty. Innovative PDS models have been introduced in states like Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh to enhance food distribution.
- **Nutrition programs:** States are responsible for implementing nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive programs. These include programs aimed at improving the nutritional status of women and children, such as the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and the National Health Mission (NHM). States like Odisha have initiated programs like the Mamata scheme to improve maternal and child nutrition.
- **Disaster Management:** In the event of a natural disaster, such as a drought or a flood, states must be ready to manage issues related to food security. By giving afflicted communities food and shelter, they play a crucial part in disaster relief. Eg, states like Maharashtra have created drought relief programs to provide food and job possibilities to affected farmers during droughts.
- **Targeted welfare programs:** States have the flexibility to design and implement targeted welfare programs to address specific food security challenges. For example, the Tamil Nadu government has implemented the Amma Unavagam scheme, which provides subsidized meals to urban residents, ensuring access to affordable food.

Conclusion:

Effective collaboration between the central government and state governments is essential to address India's complex food security issues and ensure that nutritious food reaches all citizens, especially the vulnerable and marginalized populations.

17. "Fraternity in India is often overshadowed by social and caste inequalities, making it a neglected constitutional value." Critically assess the statement, considering the role of political and social factors in promoting fraternity in India.

Introduction: Describe fraternity as a concept.

Body: What role do political & social factors play in promoting fraternity in India?

Conclusion: Way forward.

Fraternity along with liberty & equality remains the most significant tenet of liberal political philosophy. Fraternity means a sense of common brotherhood of all Indians. It is the principle that gives unity and solidarity to social life. Without fraternity, equality, and liberty will not be very useful. Fraternity has been most forgotten in our Constitution and our electoral process. B.R. Ambedkar is often credited as the person who gave primacy to ideas of Liberty, Equality, and fraternity in the Indian constitution.

What role do political & social factors play in promoting fraternity in India?

- **Historical factors:** Liberty, Equality, and fraternity are core values enshrined in the preamble of the Indian constitution. India's caste system, colonial rule, and various stages in the independence struggle had a lasting impact on the social system in India. For eg, the 1931 "Fundamental Rights" resolution, Objectives Resolution, Annihilation of Caste, & finally Constitution have played a role in promoting fraternity in India.
- **Caste system:** The caste system in India is rife with historical marginalization and discrimination of some castes, as well as deep-seated inequality. Despite constitutional protections like reservation laws, caste-based prejudice continues to

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exist in many forms. When caste-based differences remain widespread, fraternity might be difficult to achieve.

- **Political factors:** The political landscape in India has often been influenced by identity politics, where politicians use caste and religion as tools to garner votes. This can perpetuate divisions rather than promote fraternity. Moreover, the failure of some political parties to address social and economic inequalities exacerbates the problem.
- **Affirmative action:** Reservation laws have been put in place to advance social justice and empower vulnerable communities, yet they occasionally cause animosity among other sections of society. When some persons believe their prospects are constrained by these regulations, this can impede the growth of brotherhood.
- **Social justice movements:** The Dalit rights movement and women's empowerment programs are just two examples of social movements in India that have sought to advance social justice and fraternity. Significant progress has been made by these movements in promoting change and increasing awareness.

Conclusion:

Although fraternity remains one of the chief goals of India's parliamentary democracy and is the foundational political objective of its constitutional democracy, the current nature of India's fraternity is different from the political fraternity espoused in its Constitution. Addressing these issues requires a multi-faceted approach, including education, social awareness, and meaningful political reforms, to bridge the gaps and promote a stronger sense of fraternity among all citizens.

18. The MoU between India and Saudi Arabia on renewable energy can be a game-changer for India's energy security." Discuss

Introduction: Give brief context of MoU.

Body: How can this MoU be a game changer for India's energy security.

Conclusion: Way forward

India and Saudi Arabia signed a historic comprehensive cooperation agreement in the field of energy on the sidelines of the G20 summit. The MoU is expected to result in enhanced ties between India and Saudi Arabia in renewable energy, energy efficiency, hydrogen, electricity and grid interconnections, petroleum, natural gas, strategic petroleum reserves, and energy security.

How can this MoU be a game changer for energy security?

- **Renewable energy:** The MoU will give a great push to renewable energy transition in both nations. Saudi Arabia aims to increase its domestic renewable energy capacity to 50% of total energy by 2030. India on the other hand has set a target of doubling its renewable energy capacity of 175 GW in 2022 to 450 GW by 2030.
- **Diversification of energy resources:** India is heavily reliant on fossil fuels, particularly oil and natural gas, which are often imported from regions like the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia. Diversifying its energy sources to include renewables like solar and wind can reduce its vulnerability to fluctuations in global oil prices and supply disruptions, thereby enhancing energy security.
- **Reduce Import dependency:** India may lessen its reliance on energy imports, especially from countries that produce oil, by making investments in renewable energy. This might have important economic and geopolitical repercussions because it would lessen India's trade deficit and its vulnerability to global conflicts that could disrupt oil supplies.

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- **Environment benefits:** Moving toward renewable energy is consistent with India's pledges to fight climate change. It lowers greenhouse gas emissions and works toward a more sustainable and clean energy future, both of which are essential for the environment and the well-being of its people.
- **Technology transfer:** Working together on renewable energy projects with Saudi Arabia may result in technology transfer and information exchange. This could hasten India's adoption and development of renewable energy technology, positioning it as a market leader for these sources of power.
- **Energy Access:** Renewable energy projects can also improve energy access in rural and remote areas of India, where conventional energy infrastructure is often lacking. This can help bridge the energy divide and promote social and economic development.

Conclusion:

The success of the MoU rests on addressing challenges like regional differences in Renewable energy development policies in India and, the rising storage cost of renewables. However, success will depend on sustained commitment, investment, and effective implementation of renewable energy projects in both countries.

19. Critically analyze the role of the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) in maintaining the quality of teacher training in India.

Introduction: Describe NCTE.

Body: What role does the (NCTE) play in maintaining the quality of teacher training in India?

Conclusion: Way forward

The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) is a statutory body of the Indian government set up under the National Council for Teacher Education Act, 1993. It was set to formally oversee standards, procedures, and processes in the Indian education system. This council functions for the central as well as state governments on all matters with regards to Teacher Education and its Secretariat is located in the Department of Teacher Education and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

What role does the (NCTE) play in maintaining the quality of teacher training in India?

- **Standardization of Teacher Education:** NCTE has established norms and standards for teacher education programs, including curriculum, infrastructure, and faculty qualifications. This has brought a degree of uniformity and quality assurance to teacher training institutions across the country.
- **Lack of Transparency:** There have been allegations of corruption and lack of transparency in the recognition and accreditation processes. Some institutions have obtained recognition through unethical means, undermining the credibility of NCTE.
- **Proliferation of Substandard Institutions:** One of the major criticisms of NCTE is its inability to effectively regulate and monitor the proliferation of substandard teacher education institutions. Many subpar institutions continue to operate, compromising the quality of teacher training in India
- **Outdated Curriculum:** The curriculum guidelines provided by NCTE can sometimes be outdated and disconnected from the changing needs of the education system. There is a need for more frequent updates to ensure that teacher education programs remain relevant.
- **Teacher Quality and Training:** While NCTE focuses on the quality of teacher education institutions, there is a need for a more comprehensive approach to

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improving the quality of teachers themselves. This includes ongoing professional development, which falls outside the purview of NCTE. The NCTE in recent years emphasized the need for the duration of courses by strengthening pedagogy and practice in taking programs with the incorporation of internships.

- **Inconsistent Implementation:** While NCTE sets standards and guidelines, their implementation varies widely across states and institutions. This inconsistency in implementation can lead to disparities in the quality of teacher education.
- **Research and Innovation:** NCTE promotes research and innovation in teacher education. It encourages institutions to develop innovative teaching methods and practices, which can ultimately benefit students and improve the overall quality of education.
- **Accreditation and Recognition:** NCTE is responsible for granting recognition and accreditation to teacher education institutions. This recognition helps maintain minimum standards and ensures that institutions offering teacher training adhere to certain quality benchmarks.

Conclusion:

India has made considerable progress in school and college education since independence concerning overall literacy, infrastructure, and universal access and enrolment in schools. However, the quality of education in a nation not only depends on literacy, infrastructure, and universal access and enrolment in schools but also depends upon the competence, dedication, and quality of school teachers. The success of any educational program largely depends on the teachers, their competencies, and skills.

20. Discuss the role of climate change in increasing the frequency and intensity of floods in India. Elaborate on the need for a coherent framework integrating various laws for effective flood risk management.

Introduction: Give a brief description related to floods.

Body: What role does climate change play in increasing the frequency and intensity of floods?

Conclusion: Way forward

According to the World Health Organization, "Floods are increasing in frequency and intensity, and the frequency and intensity of extreme precipitation is expected to continue to increase due to climate change." Devastating effects of floods were witnessed in Pakistan, Uttarakhand, Kashmir Valley, Chennai, Gujarat & in several districts of Himachal Pradesh this year. As per the Geological Survey of India, over 40 million hectares, which is nearly 12% of the total land area of India, are prone to floods.

What role does climate change play in increasing the frequency and intensity of floods?

- **Melting of glaciers:** The Himalayan region, which feeds numerous important rivers in India, is witnessing rapid glacial melting as a result of rising temperatures. Rivers may expand and flood downstream areas when there is too much meltwater and a lot of monsoon rain.
- **Rising sea level:** As a result of global warming and rising sea levels, coastal areas may experience coastal flooding in states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal due to seawater intrusion during storms and high tides.
- **Change in rainfall pattern:** With greater variability and intense occurrences, climate change affects rainfall patterns. The monsoon season in India is getting more

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unpredictable and has increasingly frequent, heavy downpours. Flooding may occur as a result of sudden, intense downpours that overwhelm drainage systems.

- **Urbanization & deforestation:** Deforestation and urbanization are accelerated by climate change, which worsens flooding. Deforestation lowers the capacity of trees and other natural vegetation, which are essential for absorbing surplus rainfall. As impermeable surfaces are built as a result of urbanization, natural drainage is reduced and the risk of localized flooding is increased.

Why there is a need for a coherent framework for flood risk management?

- **Early warning system:** Effective flood risk management requires accurate data and early warning systems. An integrated framework can establish mechanisms for data sharing and the development of advanced early warning systems to predict and respond to floods promptly.
- **Climate Adaptation:** The framework should incorporate climate change adaptation strategies, such as resilient infrastructure, floodplain zoning, and reforestation, to mitigate the impact of climate change on flooding.
- **Resource Allocation:** It can help in the efficient allocation of resources for flood risk management, ensuring that funds are directed toward high-priority projects that address vulnerabilities.
- **Better coordination:** Flood risk management involves multiple stakeholders at the central, state, and local levels. A coherent framework can facilitate better coordination and collaboration among these entities, ensuring a more effective response during floods.

Conclusion:

Finally, there is a need to focus on floodplain restoration and water retention of water bodies as they are considered to be pillars against flooding. But all this would require strong political will and refrain from populist policies to save lives and livelihoods and safeguard infrastructure.

21. Discuss the significance of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) in the context of India's Blue Economy. Analyze its impact on the fisheries sector and its potential to transform the livelihoods of the fishing community.

Introduction: Describe PMMSY.

Body: Significance & its impact on fisheries sector and livelihood of fishing community.

Conclusion: Way forward

PMMSY is a flagship scheme for focused and sustainable development of the fisheries sector in the country with an estimated investment of ₹20,050 crore for its implementation during 2020-21 to 2024-25 as part of the Aatmanirbhar Bharat package. The PMMSY aims at enhancing fish production by an additional 220 lakh tonne by 2024-25, increasing fisheries export earnings to ₹1 lakh crore by 2024-25. It aims to boost production and exports in the fisheries sector as part of the government's aim to double farmers' income.

Significance of PMMSY in India:

- **Neel Kranti Mission:** PMMSY is integral to the vision of the Blue Revolution mission to achieve economic prosperity for the country and the fishers and fish farmers as well as contribute towards food and nutritional security through full potential

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utilization of water resources for fisheries development in a sustainable manner, keeping in view the bio-security and environmental concerns.

- **Job generation:** PMMSY aims to bring about the 'Blue Revolution' through sustainable and responsible development of the fisheries sector in India. It aims to generate about 55 lakh direct and indirect employment opportunities in the fisheries sector over the next five years i.e. (2020-21 to 2024-25).
- **Women empowerment:** PMMSY recognizes the role of women in the fisheries sector and promotes their active participation. It provides opportunities for women to engage in various activities along the value chain, from fishing to processing and marketing, thereby empowering them economically.

What is its impact on the fisheries sector & livelihoods of the fishing community?

- **Addressing critical issues in fisheries:** From fish production, productivity, and quality to technology, post-harvest infrastructure, and marketing, PMMSY began to address significant gaps in the fisheries value chain. The following were listed as important strategic priority areas: marine fisheries, inland fisheries, fishermen's welfare, infrastructure, and post-harvest management; cold water fisheries; ornamental fisheries; aquatic health management; and seaweed culture.
- **Aquapreneur culture:** PMMSY has infused new energy in the fisheries sector by infusing new talent, and young minds with technological spirit by implementing new methods of fish rearing. Fisheries have been expanded to non-traditional areas like Rajasthan & Haryana where farmers are successfully converting their saline wastelands into wealth lands through aquaculture.
- **Alternate livelihood for rural Indians:** PMMSY has empowered fisherwomen to explore remunerative options and alternative livelihoods, such as ornamental fisheries, pearl culture, and seaweed cultivation. E.g. of Kashmir women young women are efficiently rearing cold water rainbow trout using a recirculatory aquaculture system.
- **Enhanced production:** India is currently ranked among the top three nations in the world for fish and aquaculture production, and it exports more shrimp than any other country. This leap in production is on account of several steps like recently launched ₹127-crore Seaweed Park in Tamil Nadu, 900 fish feed plants, and 755 hatcheries have been set up under PMMSY which is supporting research and genetic improvement of Indian White Shrimp at Chennai, development of specific pathogen-free brood stock, and domestication of tiger shrimp in the Andaman Islands.

Conclusion:

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana is a crucial step in harnessing India's Blue Economy potential by promoting sustainable growth in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

22. Discuss the significance of carbon trading in the context of India's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Analyze the potential challenges and benefits of establishing the Indian Carbon Market (ICM).

Introduction: Describe carbon trading.

Body: Significance of carbon trading & benefits, challenges of ICM.

Conclusion: Way forward.

Carbon trading is the buying and selling of credits that permit a company or other entity to emit a certain amount of carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases. It is authorized by the

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government to gradually reduce overall carbon emissions and mitigate their contribution to climate change. Indian Carbon Market (ICM) aims to decarbonize the Indian economy by pricing the Green House Gas (GHG) emissions through the trading of Carbon Credit Certificates.

What is its significance in reducing GHG emissions in India?

- **Incentivizes emission reduction:** Businesses and industries are given financial incentives to lower their greenhouse gas emissions because of carbon trading. Companies are allotted a fixed number of emissions allowances, and those who can lower their emissions below their allotted level can sell their extra credits to others who exceed their limit.
- **Achieve international commitments:** India is a signatory to international climate agreements like the Paris Agreement, along with many other nations. These agreements bind nations to particular emission reduction goals & give flexibility in how to achieve these goals.

What are the challenges of establishing ICM?

- **Price fluctuations:** Carbon markets can experience price volatility, which can impact the profitability of emission reduction projects and the overall stability of the market. India would need mechanisms to mitigate such volatility.
- **Data and Monitoring:** Establishing an effective carbon market requires robust systems for data collection, monitoring, and verification of emissions reductions. India may face challenges in setting up and maintaining these systems, especially in rural areas.

What are the benefits of ICM?

- **Transition to low carbon economy:** ICM will enable the creation of a competitive market that can provide incentives to climate actors to adopt low-cost options by attracting technology and finance towards sustainable projects that generate carbon credits. It can be a vehicle for mobilizing a significant portion of investments required by the Indian economy to transition toward low-carbon pathways.
- **Cost-effective mitigation:** The ICM will mobilize new mitigation opportunities through demand for emission credits by private and public entities. A well-designed, competitive carbon market mechanism would enable the reduction of GHG emissions at the least cost, both at the level of entity, as well as the overall sector, and drive faster adoption of clean technologies, in a growing economy like India.

Conclusion:

As the nation moves towards achieving its ambitious target of turning net zero by 2070, initiatives like carbon trading & carbon market can help in carbon management solutions and clean energy transition towards maintaining the delicate balance between economic needs and environmental concerns.

23. Discuss the challenges faced in ensuring a consistent and quality water supply under the Jal Jeevan Mission. Suggest measures to address these challenges.

Introduction: Describe Jal Jeevan Mission.

Body: Address challenges & measures associated with the scheme.

Conclusion: Way forward.

Jal Jeevan Mission is the flagship scheme launched by the Ministry of Jal Shakti in 2019. It envisioned providing safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections by 2024 to all households in rural India. It is based on a community approach to water and will include extensive Information, Education, and communication as a key component of the mission.

What are the challenges faced in ensuring quality water supply under the scheme?

- **COVID Pandemic:** The pace of the scheme was slowed due to the pandemic which affected the progress of the scheme including the availability of necessary materials like pipes and other construction resources resulting in delays.
- **Inadequate infrastructure:** One of the primary challenges is the inadequate infrastructure for water supply in rural areas. Many villages lack the necessary pipelines, storage tanks, and treatment facilities.
- **Poor water quality:** States like Kerala, and Bengal face issues with water contamination, posing obstacles in ensuring access to safe drinking water. Climate change, over-extraction, and contamination of water sources can threaten the long-term viability of water sources.
- **Geographical Diversity:** India's rural areas are diverse in terms of geography and terrain, which can make it challenging to implement uniform water supply solutions. Eg, Mahoba in UP relies on lakes and ponds for irrigation, but the region's rocky sub-surface means that perennial sources of groundwater are few leading to poor implementation of the scheme.

What measures are necessary to address challenges?

- **Training & capacity building:** The need is to provide training and capacity-building programs for local community members to operate and maintain water supply infrastructure. This will address the issue of shortage of skilled workers in water management areas.
- **Monitoring & Evaluation:** Delivering safe drinking water can be ensured by putting in place effective water quality monitoring systems and countermeasures, such as routine testing and treatment.
- **Behavioral change:** Changing traditional water-use habits and promoting responsible water use by launching public awareness campaigns and community education programs.
- **Water Security for Development:** India should work on groundwater replenishing methods without polluting the sources. Further, village communities and users/owners should start water budgeting to understand and improve water-use efficiency by changing water usage patterns, shifting to less water-consuming crops, and/ or switching to micro-irrigation, i.e., drip and sprinkler systems.

Conclusion:

The successful implementation of JJM ensures that India achieves its desired SDG 6 by 2030 to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.

24. Discuss the significance of genetically modified (GM) crops in achieving global food and nutritional security. Highlight the challenges and benefits associated with GM crops.

GM crops are created by altering their DNA through genetic engineering techniques to impart specific traits, such as resistance to pests, tolerance to herbicides, or improved nutritional content. These crops have played a significant role in the quest for global food and nutritional security.

What is the significance of GM crops in food & nutrition security?

- **High Crop Yield:** GM crops often have higher yields due to traits like pest resistance and drought tolerance. This increased productivity helps meet the growing demand for food in a world with a rising population.
- **Enhanced nutrition value:** Genetic modification can be used to enhance the nutritional content of crops. For example, biofortified GM crops like Golden Rice are engineered to contain higher levels of essential nutrients, addressing malnutrition in many developing countries.
- **More crops under GM:** The pool of GM crops has been widened by the addition of new crops like potato, and sugarbeet in addition to maize, soybean, cotton, and canola which has improved traits such as insect and herbicide resistance, climate resilience, and nutritional quality improvement in crops.

What are the challenges associated with GM crops?

- **Environment:** GMO breeding with the other crops in the natural ecosystem can result in genetic contamination. GM technology could also allow the transfer of genes from one crop to another, creating "superweeds", which might be immune to common control methods.
- **Corporate control:** A few large biotech companies dominate the GM seed market, through the use of IPR which raises concerns about corporate control of agriculture & food supply.
- **Health issues:** Some critics argue that GM crops could have long-term health effects, through the use of chemicals & antibiotics rendering antibiotic medications less effective over some time, leading to superbug threats.

What are the benefits associated with GM crops?

- **Farmers' income:** GM crops can save farmers' income, reduce pesticide load on the environment, and provide pesticide- and insect-free crops to consumers while also boosting soil conservation efforts.
- **Sustainability:** Drought-tolerant and disease-resistant GM crops can promote sustainable agriculture by reducing water consumption and minimizing the environmental impact of farming.
- **Nutritional Enhancement:** Biofortified GM crops can combat micronutrient deficiencies, improving public health and nutrition. Crops can even be engineered to be more nutritious, providing critical vitamins to populations that struggle to get specific nutrients needed for healthy living.

Conclusion:

India could meet its edible oil demand through the use of GM Mustard after the release of DMH 11 for cultivation. Cultivation of these GM mustard hybrids developed indigenously could help enhance farmers' income, reduce the oil-import burden, and help achieve much-

needed self-reliance in edible oil production. This will help boost the vibrant genetic engineering research sector in the country and enable the generation of new crop varieties with improved traits.

25. Discuss the significance of scientific assessments in wildlife reintroduction projects, especially in the context of potential pathogen threats. How can such assessments ensure the long-term success of reintroduction efforts?

Introduction: Briefly explain the context.

Body: Significance of scientific assessments & how do they ensure success of **reintroduction** efforts.

Conclusion: Way forward.

Scientific assessments play a crucial role in wildlife reintroduction projects in India, particularly when considering potential pathogen threats. These assessments are essential for ensuring the long-term success of reintroduction efforts.

What is the significance of scientific assessments in wildlife reintroduction projects?

- **Assessment of Disease risk:** One of the primary functions of scientific assessments in wildlife reintroduction projects is to evaluate the risk of disease transmission between reintroduced animals and existing populations or other wildlife species. By conducting disease risk assessments, scientists can identify potential pathogens, assess their prevalence, and determine the likelihood of transmission. This information helps develop strategies to mitigate disease risks. These critical assessments are especially necessary as seen from the recent death of cheetahs in India.
- **Research and Data Collection:** Scientific assessments provide valuable data that contribute to a deeper understanding of the ecology and biology of the reintroduced species. This research informs not only the reintroduction process but also broader conservation efforts.
- **Ecological Impact Assessment:** Scientific assessments go beyond disease concerns to evaluate the broader ecological impact of reintroduction. Researchers examine how reintroduced species interact with their environment and other wildlife, including potential competitors and predators.

How can such assessments ensure the long-term success of reintroduction efforts?

- **Adaptive Management:** Scientific assessments are integral to adaptive management strategies. In the face of changing environmental conditions, emerging diseases, or unexpected challenges, ongoing assessments provide the information needed to adjust reintroduction plans, such as altering release sites, population sizes, or disease management protocols.
- **Public and Stakeholder Engagement:** Scientific assessments also play a role in engaging the public and stakeholders in the reintroduction process. By sharing research findings and emphasizing the importance of disease risk assessment and monitoring, conservation organizations can build support and understanding among local communities, governments, and NGOs.
- **Monitoring and Surveillance:** Once animals are reintroduced, ongoing scientific assessments involve monitoring the health and behaviour of the reintroduced population and the resident wildlife. Regular health checks and disease surveillance help detect and respond to emerging disease threats promptly. This adaptive

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management approach allows for adjustments to be made if disease risks evolve over time.

Conclusion:

Finally, there should be active engagement with scientists and conservationists who have decades of experience working with wildlife reintroduction projects to incorporate the best available scientific knowledge in the planning, implementation and monitoring of a project.

26. Discuss the significance of breeding for disease resistance in crop varieties, especially in the context of Basmati rice. How do government policies with regard to exports impact Basmati rice farmers in India?

Introduction: Briefly describe Basmati rice.

Body: Significance of breeding in crop varieties and government policies impact on farmers cultivating Basmati rice.

Conclusion: Way forward.

Basmati rice is a premium variety of rice cultivated in the Himalayan foothills of the Indian subcontinent known for its long grain size, fluffy texture and unique inherent aroma and flavour. It is cultivated in Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, UT of Jammu and Kashmir and western Uttar Pradesh. Breeding for disease resistance in crop varieties, including Basmati rice, holds significant importance for agricultural sustainability and food security.

What is significance of breeding for disease resistance in Basmati rice?

- **Disease Resistance:** Disease-resistant crop varieties help protect agricultural yields and reduce the need for costly chemical pesticides. Protecting Basmati rice crop against diseases is crucial for maintaining its quality and market competitiveness.
- **Food Security:** Disease-resistant varieties of Basmati rice ensure a stable supply of this important food source. Reduced crop losses due to diseases help maintain food security, especially in regions where Basmati rice is a dietary staple.
- **Increase Exports:** Basmati rice is a valuable export commodity that generates substantial revenue for Indian farmers and the country's economy. Disease-resistant varieties can increase yield and quality, resulting in higher profits for farmers and greater income for the nation through exports.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Disease-resistant varieties can contribute to sustainable agriculture by reducing the use of chemical pesticides. This, in turn, helps mitigate the environmental impact of agriculture, such as soil and water pollution.

What is the Impact of Government Export Policies on Basmati Rice Farmers in India?

- **Support and subsidies:** Government policies may provide support, subsidies, or incentives to encourage Basmati rice cultivation and export. These measures can benefit farmers by reducing production costs and increasing profitability.
- **Market Access:** Government policies play a crucial role in facilitating or hindering the export of Basmati rice. Favourable policies that promote access to international markets can significantly benefit Basmati rice farmers by increasing demand and prices for their produce.
- **Quality Standards:** Export policies often include quality standards and regulations that Basmati rice must meet to access foreign markets. These standards are meant to ensure that Indian Basmati rice maintains a high reputation for quality. Farmers

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must adhere to these standards, which can impact their practices and investments in disease-resistant varieties and farming techniques.

- **Price Stability:** Government interventions in the form of export bans or restrictions can affect Basmati rice prices. While such measures may be imposed to safeguard domestic availability, they can also disrupt farmers' income if they result in price fluctuations or reduced market access.

Conclusion:

The success of Basmati rice can be seen from reports showing annual exports from India have soared, from 0.3-0.35 million tonnes (mt) valued at \$200-250 million to 4.5-4.6 mt worth \$4.7-4.8 billion, in the past three decades. Efforts like Minimising the spraying of crop protection chemical also helps protect the premium value of Indian basmati in the global market. There is need to put safeguards in place to minimize risks faced by farmers who are exposed to the vagaries of the market and government policy with regard to exports.

27. Analyze the significance of women-focused welfare schemes in shaping the political landscape of India. How have they impacted the perception of political parties among women constituents?

Introduction: Briefly explain the context.

Body: Highlight the significance of such schemes & how they have impacted the perception of political parties.

Conclusion: Way forward.

The significance of women-focused welfare schemes has played a significant role in shaping the political landscape of India. These schemes have played a crucial role in addressing gender disparities, empowering women, and influencing the perception of political parties among women constituents.

Significance of such schemes in shaping the political landscape of India:

- **Reduce gender disparities:** Women-focused welfare schemes, such as the "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" and "Mahila Shakti Kendra", have aimed to reduce gender-based inequalities in various sectors, including education, healthcare, and employment. These schemes have improved the lives of women and girls and contributed to reducing disparities.
- **Political empowerment:** Schemes like the "Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana" and "Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana" have empowered women by providing them with financial assistance and resources. This empowerment often leads to increased political awareness and participation among women in society.
- **Greater political representation:** Women-focused schemes have contributed to increasing the representation of women in politics. Reservations for women in local governance (Panchayati Raj) institutions have provided women with opportunities to hold leadership positions, leading to better representation of their interests and concerns. The newly introduced Women's Reservation Bill, which seeks to provide a 33 percent quota to women in Parliament and state legislatures will be a landmark legislation in empowering women & ensuring greater representation of women.

Impact of such welfare schemes on the perception of political parties among women constituents:

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- **Political Behaviour and Voting Patterns:** The impact of women-focused schemes on voting behaviour can vary. While these schemes may lead to increased support for parties that implement them effectively, voting decisions are influenced by a wide range of factors, including local candidates, party ideologies, and broader political issues.
- **Improve political party image:** Political parties that prioritize women's welfare are generally viewed more positively by women voters. Parties that champion women's rights and promote gender equality are seen as progressive and responsive to the needs of half the population. This can improve the image of such parties among women constituents. E.g., Dravidian parties of Tamil Nadu & JDU of Bihar.
- **Increased Trust and Support:** Effective implementation of women-focused welfare schemes has often led women to view political parties that prioritize these schemes more favourably. When women perceive that a political party is genuinely committed to improving their welfare and addressing their needs, they are more likely to trust and support that party.

Conclusion:

The Indian government has introduced various schemes to empower women and provide them with opportunities for growth and safety. Through these schemes, the government is actively working towards creating a more inclusive and secure environment for women in India.

28. Analyze the potential impact of PM-WANI on India's digital public infrastructure. How does it compare to other initiatives like UPI in transforming the digital landscape of the country?

Introduction: Describe PM-WANI briefly.

Body: Highlight its impact on DPI & comparison with UPI.

Conclusion: Way forward.

PM-WANI (Prime Minister's Wi-Fi Access Network Interface) is an initiative launched in India to improve internet access and connectivity by promoting public Wi-Fi networks. It aims to transform India's digital landscape by making high-speed internet accessible to a wider population. The scheme envisages the setting up of public Wi-Fi networks and access points by local Kirana and neighborhood shops through public data offices (PDO) will be set up on the lines of Public Call Offices (PCOs) that will not involve any license, fee, or registration.

Impact of PM-WANI on India's digital public infrastructure:

- **Improved Internet Access:** PM-WANI aims to provide high-speed internet access in public places such as markets, bus stops, railway stations, and rural areas. This can significantly enhance digital inclusion and access to online services for a larger population.
- **Reduced Data Costs:** By offering low-cost or free public Wi-Fi, PM-WANI can help reduce data costs for users, making it more affordable for people to access the internet.
- **Enhanced Education and E-Governance:** Improved internet access can benefit education, e-governance services, and telemedicine, especially in remote areas. It can also promote digital literacy and skill development.
- **Bridging the Digital Divide:** With a low home broadband penetration of around 10% in India, PM-WANI offers an opportunity to improve internet access, especially in underserved areas.

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- **Boosting Local Economy:** Local shops and households can become PDOs, setting up Wi-Fi hotspots. This not only promotes affordable internet usage but also augments their earnings.

Comparison between UPI with PM-WANI:

- **Purpose:** PM-WANI's primary purpose is to improve digital connectivity and internet access, especially in rural and underserved areas through a network of public Wi-Fi hotspots. UPI on the other hand is a real-time payment system that facilitates digital transactions and money transfers.
- **Challenges:** PM-WANI faces challenges related to the effective implementation of public Wi-Fi networks, including issues of infrastructure, privacy, and security. UPI on the other hand faces challenges related to security and fraud, as the increased use of digital payments has attracted cybercriminals.
- **Economic Impact:** UPI has had a significant economic impact by boosting digital transactions, e-commerce, and fintech innovation. PM-WANI's economic impact is more indirect, as improved internet access can facilitate online economic activities.
- **Implementation:** PM-WANI involves the setup of physical infrastructure (Wi-Fi hotspots) and may require more local-level involvement, whereas UPI primarily operates through digital platforms and apps.

Conclusion:

India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) is a blend of scalability, interoperability, innovation, and frugality which advances a digitally inclusive future & country's commitment to leverage technology for the greater good.

29. Critically evaluate the role of self-help groups in empowering women in rural and semi-urban settings. How have these groups influenced women's participation in local governance?

Introduction: Describe SHG.

Body: What is role of SHG in empowerment of women and their influence in local governance?

Conclusion: Way forward

Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are small voluntary associations of poor people, who come together to solve their common problems through self-help and mutual help. The SHGs usually comprise very poor people who do not have access to formal financial institutions. Self-help groups (SHGs) have played a significant role in empowering women in rural and semi-urban settings in India. However, their impact and influence on women's participation in local governance can vary depending on several factors.

Role of self-help groups in empowering women in rural and semi-urban settings:

- **Economic Empowerment:** SHGs have been effective in encouraging women in rural and semi-urban regions to become economically independent. Women now have access to loans and financial resources to launch small enterprises or take part in income-generating activities thanks to microfinance initiatives.
- **Social Empowerment:** Social engagement and networking among women rise frequently as a result of SHG participation. This aids in dismantling conventional barriers and norms, fostering higher levels of self-esteem and social empowerment.

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- **Skill Development:** Many SHGs offer training and skill development programs, enabling women to acquire new skills, which not only improves their employability but also boosts their self-confidence.
- **Collective Bargaining:** SHGs empower women to negotiate better prices for their products and services, helping them earn more income. This collective bargaining power can be a significant force for economic empowerment.

Influence of SHG in influencing women's participation in local governance:

- **Representation:** SHGs can serve as a training ground for women to understand the workings of community organizations. However, direct participation in local governance can be limited because SHGs are primarily focused on economic and social issues rather than political matters. SHG women's interaction with panchayats through greater Gram Panchayats-SHG convergence can also provide a valuable civil society check on the working of the panchayats themselves.
- **Leadership skills:** While SHGs may not directly engage in politics, they often cultivate leadership skills among women. Some women who have been part of SHGs may eventually take an interest in local politics and run for elected positions.
- **Influence local issues:** Some SHGs engage in advocacy efforts to influence policies and programs that affect their communities. They can lobby for better access to healthcare, nutrition, education, and infrastructure, indirectly impacting local governance.

Conclusion:

SHG should align its efforts to not just focus on economic empowerment alone but also social and political empowerment. Women's SHGs must be systematically oriented around women's rights, entitlements, legal remedies, and support systems; they should be actively educated about how to resist gender-based violence, discrimination, and exploitation. They should be supported to function as informal social networks of resilience and solidarity for their members.

30. Discuss the role of the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) in resolving the water dispute. How can transparency and public awareness aid in dispelling misconceptions related to the issue?

Introduction: Describe CWMA briefly.

Body: Highlight role of CWMA in resolving water disputes.

Conclusion: Way forward

Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) plays a pivotal role in resolving the long-standing water dispute between the states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu in India. Its establishment was a result of a Supreme Court verdict in 2018, which aimed to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of Cauvery River water among the riparian states. (CWMA) lies under the administrative control of the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Role of CWMA in resolving water dispute:

- **Water allocation:** CWMA is responsible for determining the annual allocation of Cauvery river water among Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Puducherry based on the water availability and the needs of the states.
- **Reservoir Regulation:** It supervises the operations of reservoirs and the release of water to the downstream states to ensure that the allocated shares are met.

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- **Dispute Resolution:** CWMA has the authority to resolve disputes arising between the riparian states regarding water-sharing. It provides a platform for states to address grievances and reach consensus.
- **Monitoring and Data Collection:** The authority collects data on rainfall, river flows, and reservoir levels to make informed decisions about water allocation.

How can transparency & public awareness aid in resolving water disputes?

- **Access to Information:** Ensuring transparency in the functioning of CWMA is crucial. Making information about water allocation, releases, and decisions easily accessible to the public can help dispel misconceptions and build trust.
- **Public Consultations:** CWMA can engage in public consultations and involve stakeholders, including farmers and local communities, in the decision-making process. This can provide insights and build consensus on water-sharing issues.
- **Educational Campaigns:** Promoting awareness campaigns about the Cauvery water dispute, the role of CWMA, and the importance of equitable water-sharing can help dispel misconceptions and foster a better understanding of the issue among the public.
- **Media Engagement:** CWMA can actively engage with the media to ensure accurate and unbiased reporting on water-related matters. This can help prevent the spread of false information or biased narratives.
- **Conflict Resolution Workshops:** Organizing workshops and training programs on conflict resolution and negotiation can empower local leaders and officials to manage disputes at the grassroots level.
- **Technology and Data Sharing:** Utilizing technology to share real-time data on water availability and releases can enhance transparency and help stakeholders understand the ground realities.

Conclusion:

A positive step by CWMA would be to make the proceedings of all its meetings held so far available to the public on a website to dispel misconceptions in both States Cauvery water sharing issue. The water-sharing formula should be addressed rationally and objectively with officials and technical experts of CWMA.

31. In the context of the Antarctic Treaty and the Moon Agreement, how can nations strike a balance between exploration and preservation?

Introduction: Describe the Antarctic Treaty & Moon Agreement.

Body: How can nations strike a balance between exploration and preservation

Conclusion: Way forward.

The urge to control resources over the South Pole and competition to dominate celestial bodies has raised questions of exploration & preservation in the context of agreements signed among nations to protect these resources. The Moon Agreement of 1979 is directed towards the use of the Moon and other celestial bodies & limits the scope of exploitation of resources from these celestial bodies. Such celestial bodies must only be used for peaceful purposes, with no state allowed to establish military bases or place weapons on celestial bodies. Antarctic Treaty on the other hand came into force in 1961 & aims to demilitarize Antarctica, establish it as a zone free of nuclear tests, & promote international scientific cooperation in Antarctica.

How can nations strike a balance between exploration and preservation?

- **Monitoring & Regulations:** Close monitoring systems regulate the activities of the countries with a presence in Antarctica to maintain their ecological integrity. These regulations should include strict guidelines on waste disposal, habitat protection, and sustainable resource use.
- **Peaceful & scientific research:** Nations should Encourage and prioritize scientific research in both regions. Scientific exploration often leads to a better understanding of ecosystems and celestial bodies, which can inform responsible practices. Nations should collaborate on research projects to minimize duplication and share knowledge.
- **Global cooperation:** Nations should work together to encourage international cooperation and coordination & reduce conflict. Collaboration can also lead to shared responsibility for preservation efforts. Eg success of Chandrayaan is the “***success of all of humanity***”.
- **Off-limit zones:** UNGA should designate and maintain protected areas in Antarctica and on the Moon. These areas can serve as natural laboratories or cultural heritage sites that are off-limits to exploitation and development. These zones would help preserve unique ecosystems and historical sites.
- **Educational awareness:** Nation-states can promote education and awareness about the importance of preservation in both Antarctica and on the Moon. Public support for conservation efforts can influence government policies and corporate practices.
- **Regular Review and Adaptation:** The need is to periodically review the treaties and agreements in place to ensure they remain relevant and effective. As technology advances and our understanding of these environments grows, it may be necessary to adapt regulations and practices accordingly.

Conclusion:

India's mature stance on the moon mission reflects India's stance on crafting a new chapter in balancing exploration & preservation of celestial bodies and the South Pole. India can cooperate with other nations to frame a new set of guidelines to protect outer space & south pole from debris & non-militarisation of outer space a non-negotiable arrangement.

32. How can India ensure that its pursuit of strategic autonomy does not lead to isolation or conflict with major global powers?

Introduction: Define strategic autonomy.

Body: How can India ensure its strategic autonomy is maintained in current environment?

Conclusion: Way forward.

Strategic autonomy is the ability of a state to pursue its national interest and preferred foreign policy without being constrained by other states. It has to be formulated as per the security environment to ensure India's sovereignty and territorial integrity are maintained. India's NAM policy has been the root cause of its strategic autonomy.

Several strategies that can be used to ensure strategic autonomy:

- **Engagement with global powers:** India should actively pursue diplomacy & engage with major global powers like the US, EU, Russia, and China to prevent misunderstandings and conflict. India has to actively seek the cooperation of the US and the West to make a success of its economic reform & needed Western capital as well as technology for better access to markets. On the other hand, Delhi has to

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protect some of its core national interests from the threats of US intervention like the strategic nuclear program & Kashmir issue.

- **Cooperation on global concerns:** India can actively collaborate with major powers on global challenges such as climate change, pandemic response, poverty, hunger, and counterterrorism. Addressing these issues collectively demonstrates the responsible & global role played by India.
- **Atmanirbharta or self-reliance:** The policy of self-reliance is not about retreating from the world, but enhancing India's economic contribution to the global economy. When applied to the foreign policy framework, "self-reliance" becomes "strategic autonomy". India aims to achieve self-reliance by securing a critical supply chain, achieving competency in advanced technologies & enabling further diversification & indigenization of defence platforms.
- **Multilateral forums:** India should participate actively in multilateral forums like the United Nations, G20, BRICS, NAM, and ASEAN provide opportunities to collaborate with major global powers on common issues, fostering cooperation and reducing isolationist tendencies. For eg, India can engage with Global South and influence the global decision process through the reform of WTO, IMF, UNO & World Bank.
- **Engaging new partners:** India should diversify its engagement globally by establishing strategic partnerships with countries like France & Central Asian Republics (CAR). India and France share a common view regarding defence cooperation & strengthening of global institutions like UNO. Cooperation with CAR can help secure future energy needs & reduce dependence on the Gulf.

Conclusion:

India's foreign policy is to be guided by realism with elements of confidence & objectivity combined with logic, reason, and clarity if we are to deal successfully with the world as it is. Today, more than ever we need to strengthen our autonomy while working with all the major powers and cooperating harmoniously with our neighbours.

33. What challenges and opportunities does the mandatory 'star rating' program present for the Indian fan market? How can India leverage its domestic market to promote energy-efficient products and reduce import dependence?

Introduction: What is a star rating program?

Body: Highlight challenges and opportunities related to the program.

Conclusion: Way forward

The mandatory Standards and Labelling (S&L) program, popularly known as the 'star-rating' program was made mandatory for ceiling fans in May 2022. The program was implemented by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the Ministry of Power, & aims to promote energy-efficient products and reduce energy consumption for appliances & electronics.

Some of the challenges of this program:

- **High cost:** Energy-efficient fans often come at a higher upfront cost. Consumers might be hesitant to pay more, even if it means long-term savings on electricity bills.
- **Import dependence:** A new type of fan like a brushless DC (BLDC) motor, which meets the '5-star' performance benchmark has a high import dependency for components.
- **Initial Resistance:** Implementing mandatory star ratings might face initial resistance from manufacturers and consumers who are accustomed to less efficient but cheaper products. Convincing them to invest in more energy-efficient fans may be a challenge.

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- **Market Competition:** Indian manufacturers will face increased competition from international brands that have been producing energy-efficient products for a longer time. Local manufacturers may need to upgrade their technology and processes.

Some opportunities for the Indian fan market:

- **Energy Savings:** The primary objective of the star rating program is to reduce energy consumption. Energy-efficient fans can significantly lower electricity bills for consumers, making them an attractive option.
- **Environmental Benefits:** Promoting energy-efficient products aligns with India's goals of reducing carbon emissions and combating climate change. It contributes to a more sustainable future.
- **Technology Adoption:** The program can drive innovation and encourage manufacturers to develop more energy-efficient technologies, which can be a significant competitive advantage.

How can India leverage its domestic market to promote energy-efficient fans?

- **Tech agnostic:** This policy offers manufacturers a free hand to offer different technologies to consumers so that they can compete and market transformation is cost-effective.
- **Quality Control and Standards:** Strengthen quality control measures, effective pricing mechanisms & balance, and standards to ensure that domestic products meet the required energy efficiency criteria.
- **Local manufacturing:** Under the Atmanirbharta program the need is to boost domestic manufacturing capacity for high-efficiency fans. Collaborations between government agencies, academic institutions, and private companies can lead to research in developing cutting-edge technologies for energy-efficient fans.
- **Export promotion:** India can leverage its massive domestic market to achieve economies of scale for finished products and components, and expand into the export market under "Made in India".

Conclusion:

Energy efficient fans are necessary to help the population with soaring electricity bills & heat stress while at the same time central to India's clean energy transition and can play a part in its economic growth.

34. How can India balance its ambitious technological advancements with the pressing need to address socio-economic inequalities?

Introduction: Give a brief context of the question.

Body: What ways can be considered to balance tech advancement with socio-economic inequalities.

Conclusion: Way forward

The recent success of the Chandrayaan mission has once again reignited debate about balancing ambitious technological advancements with the pressing need to address socio-economic inequalities.

Several strategies that India can consider to strike a balance between these two important priorities:

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- **Education & skill development:** India should fund extensive national digital literacy initiatives to guarantee that people from all socioeconomic backgrounds have access to technology and the know-how to use it efficiently. Vocational training programs can equip individuals with skills relevant to the modern job market, especially in technology-related fields.
- **Infrastructure:** The need is to continue investing in physical infrastructure development, such as transportation and energy, to support economic growth and reduce regional disparities. Digital infrastructure, including data centres and broadband networks, will facilitate technological advancements and support the growth of the digital economy.
- **Social security:** The government can explore the feasibility of implementing Universal Basic Income or targeted cash transfer programs to provide a financial safety net for those facing economic hardship, enabling them to participate in the digital economy. The need is to strengthen public healthcare and education systems to ensure that essential services are accessible to all, irrespective of socio-economic status.
- **Access to Technology:** Expand access to affordable and reliable internet services, especially in rural and remote areas, to bridge the digital divide and enable access to online education, job opportunities, and government services. Encourage the development and adoption of low-cost computing and communication devices, making technology more accessible to marginalized communities.
- **Responsible use of technology:** Establish and enforce regulatory frameworks that ensure responsible and ethical use of technology, including data privacy protections and safeguards against discriminatory algorithms. Complement these efforts with a framework to protect digital rights, ensuring that all citizens have equitable access to the benefits of technological advancements.

Conclusion:

The attempt towards technological advancements should be supplemented with generous state support which can play a vital role in infrastructure development, health & education, and agrarian reforms. The goal should be to harness the transformative power of technology to uplift marginalized communities and create a more inclusive and equitable society in India.

35. Analyze the symbolic significance of the new Parliament building in the context of India's democratic ethos. How does it reflect the changing dynamics of political governance in the country?

Introduction: Give context to the question.

Body: Significance of new building & how does it reflect changing political dynamics in the nation.

Conclusion: Way forward

Recently, the Indian Prime Minister inaugurated India's new Parliament building, part of the revamped Central Vista project. The recently inaugurated new Parliament building is a remarkable achievement and a symbol of the nation's progress. The construction of the new building, designed by Architect Bimal Patel, began in 2019.

Significance of New Parliament building in India's democratic ethos:

- **Symbol of democracy:** The Parliament building serves as the nucleus of India's democratic system, providing a platform for elected representatives to convene, deliberate, and enact legislation. It signifies the perpetuation and strengthening of democratic values within the country.

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- **Inclusivity:** The planning and construction of the new Parliament building can underscore inclusivity by addressing the requirements of an expanding community of parliamentarians, support staff, and visitors. This underscores the notion that democracy must be accessible to every citizen, and it demonstrates the government's proactive efforts to facilitate this accessibility.
- **Reflecting Indian heritage:** The building showcases the vibrance and diversity of modern India by incorporating cultural and regional arts and crafts, serving as an embodiment of Indian heritage. Eg, Lok Sabha Hall is based on the peacock theme, India's national bird. The Rajya Sabha is based on the lotus theme, India's national flower.

How does it reflect changing political governance dynamics in the country?

- **Sufficient seating space:** The new building has been designed to accommodate a bicameral legislature for a full-fledged democracy. With the likely rise in Lok Sabha seats post delimitation after 2026 there was a need for new space to accommodate new MPs, which also helped in organising joint sessions comfortably. This underscores the flexibility and adaptability of the country's democratic institutions.
- **Technological advancements:** The new building offers secure and efficient office spaces equipped with the latest communication technology. It features large committee rooms with advanced audio-visual equipment and provides an enhanced library experience. It incorporates state-of-the-art facilities, advanced communication systems, and electronic surveillance for improved functionality and efficiency.
- **Enhanced legislative proceedings:** The new building provides well-engineered acoustics, a digitized voting system, and modern audio-visual systems to facilitate effective legislative proceedings. It ensures a more conducive environment for debates, discussions, and decision-making on matters of national importance.

Conclusion:

The new building, which stands alongside the existing Parliament House, **“reflects the aspirations of 135 crore Indians”**. The old and new Parliament buildings **“will work together as an ensemble”** to **“facilitate smooth and efficient functioning of operations”** by adapting to the needs of a growing and evolving nation while upholding its democratic ethos.

36. Compare and contrast mediation and commercial arbitration in India. How do recent legislative changes position them in the landscape of dispute resolution?

Introduction: Describe ADR briefly.

Body: Compare mediation & arbitration and how they affect dispute resolution.

Conclusion: Way forward

Recently President gave assent to The Mediation Bill, 2023 which encourages courts to refer the disputing parties to ADR procedures, including mediation. ADR or Alternate Dispute Resolution refers to a set of methods and processes used to resolve legal disputes outside of traditional courtroom litigation. ADR methods include negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and various other techniques that aim to facilitate the resolution of disputes more efficiently and cost-effectively than going to court.

Difference between mediation & commercial arbitration in India:

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- **Definition:** Mediation is a voluntary and consensual process where a neutral third party (the mediator) assists disputing parties in reaching a mutually acceptable resolution. The mediator does not impose a decision but facilitates communication and negotiation. Commercial arbitration is a process where parties submit their dispute to one or more arbitrators, who render a binding decision called an arbitration award. It is often used for complex commercial disputes.
- **Control:** Parties have significant control over the outcome in mediation, as they actively participate in crafting the resolution. The mediator's role is to guide and facilitate the discussions. While parties have some control over the choice of arbitrators and the arbitration process, the final decision rests with the arbitrator(s). The process is more formal compared to mediation.
- **Legislation:** The Mediation and Conciliation Act, of 1996, & Mediation Act of 2023 govern mediation in India. The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 & Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2019, governs arbitration in India.

How do recent legislative changes affect dispute resolution?

- **Necessary obligation:** The new legislative change proposes that regardless of any previous mediation agreement, the Act mandates both parties to engage in pre-litigation mediation as a preliminary step before resorting to the Indian court system. To facilitate this procedure, the Act will also necessitate courts and relevant institutions to establish a roster of qualified mediators.
- **Reduce the burden on courts:** The act's message is clear regarding commercial matters, that courts must no longer be the default venue for dispute resolution instead parties must go for ADR. Given the huge backlog of cases in courts the ADR mechanism can be an important tool in increasing access to justice by providing redress and settlement of disputes in a non-adversarial manner, free from the formalistic procedural practices of the law.
- **Institutionalized Services:** Both the Mediation Act & Arbitration and Conciliation Act emphasize institutional mediation. Mediation service providers would provide not only the services of a mediator but also all the facilities, secretarial assistance, and infrastructure for the efficient conduct of mediation.

Conclusion:

Both mediation and commercial arbitration have their roles in India's dispute resolution landscape. Recent legislative changes have sought to enhance the appeal and effectiveness of both methods, positioning them as viable alternatives to lengthy and costly court litigation, depending on the nature of the dispute and the preferences of the parties involved.

37. Critically analyze the role of criminal law in maintaining social order. Do you agree that the focus on individual offenders obscures the socially rooted nature of crimes?

Introduction: What is criminal law?

Body: Highlight the role of criminal law in maintaining social order and focus on the individual obscure socially rooted nature of crimes.

Conclusion: Way forward

The role of criminal law in maintaining social order is a complex and multifaceted issue. Criminal law serves several important functions in society, including deterring criminal behaviour, punishing offenders, protecting the rights of individuals, and maintaining a sense of justice. The three new Bills passed assume that the law can maintain "public order" by reducing crimes.

Role of criminal law in maintaining social order:

- **Deterrence:** Criminal law aims to deter individuals from engaging in criminal behaviour by imposing penalties such as fines, imprisonment, or probation. The idea is that the threat of punishment will discourage people from committing crimes.
- **Punishment and Rehabilitation:** Criminal law also serves the purpose of punishing offenders for their actions. This is seen as a form of retribution and justice for victims and society. Additionally, rehabilitation is often an important component of criminal justice, aiming to help offenders reintegrate into society as law-abiding citizens.
- **Protection of Individual Rights:** Criminal law is designed to ensure that individuals accused of crimes are provided with due process and their rights are protected. This includes the right to a fair trial, legal representation, and protection against self-incrimination. These safeguards are essential to maintain a just and orderly society by preventing miscarriages of justice.

Does focus on individual offenders obscure the socially rooted nature of crimes?

- **Social Roots of Crimes:** One of the critical points of contention is whether the focus on individual offenders obscures the socially rooted nature of crimes. Many crimes have underlying social, and environmental factors like socio-economic status, social upbringing, education, family and friendships, and systemic causes, such as poverty, inequality, and lack of access to education or mental health services. Critics argue that the criminal justice system often fails to address these root causes and instead focuses primarily on punitive measures against individual offenders.
- **Criminalization of Social Issues:** Some argue that criminal law is sometimes used as a blunt tool to address complex social problems, such as drug addiction or homelessness. Rather than addressing the underlying issues, society may rely on criminalization, which can exacerbate the problems and lead to a cycle of incarceration.
- **Institutional challenges:** There is a need to fundamentally reconfigure the role of institutions that play a role in delivering criminal justice. Institutions like police, investigation mechanisms, criminal courts, prosecution and defence services, prisons, and support services in criminal justice administration need an urgent overhaul.

Conclusion

The criminal justice system must strike a balance between punitive measures and addressing the root causes of criminal behaviour to better serve the goal of maintaining social order and justice.

38. Assess the impact of environmental issues like the Fukushima wastewater release on regional politics. How can India prepare for similar challenges?

Introduction: Give a brief idea about the Fukushima disaster.

Body: What is its impact on regional politics and lessons for India?

Conclusion: Way forward

The impact of environmental issues like the Fukushima wastewater release on regional politics can be significant, as it involves complex considerations related to environmental safety, public health, international relations, and the management of natural resources. In the case of Fukushima, Japan's decision to release treated radioactive water from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the sea generated concerns and reactions both domestically and internationally.

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Impact on Regional Politics:

- **Domestic Politics:** In Japan, the decision to release Fukushima wastewater has sparked domestic debates and protests. Local communities, fishermen, and environmental groups expressed concerns about the potential ecological and health impacts.
- **International Relations:** The release of contaminated water has the potential to strain Japan's relations with neighbouring countries, particularly South Korea and China, which have expressed strong reservations about the decision. The issue can lead to diplomatic tensions and discussions on the responsibility of nations in addressing transboundary environmental challenges.
- **Global Environmental Governance:** Fukushima's wastewater release highlights broader issues related to nuclear safety, environmental management, and international agreements. It may lead to discussions on strengthening global environmental governance and cooperation to address similar challenges in the future.

Similar challenges for India:

- **Transparency and Public Engagement:** India can learn from the Fukushima experience by prioritizing transparency and public engagement in decision-making processes related to nuclear energy and environmental issues. Providing accurate information to the public and involving stakeholders can help build trust and reduce concerns.
- **Safety and Monitoring:** Ensuring the safety of nuclear facilities is paramount. India should invest in robust safety measures, regular inspections, and continuous monitoring of nuclear plants. This includes developing and implementing effective waste management strategies.
- **International Cooperation:** India should engage in international cooperation and dialogue with neighbouring countries to address concerns related to nuclear safety and environmental issues. Establishing mechanisms for information sharing and cooperation can help prevent diplomatic tensions.
- **Long-Term Waste Management:** Developing and implementing long-term strategies for the safe disposal and management of nuclear waste is crucial. India should invest in research and infrastructure for the safe handling of nuclear materials and waste.

Conclusion

Environmental issues like the Fukushima wastewater release can have a profound impact on regional politics and international relations. India can prepare for similar challenges by prioritizing safety, transparency, international cooperation, and sustainable energy alternatives while addressing concerns related to nuclear energy and environmental protection.

39. Analyze how China is trying to increase its influence in Nepal. What are the challenges and implications for India?

Introduction: Give a brief context of the question.

Body: Highlight factors showing China's increasing influence in Nepal & challenges for India.

Conclusion: Way forward.

India and Nepal share deep social, cultural, strategic, political, and economic ties that have been forged over many centuries. India is Nepal's largest trade partner & source of the largest FDI. The bilateral trade between both nations is over US \$11 billion. Over the past few years, China's efforts to increase its influence in Nepal have been a subject of concern and interest, both for Nepal and its neighbour, India.

How is China trying to increase its influence in Nepal?

- **Infrastructure:** China has been actively involved in Nepal's infrastructure development, including the construction of all-weather roads, bridges, and hydropower projects. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has played a significant role in fostering economic ties between the two nations. Both countries have agreed to intensify the implementation of projects like the Trans-Himalayan Multidimensional Connectivity Network.
- **Security interests:** Nepal's northern border with China lies entirely with Tibet and China sees security cooperation with Nepal as critical in controlling Tibetan matters. Hence, China is following security diplomacy vis-à-vis Nepal.
- **Economic relations:** China is the second largest trading partner of Nepal. China has been investing in various sectors of Nepal's economy, such as manufacturing, tourism, and telecommunications. This can be viewed from the fact that Chinese exports to Nepal were valued at \$1.74 Billion last year.

What are the challenges & implications for India?

- **Strategic interest:** China may use its "security diplomacy" with Nepal to interfere in the internal affairs of Nepal which may result in Nepal slipping into China's sphere of influence, which will not be in India's strategic interest.
- **Terrorism:** Close cooperation of China with Nepal may pose security risks to India's northeast as there will be resurgence of Terrorist organizations and insurgent groups operating in India's northeast aided by Chinese weapons, counterfeit Indian currency & Mao's ideology.
- **Environmental concern:** Some infrastructure projects backed by China have faced criticism for their environmental impact and concerns about Nepal's sovereignty and debt sustainability which will impact the fragile Himalayan ecosystem.
- **Distrust towards India:** Post the 2015 standoff incident there has been a change of perception in Nepal towards India because of India's big brother attitude, India's indifferent attitude towards revisiting the 1950 India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship & approach to deal with boundary issues & water treaties. Some Nepalese ethnic groups dislike India because they think that India meddles too much in Nepal's politics and interferes with their political sovereignty.

Conclusion:

India should cooperate with Nepal on multiple dimensions, abide by its Neighbourhood First Policy & focus on completing infrastructure projects on time while staying out of Nepal's domestic affairs so that a friendly and favourable Nepal can act as a vital buffer between India and an increasingly aggressive China.

40. Discuss the role of State governments in the implementation of NEP in higher education. Also, evaluate the effectiveness of the New Education Policy, especially in Jammu and Kashmir. What challenges does it face?

Introduction: Give brief context of NEP

Body: Highlight role of states in implementation of NEP & its progress in J&K.

Conclusion: Way forward.

NEP(National Education Policy) was approved by the cabinet in 2020 & is based on recommendations of the Kasturirangan and T.S.R Subramanian committees. NEP, 2020 emphasizes reforms in education at all levels from pre-primary to higher education. It aims to bring transformation in the education system of India in line with contemporary needs.

Role of State governments in the implementation of NEP in higher education:

- **States have a bigger pool of students:** A recent Parliament report on NEP highlighted that of the 1,043 universities functioning in the country, 70% are under the State Act and that 94% of students are in State or private institutions with just 6% of students in Central higher educational institutions, stressing the importance of States in providing higher education.
- **Resource Allocation:** State governments play a crucial role in allocating resources for higher education institutions within their respective states. This includes funding for infrastructure, faculty development, and research initiatives.
- **Curriculum & Pedagogy:** State Governments have a vital role in making admission processes and curricula more inclusive, increasing the employability potential of higher education programs, and developing more degree courses taught in regional languages and bilingually.
- **Student welfare:** State Governments can frame policies regarding financial assistance for the education of Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs), setting clear targets for higher Gross Enrolment Ratio for SEDGs, enhancing gender balance in admissions to HEIs, and strict enforcement of all no-discrimination and anti-harassment rules.

Effectiveness of the New Education Policy, especially in Jammu and Kashmir:

- **Diversification of Education:** The NEP emphasizes a multidisciplinary approach, allowing students to choose from a wide range of subjects. Under this policy, no one will be forced to learn a particular language & students can choose the language according to their interests which can help students access diverse educational opportunities aligned with their interests.
- **National pattern of curriculum:** With the adoption of NEP there will be a shift in academic sessions from November to March for school education & to July for the Higher Education Department (HED) session. Examinations in the educational institutions will also be held simultaneously and the results will also be declared simultaneously so that the students can appear in the competitive examinations without any difficulty.

Challenges in the implementation of NEP in J&K

- **Socio-Political Issues:** The region's unique socio-political situation can impact the implementation of educational reforms. Ensuring a conducive environment for education is crucial.
- **Faculty Development:** Ensuring that faculty members are trained and equipped to implement the NEP's recommendations can be a challenge, especially in valley areas.

Conclusion:

Jammu and Kashmir became the first state to implement NEP 2020 & is witnessing a paradigm shift in the methods of teaching, leading to lifelong learning opportunities for students. State governments, in collaboration with central agencies, have to play a vital role in the successful implementation of the policy.

41. Elaborate on how habitat loss due to climate change increases the risk of diseases transferring from animals to humans. Provide examples.

Introduction: Give a brief context of the question.

Body: How does habitat loss & climate change increase the risk of diseases transferring from animals to humans?

Conclusion: Way forward

Recently, IPCC in its latest report cautioned against the rise of infectious diseases due to the worsening effect of climate change. It gave the example of the periodicity of mosquito-borne disease outbreaks which no longer follows the traditional pattern of outbreak. This cycle is disrupted due to changes in temperature, precipitation, and humidity.

How does habitat loss & climate change increase the risk of diseases?

- **Increase human-wildlife contact:** Habitat loss forces disease-carrying animals to encroach upon human territory, increasing the risk of human-animal interaction and the transfer of pathogens from wildlife to humans. Eg Nipah outbreak in Kerala, HIV is believed to have originated from the transmission of the simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV) from chimpanzees to humans.
- **Disturbed Migration pattern:** Rising temperatures can affect the migration patterns of animals & force them to come into contact with new animal populations and potentially transmit diseases. E.g., spread of avian influenza (bird flu).
- **Vector-borne diseases:** Altered climatic conditions can affect the distribution and behaviour of disease vectors (e.g., mosquitoes and ticks) increasing the transmission risk of malaria in regions previously unaffected, and exposing more human populations to the disease.
- **Disrupt Agriculture:** Climate-induced changes in precipitation and temperature can disrupt agriculture and force people to encroach upon wildlife habitats for sustenance, increasing human-wildlife contact. Eg, In parts of Africa, reduced crop yields due to climate change have led to an increased reliance on bushmeat hunting, increasing the risk of zoonotic diseases like Ebola being transmitted from wildlife to humans.
- **Weakened Healthcare Systems:** Extreme weather events can damage infrastructure, disrupt healthcare systems, and hinder responses to disease outbreaks. Example: Hurricane Katrina in 2005 compromised healthcare services in New Orleans, making it more difficult to respond to health emergencies, including infectious disease outbreaks.

Conclusion

To combat climate change-induced diseases effectively, India should adopt a "One Health" approach that integrates human, animal, plant, and environmental health. This strategy requires enhanced collaboration between the central and state governments and their specialized agencies. Key sectors, including animal husbandry, forestry, municipal corporations, and public health departments, must work together to establish strong surveillance systems to prevent outbreaks.

42. Explain the concept of angel tax. How does it impact investments in start-ups?

Introduction: Describe Angel tax

Body: How does it impact investments in start ups

Conclusion: Way forward

Angel Tax is a 30% tax that is levied on the funding received by startups from an Angel investor. However, this tax is levied when startups receive angel funding at a valuation higher than its 'fair market value'. It is counted as income to the company and is taxed. Section 56(2) VII B of the Income Tax Act colloquially known as the angel tax was first introduced in 2012. The aim was to discourage the laundering of unaccounted money via unlisted firms disguised as capital investments.

Here's how angel tax can impact investments in startups:

- **Reduce cash flow:** Angel Tax creates cash flow constraints as startups depend on funds to fuel their growth and operations. The tax reduces the capital raised, hindering their expansion plans.
- **Increased Compliance Burden:** Determining the fair market value of a startup, especially in its early stage, is challenging due to limited financial data, leading to disputes with tax authorities, resulting in prolonged assessments and unnecessary burdens. This often involves providing extensive documentation and evidence to tax authorities, which can be time-consuming and costly.
- **Delayed Funding:** Angel tax generates uncertainty and apprehension among angel investors and HNIs, discouraging them from investing in startups, and thus affecting the availability of funds for budding entrepreneurs. These delays can affect a startup's ability to secure timely capital and execute its business plans.
- **Reduced Attractiveness:** Indian startups face a competitive disadvantage compared to their global counterparts as foreign startups do not have a similar tax burden, affecting India's startup ecosystem. Investors may be hesitant to invest in startups if they believe that the valuation could trigger angel tax, leading to taxation on their investments.
- **Tax Liability for Startups:** The high tax liabilities divert the focus of startup founders from innovation and business growth to tax compliance, paperwork, and legal complexities, potentially stifling innovation and hindering the overall development of the startup ecosystem.

Conclusion:

Angel tax has remained a source of controversy within the Indian startup landscape, affecting not only the growth prospects of startups but also investor sentiment and overall confidence in the ecosystem. Nevertheless, India has an opportunity to foster its entrepreneurial community and position itself as a global centre for innovation and startup excellence by finding a harmonious equilibrium between taxation and support.

43. “Many scientists also believe that when rocks such as Bennu crashed into the earth, they delivered the compounds required for the formation of life.” How might the study of asteroids like Bennu reshape our understanding of the origins of life on Earth?

Introduction: What is Bennu asteroid?

Body: How this asteroid helps in understanding origin of life on Earth?

Conclusion: Way forward

Bennu is a near-Earth asteroid that has gained significant attention due to its potential impact hazard and its scientific importance. Bennu is believed to be a fragment of a larger asteroid that broke apart in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter. It then migrated toward Earth's vicinity, becoming a near-Earth asteroid. Bennu gained prominence when NASA launched the OSIRIS-REx mission in 2016 to study this asteroid up close.

How can this asteroid reshape our understanding of the origins of life on Earth?

- **Composition made of organic compounds:** Asteroids like Bennu, may have brought organic chemicals to Earth. The fundamental components of life as we know it are these organic substances, such as amino acids and nucleotides. It would be strongly supported by evidence if it can be proven that these substances were truly transported by asteroids, increasing the likelihood that life might have originated in space.
- **Solar system timeline:** Bennu is thought to be about 4.5 billion years old and has an interior that is between 20 and 40 percent space. Bennu is thought to have formed within the first 10 million years of the solar system's creation. This can help scientists refine our understanding of when key ingredients for life arrived on our planet, potentially narrowing down the timeline for the emergence of life.
- **Unique features:** Asteroid is a B-type asteroid, which indicates that it has a high carbon and mineral content. When compared to a planet like Venus, which reflects around 65% of the light, and Earth 30%, the asteroid only reflects about four percent of the light that strikes it due to its high carbon content.
- **Trace of Water:** NASA's OSIRIS-REx probe found hydrogen and oxygen molecules embedded on Bennu's rocky surface offering some clues to the origins of life on the earth

Conclusion:

Bennu's study not only informs us about the early solar system's composition but also provides essential data for assessing and mitigating potential asteroid impact threats to our planet. The OSIRIS-REx mission marks a significant step in our exploration of these celestial objects and their role in the evolution of our solar system.

44. Analyze the reasons behind the recent spike in tiger deaths in the Nilgiris district. How do human-animal conflicts and habitat degradation contribute to this issue?

Introduction: Give context of the question.

Body: What are reasons behind tiger deaths and suggestion to deal with issue.

Conclusion: Way forward

The recent death of tigers in Nilgiris has raised concerns among the state forest department and conservationists about the welfare of these animals.

Reasons behind the recent spike in tiger deaths in the Nilgiris district:

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- **High density of tigers:** The high density of tigers in the Mudumalai-Bandipur-Nagarhole complex of the Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve is pushing populations into the surrounding habitats in the Mukurthi National Park, Nilgiris and Gudalur forest divisions. This leads to increased competition between animals and more fighting, resulting in more deaths.
- **Poaching:** Tigers are frequently targeted by poachers for their body parts because they are in high demand on the black market for wildlife. Some of the recent deaths may be traced to unlawful hunting, and poaching still poses a serious threat to tiger populations.
- **Man-animal conflict:** The encroachment of human activities into tiger habitats often results in conflicts. These conflicts emerge when tigers enter human settlements in search of prey or when they are viewed as threats to livestock and human well-being. In such situations, villagers may react by resorting to retaliatory killings or capturing and relocating tigers, thereby contributing to an increase in tiger mortality.
- **Lack of prey base:** Habitat degradation can lead to a decline in prey species, such as deer and wild boar, which are essential for tigers' survival. Tigers may turn to domestic livestock as alternative prey, escalating conflicts with humans.

What conservation strategies are required to address the issue?

- **Anti-Poaching Efforts:** Strengthening anti-poaching measures and law enforcement is essential to combat illegal wildlife trade. Eg of such camps in forest ranges surrounding the Mukurthi National Park
- **Monitoring of areas:** There is a need to begin annual monitoring of tiger populations in the Nilgiris Forest Division, with the population size, range of each animal and other parameters to be recorded for better management.
- **Habitat Protection:** Protecting and restoring tiger habitats is crucial for reducing human-wildlife conflicts and providing tigers with sufficient prey.
- **Community Engagement:** Involving local communities in conservation efforts, providing education on coexistence, and offering compensation for livestock losses can help reduce conflicts.

Conclusion:

Addressing the recent spike in tiger deaths in the Nilgiris district requires a multi-pronged approach that considers both the ecological and social aspects of tiger conservation while addressing the root causes of habitat degradation and conflicts between humans and tigers.

45. Analyze the recurring nature of inter-state water disputes in India, taking the Cauvery waters dispute as a case study. What are the underlying causes and challenges in resolving such disputes?

Introduction: Give context to the question.

Body: What are the underlying causes and challenges in resolving such disputes?

Conclusion: Way forward

The recurring nature of inter-state water disputes in India, exemplified by the Cauvery waters dispute, can be attributed to a combination of historical, geographical, political, and legal factors.

What are the underlying causes of such disputes?

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- **Geographical factors:** India's diverse geography, with multiple states sharing river basins, often leads to conflicts over water allocation. The Cauvery River, for instance, flows through Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Puducherry, creating competition for its waters. Other factors like erratic & variable rainfall, rapidly depleting groundwater, land use modification & water-intensive cropping patterns are intensifying the disputes.
- **Historical Agreements:** Historical agreements and agreements signed during the pre-independence era have laid the foundation for water-sharing arrangements. These agreements, often outdated, can become contentious when interpreted differently by the states. Eg, The Sutlej-Yamuna Link dispute started in 1966, when the Punjab Reorganisation Act divided erstwhile Punjab into the states of Punjab and Haryana.
- **Political Factors:** Political interests and regional rivalries can influence state governments' stance on water-sharing disputes. The pursuit of electoral gains and local political considerations can impede negotiations. The sharing of Krishna River water between Karnataka and Maharashtra has witnessed political considerations and protests from various stakeholders.
- **Legal factors:** A big limiting factor is the lack of effective authority for enforcing the orders of tribunals. The Tribunal can only make an award and cannot make it binding.

What are the challenges in resolving such disputes?

- **Lack of Adjudicative Bodies:** India has set up various tribunals, like the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, to address such disputes. However, these bodies often face delays in adjudication due to legal complexities and resource constraints.
- **Federal Structure:** India's federal structure gives significant autonomy to states, making it challenging for the central government to intervene effectively in state-level water disputes. This approach of imprecise distribution of power between the Union and the States has created a Federal-Jurisdictional ambiguity.
- **Public sentiments:** Public sentiment in riparian states can be inflamed during water disputes, making it politically risky for governments to compromise.
- **Jurisdictional overlap:** The institutional ambiguity regarding the jurisdiction of Supreme courts and tribunals has further complicated the issue where appeals are filed against the order of the tribunal leading to a lack of effective implementation.

Conclusion

Resolving inter-state water disputes in India requires a multifaceted approach that combines legal, political, technical, and environmental considerations to ensure sustainable and equitable water management.

46. Discuss the implications of the findings of the Lancet Commission report on gender inequity in cancer care. How do societal perceptions of women's roles contribute to the disparities observed in cancer care for women?

Introduction: Give brief account of the report

Body: What are implications of Lancet report?

Conclusion: Way forward

A global, multidisciplinary commission titled "Women, Power and Cancer" was **established by The Lancet** to look into the glaring gender gap in cancer care across the globe. The commission was composed of experts in "gender studies, human rights, law,

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economics, social sciences, cancer epidemiology, prevention, and treatment, as well as patient advocates."

Implications of the Lancet Commission Report:

- **Different outcomes:** The report likely reveals that women face disparities in cancer outcomes compared to men. This can include differences in cancer diagnosis, treatment access, survival rates, and overall quality of life during and after cancer treatment. Eg, In India, 63% of cancer-related deaths among women were preventable if risk factors were reduced by ramping up screening and diagnosis; simultaneously, timely and appropriate treatment could've saved the lives of 37%.
- **Access to Screening and Early Detection:** The report shows that women, especially in lower-income or conservative societies, have limited access to cancer screening programs. This can result in late-stage diagnoses and reduced chances of successful treatment. These structural asymmetries can be seen in the under-representation of women in the oncology workforce as leaders and decision-makers.
- **Inequity in STEM:** The perception of women primarily as child-bearers and caregivers not only hinders research into cancers affecting areas beyond their breasts and cervix but also discourages women's active participation in STEM fields. This gender bias in STEM leads to a shortage of women in cancer research, medical practice, and policymaking, consequently resulting in a lack of cancer prevention and care tailored to women's specific needs.

Societal Perceptions of Women's Roles and Their Contribution to Disparities:

- **Economic Disparities:** Women's economic disparities, including wage gaps and limited employment opportunities, can result in financial barriers to accessing cancer care. Women are also more likely to experience "financial catastrophe" due to cancer.
- **Lack of Decision-Making Power:** In many societies, women have limited decision-making power regarding their healthcare. Their access to cancer care, including treatment decisions, may be influenced by family members or community expectations.
- **Limited Advocacy and Representation:** Women's underrepresentation in healthcare leadership and policy-making roles can result in a lack of focus on gender-specific health issues, including cancer. The asymmetries of power also play out in terms of decision-making, knowledge, and economics in 185 countries.

Conclusion:

More studies on risks that affect women and the gathering and updating of socio-demographic data in cancer health are two ways to address the measures to reduce inequity in cancer care. All stakeholders, from institutions and policymakers at the top to those who raise awareness and are involved in the treatment and care of the affected women, need to be more sensitive to and responsive to the challenges that arise at the intersections of power, status, and identity.

47. Discuss the role of the Centre in ensuring reconciliation between conflicting communities in Manipur. What measures can be taken to prevent further deterioration of the situation?

Introduction: Give a brief context to the question.

Body: What is role of Centre in ensuring reconciliation & measures taken to resolve the situation?

Conclusion: Way forward

Manipur, a northeastern state in India, has a history of ethnic and communal tensions, which have often resulted in violence and instability. The role of the Centre in ensuring reconciliation between conflicting communities in Manipur hence becomes pivotal, given the complex and sensitive nature of the issues in the region.

Highlight role of Centre in ensuring reconciliation in Manipur:

- **Political dialogue:** The Centre should actively engage in political dialogues with various communities, insurgent groups, and stakeholders in Manipur. These dialogues should be inclusive and aim to address the grievances and aspirations of different ethnic and social groups.
- **Economic Development:** Socio-economic disparities often fuel communal conflicts. The Centre should invest in infrastructure development, job creation, and poverty alleviation programs in Manipur. This can help in reducing economic disparities and fostering a sense of inclusivity.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms should be put in place to resolve disputes and conflicts peacefully. Third-party mediators like civil society organisations or human rights groups, can help in facilitating these discussions. The Centre can play a crucial role in encouraging and supporting these processes.

Measures that can be taken to prevent further deterioration of situation:

- **Security Measures:** While long-term reconciliation efforts are crucial, immediate security measures are also necessary to prevent violence. The Centre should work with state and local law enforcement agencies to maintain law and order.
- **Dialogue with communities:** Encouraging civil society organizations, NGOs, and community leaders to play an active role in reconciliation efforts can be highly effective. These groups often have a deep understanding of local dynamics and can bridge gaps between conflicting communities. The major task before the government is to build confidence between the Meitei and Kuki communities.
- **Reform in AFSPA:** To enhance the human rights situation in the region, it is imperative to revoke the contentious Armed Forces Special Powers Act of 1958 (AFSPA). The government must guarantee a just and transparent legal framework to curb the potential abuse of authority by security forces.
- **Various constitutional reforms:** Government could start with need to evaluate the criteria for ST status to Meiteis in line by considering recommendations given by several Committees, like Lokur Commission, Bhuria Commission & XaXa committee.

Conclusion:

Reconciliation in Manipur requires a multi-pronged approach that combines political dialogue, economic development, security measures, and cultural sensitivity. The Centre must play a central role in facilitating these efforts, working closely with the state government and local stakeholders. Finally, government should foster the participation of the people of the region in the decision-making process to instill a sense of ownership and belonging.

48. Analyze India's stance on the investor-state-dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism. How can an appellate review mechanism benefit India in international investment law?

Investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) is a system through which investors can sue countries for discriminatory practices concerning foreign direct investment. The protection provided by ISDS acts as a lever to boost foreign investment. ISDS is an instrument of public international law and is included in a number of bilateral investment treaties (BITs). India has supported idea of an appellate review in the ISDS because Article 29 of the Indian model BIT mentions it.

What is India's stance on ISDS mechanism?

- **Historical Perspective:** India has had a history of mixed experiences with ISDS cases. The country has faced several investment arbitration cases, some of which have resulted in unfavourable outcomes, leading to concerns about sovereignty and regulatory autonomy.
- **Balancing Investor Rights and Public Interest:** India has expressed a desire to strike a balance between protecting foreign investors' rights and safeguarding its ability to regulate in the public interest. The government is cautious about ISDS provisions that could potentially undermine its policy space in areas like public health, environmental protection, and social welfare.
- **Policy Reforms:** India has undertaken policy reforms to attract foreign investment and create a more conducive investment climate. While doing so, it has also sought to negotiate investment treaties that incorporate safeguards to mitigate the risks associated with ISDS, such as allowing claims only for expropriation without adequate compensation

How can review mechanism benefit India?

- **Legal Certainty:** An appellate review mechanism can enhance legal certainty for India. It provides a structured process for reviewing arbitral decisions, reducing the unpredictability associated with ISDS outcomes.
- **Deterrent Against Frivolous Claims:** Knowing that there is an appellate review process can serve as a deterrent against frivolous or unjustified claims by investors, reducing the burden on India's legal system and resources.
- **Enhanced Credibility:** Embracing an appellate review mechanism demonstrates India's commitment to a fair and transparent international investment regime. This can enhance its credibility as an investment destination and promote investor confidence.

Conclusion:

India's quest to establish a rule-based global order should support an appellate review which will usher in greater confidence for states and investors in international investment law. This reform could also help India push for the restoration of the WTO appellate body towards achieving the goal of a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system at the WTO.