



**Mains Marathon**  
**Compilation**

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**Analyze the role of India as a “bridging power” in the context of global diplomacy, as highlighted in the ninth edition of the Raisina Dialogue. Discuss how India’s foreign policy aligns with its ambition to be a “Vishwamitra” or friend of the world.**

**Introduction:** Give a brief context to the question

**Body:** Highlight India’s role as a bridging power and align of “Vishwamitra” concept with India's foreign policy

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Recently, at the ninth edition of the annual Raisina Dialogue, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar called India a “bridging power”, a country seeking common ground through a “multi-vector” policy, and playing the role of a “Vishwamitra” or friend of the world.

### India’s Role in Bridging Power

- **Bringing the Global North and South into Balance:** India is well-positioned to play a mediating role due to its historical connections to the developing world through the Non-Aligned Movement and its expanding economic alliances with wealthy nations. India seeks to establish common ground for collaboration with the Global North while advocating for the interests of developing nations.
- **Indo-Pacific Focus:** The Raisina Dialogue emphasizes the growing significance of the Indo-Pacific region, where India seeks to counterbalance China's growing influence. India champions partnerships like the Quad (India, USA, Japan, Australia) and promotes a rules-based order for the region.
- **Leadership in Multilateral Forums:** India's active participation in forums such as the G20, BRICS, and the UN positions it to promote dialogue and consensus-building. India uses these platforms to voice the concerns of the Global South and to push for reforms that reflect a more equitable world order.

### Concept of “Vishwamitra” as per India’s Foreign Policy

- **Development Partnership:** India helps other developing countries, especially those in Africa and South Asia, by providing support and capacity-building initiatives based on its own development experience. This increases goodwill and makes India more powerful internationally.
- **Soft Power Projection:** India's diverse cultural legacy, which includes Bollywood, Ayurveda, and yoga, serves as an effective instrument for soft power diplomacy. Fostering these aspects helps to create goodwill toward India and strengthens ties with other countries.
- **Value-Based Diplomacy:** India places a strong emphasis on the principles of democracy, pluralism, and adherence to a system of norms. These ideas appeal to a wide range of countries and enable India to establish a network of partners that share its values.

### Conclusion

With its growing economic might, strategic position, and autonomous foreign policy approach, India has the potential to be a major bridge power. In a world where superpower tensions are rising and the international order is becoming more dispersed, this function becomes even more important. India's actions are guided by the "Vishwamitra" concept, which emphasizes cooperation, balancing relationships, and standing up for the issues and goals of the developing world.

**Discuss the implications of the recent modifications to the Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022, on the rights to parenthood in India. How do these changes reflect the government’s approach towards addressing medical complications and societal norms?**

**Introduction:** Give a brief context to the question

**Body:** Highlight implications of recent rules on parenthood and government approach to address medical complications and societal norms

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The recent modifications to the Surrogacy (Regulation) Rules, 2022, in India, have significant implications for the rights to parenthood in the country, reflecting both shifts in addressing medical complications and

societal norms. The latest amendments have allowed using donor gametes, if either the husband or wife in the intending couple has a medical condition that is certified by a medical board.

### Implications of recent modifications to Surrogacy Rules 2022

- **Increased Accessibility:** The change addresses a major barrier to parenthood for couples with medical complications preventing them from using their gametes. This expands possibilities for those who want to have children but face biological limitations.
- **Challenges for Single Parents:** These revisions still do not directly address the right to parenthood for single individuals or LGBTQ+ couples.
- **Ban on Commercial Surrogacy:** One of the most significant changes is the prohibition of commercial surrogacy. Under the new rules, only altruistic surrogacy is permitted, where the surrogate mother volunteers to carry a child for the intended parents without monetary compensation beyond medical expenses and insurance coverage.

### Reflections on the Government's Approach

- **Reducing Medical Barriers:** The new rule demonstrates the government's understanding of the difficulties caused by medical infertility and its readiness to put remedies into place. It seeks to give couples who are having trouble conceiving naturally other options.
- **Cautious Expansion:** The emphasis on married couples is indicative of a methodical, albeit perhaps cautious, approach to increasing surrogacy access. This can be the result of a desire for strict regulation of the practice as well as sociocultural factors.
- **Conventional Family Models:** Restricting the present reforms to married couples may be seen as a way to highlight Indian society's traditional family arrangements. This could be interpreted as a reluctance to accept other family structures to the fullest.

### Conclusion

The Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2022, presents a multifaceted and contentious topic that requires a deep understanding for a comprehensive viewpoint. As it evolves and matures, it holds the potential to reshape the landscape of surrogacy in India.

### Examine the potential impact of the government's new grain storage plan on India's agricultural sector and food security. Assess the role of cooperatives in implementing this plan and its implications on farmers.

**Introduction:** Give a brief context of the scheme  
**Body:** Highlight impact of scheme on agriculture and food security.  
**Conclusion:** Way forward

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the world's largest grain storage initiative within the cooperative sector, benefiting farmers with a storage capacity of 700 lakh tonnes over the next five years, with an investment totaling ₹1.25 lakh crore. The plan focuses on decentralizing storage infrastructure by empowering Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) to construct modern godowns (warehouses) and diversify their operations.

### Potential Impacts on Agriculture and Food Security

- **Decreased Post-Harvest Losses:** India experiences significant food grain post-harvest losses. By constructing state-of-the-art storage facilities near farms, reducing waste, and guaranteeing that food grains stay in good condition, the new grain storage strategy seeks to address this.
- **Price Stabilization and Farmer Income:** Farmers can stockpile their produce and sell it when market prices are favourable thanks to increased storage capacity. This may result in fewer distressed sales and increased farmer incomes.
- **Enhanced Food Security:** By keeping buffer stocks full, a strong storage network helps to ensure that food is available during hard times or emergencies. This improves the nation's overall food security.

### Role of Cooperatives in implementing the Scheme

- **Empowerment of Farmers:** Cooperatives give farmers a way to jointly plan, finance, and run storage facilities. Farmers now have more control over their produce and are able to negotiate better prices.
- **Effective Implementation:** In rural areas, cooperatives already have a robust network. Their grassroots presence guarantees that farmers immediately profit from the strategy and expedites the building of infrastructure.
- **Expanded Rural Development:** Through diversifying their operations, PACS can develop into multipurpose centres that provide services such as processing units, fair price shops, and equipment on-demand rentals. This gives farmers a variety of revenue options and strengthens the rural economy.

### Impact on Farmers

- **Enhanced Income:** Farmers can earn more money if they have access to better storage facilities, minimize waste, and have the capacity to sell their produce when the timing is right.
- **Market Access:** By having more control over how their produce is marketed, farmers are better able to establish direct relationships with larger purchasers.
- **Farmer skill development:** As PACS grows, there will be more chances for farmers to gain expertise in agribusiness, processing, and warehouse management.

### Conclusion

The success of the scheme depends on effective implementation, adequate funding, and support for cooperatives to become strong, multi-functional organizations benefitting farmers.

### Analyze the multifaceted challenges faced by India in land management against the backdrop of its burgeoning population and ecological stress. Propose a comprehensive policy framework for sustainable land management in India.

**Introduction:** Give a brief context to the question

**Body:** Highlight challenges in land management and policy framework to address these challenges

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The comprehensive significance of land is often underestimated, despite its pivotal role in various aspects of human existence. It offers a wide array of ecological, economic, social, and cultural benefits. However, this multi-faceted nature of land is frequently disregarded in land management approaches, leading to heightened pressure, degradation, and environmental depletion.

### Multifaceted Challenges

- **Population Pressure:** India with only 2.4% of world's geographical area and more than 17% of the world population experiences several land management challenges. There is a tremendous demand on land resources for housing, infrastructure, agriculture, and industry due to the rapid population growth. This causes competition in a number of industries and a shortage of land.
- **Land Degradation:** Arable land in India is around 55% of total geographical area and forest cover accounts for another 22%. The rest is desert, mountains, etc. Around 30% of total geographical area is degraded land. The productivity of land is threatened by salinization, desertification, soil erosion, and ecological balance.
- **Administrative complexity:** In India, existing land management practices are fragmented, with each department adopting its individual strategies. Land management responsibilities primarily rest with State governments. Moreover, most land is privately owned, and according to the constitution, land-use decisions are the prerogative of the owner.

### Comprehensive Policy Framework for Sustainable Land Management in India



- **Multi-stakeholder platform:** Creating a district-level multi-stakeholder platform is essential to unite farmers, policymakers, businesses, and others for collaborative land management planning. District planning committees should be mobilized to develop comprehensive land management plans covering agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.
- **Climate smart approach:** A climate-smart landscape approach will contribute to climate objectives, increased agricultural production, improved local livelihoods and the conservation of biodiversity.
- **Integrated landscape management:** Integrated landscape management approach will be useful in this context as it will provide deep insights to assess the potential of land and the scope of allocation and reallocation of land for appropriate uses. There is considerable experience on the ground to follow this approach, but systematic institutional support is hardly available.

### Conclusion

The IPCC's 2019 report on 'Climate Change and Land' advises country-level evaluations of land management practices, focusing on options that reduce land competition, offer co-benefits, and minimize negative impacts on ecosystems. Indian lawmakers can address these challenges by fostering discussions and formulating inclusive policies for sustainable land management.

### Discuss the significance of sustainable funding in science and technology for India's development goals. How does the current R&D expenditure of India compare with that of developed countries, and what steps can be taken to improve it?

**Introduction:** Give a brief context to the question

**Body:** Significance of S&T funding, and steps to improve the funding

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The 2024 National Science Day theme in India is "Science for Sustainable Development," reflecting the nation's commitment to leveraging science and technology for sustainable progress. India aims to achieve its development goals by 2047 through sustainable means, evident in its adherence to the Paris Agreement and active participation in global forums promoting sustainability.

### Significance of Sustainable S&T Funding for India

- **Innovation & Growth:** Sustainable funding for science and technology (S&T) is crucial for India's knowledge-based economy, driving breakthroughs in healthcare, renewable energy, agriculture, and IT.
- **National challenges:** Targeted S&T investments address national challenges such as climate change adaptation, sustainable agriculture, and healthcare accessibility, improving millions of lives.
- **Competitiveness:** Consistent funding for S&T strengthens India's global competitiveness, fostering a skilled workforce, boosting domestic industries, and solidifying its position as a technological hub.
- **Social issues:** S&T advancements tackle societal issues like poverty, illiteracy, and disease, promoting inclusive development through research in public health, education technology, and social innovation.

### India's R&D expenditure compared to developed nations

- **Reduced expenditure:** India's funding for science is among the lowest in the world as research and development (R&D) expenditure has dropped to the current 0.64% of GDP from 0.8% in 2008-2009 and 0.7% in 2017-2018. Most developed countries spend between 2% and 4% of their respective GDPs on R&D. The U.S. and the U.K. have consistently spent more than 2% of their GDPs on R&D for the past decade.

### Steps to improve funding

- **More private funding:** In 2020-2021, the private sector industry contributed 36.4% of the GERD whereas the Union government's share was 43.7%. Policies that encourage and reward private sector investment in R&D are crucial. This includes tax breaks, research grants, and fostering industry-academia collaborations.
- **Prioritization of R&D spending:** While advocating for fundamental research, India must strategically allocate funding to areas offering significant social and economic benefits. This may encompass clean energy, biotechnology, and artificial intelligence, all in alignment with India's developmental objectives.
- **Capacity building:** India also needs the bureaucratic capacity to evaluate science projects and, after allocations, monitor utilization. Building such capacity is a prerequisite for India to become a science power by 2047.

### Conclusion

Initiatives like the Anusandhan National Research Foundation & Increasing Gross Expenditure on R&D (GERD) to 2% of GDP as listed in the 2013 Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy provide policy directions for science to transform India into a developed country.

### Critically examine the challenges faced by the United Nations Security Council in maintaining global peace and security. How does the lack of unity among its members affect its authority and effectiveness?

**Introduction:** Give a brief context to the question

**Body:** Highlight challenges faced by the UN and how lack of unity affects its authority.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

At the 55th regular session of the Human Rights Council, the Secretary-General of the UN remarked that the 'lack of unity' amongst UNSC members had 'perhaps fatally undermined its authority citing concern about the future of the UN.

### Challenges faced by UNSC

- **Veto Power:** The veto privilege held by the P5 members—China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US—disrupts swift action, often prioritizing national interests over collective security.
- **Geopolitical Rivalry:** Major power disagreements within the UNSC hinder effective responses to global issues and may lead to misuse of veto power.
- **Resource Limitations:** Dependency on member state contributions limits the UNSC's ability to respond adequately to crises.
- **Evolving Threats:** Emerging challenges like cyberwarfare and climate change require the UNSC to adapt its approaches to address new security risks effectively.

### Impact of Lack of Unity

- **Erosion of Legitimacy:** Internal divisions within the council diminish public confidence, rendering it ineffective in tackling global security concerns and casting doubt on the legitimacy of the UN system as a whole.
- **Delayed and Ineffective Response:** Internal disagreements hamper the council's capacity to act promptly and decisively, exacerbating conflicts and exacerbating humanitarian emergencies.
- **Double Standards and Partiality:** The uneven application of veto power and the sway of national interests may foster perceptions of bias and double standards in the council's decisions, weakening its credibility and influence.
- **Lack of Cooperation on Global Issues:** Lack of unity was witnessed during COVID-19 when borders were shut down, for people, goods, for vaccines, thereby undermining the promise of a shared global prosperity based on ever-greater cooperation. Wars between Russia- Ukraine & Israel- Hamas further exposed the hypocrisy of Western Nations & exposed the fault lines between the developed and developing worlds.

## Conclusion

The UNSC grapples with a major challenge in maintaining global peace and security due to member disunity. Factors such as P5 veto power, geopolitical rivalries, limited resources, and evolving threats contribute to this issue. This lack of unity undermines the council's authority and effectiveness, leading to delayed action, legitimacy erosion, and perceived bias. Addressing these hurdles necessitates UNSC reforms and stronger member commitment to collective security.

## Evaluate the impact of the shrinking divisible pool and the rise in cesses and surcharges on the fiscal autonomy of states in India. Suggest measures to ensure a more equitable sharing of financial resources between the Union and the states.

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight the impact of the shrinking pool of taxes and measures to deal with it.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The recent unrest demonstrated by the governments of Kerala and Karnataka, along with the support garnered from several other state administrations, has shed light on several troubling issues within India's fiscal federalism practices.

### Impact of Shrinking Divisible Pool & Rising Cesses

- **Diminished State Revenue:** States are less able to pay for their own social welfare initiatives, development initiatives, and critical services.
- **Increasing Dependency on Central Government:** States' capacity to enact their laws and make independent decisions may be hampered by their growing reliance on the federal government for financial support.
- **Erosion of Cooperative Federalism:** The idea promotes cooperation between the federal government and the states. States may find it more difficult to effectively contribute to national development if they have limited resources.

### Measures for equitable sharing

- **Examining Cesses and Surcharges:** To make sure these levies are accomplishing their intended goals, a regular evaluation of these levies is necessary. The revenue from cesses that are no longer required should be returned to the divisible pool.
- **Increasing share for States:** The states' share of the divisible pool could be increased by the Finance Commission, which makes recommendations regarding the distribution of central tax revenue to the states. The needs of the states and the federal government could both be taken into consideration as this was done gradually.
- **Performance-Based Incentives:** Depending on how well states perform in areas like fiscal responsibility, social development indicators, and the execution of centrally sponsored programs, the Centre may grant them more resources. This may promote more effective state resource management and governance.
- **Increasing the Strength of Inter-governmental Organisations:** Organisations such as the Inter-State Council can be given more authority to help the federal government and the states communicate and coordinate more effectively on financial issues. This can assist in settling conflicts and identifying solutions that both parties can accept.

## Conclusion

In summary, the 16th Finance Commission must prioritize fair resource sharing and address concerns about excessive cesses and surcharges. It should rectify historical imbalances in vertical devolution by compensating states and ensuring transparency in budget reporting. The Union government should legislate strict limits on cesses and surcharges. Resolving issues of horizontal devolution is important, but the Commission's stance on vertical devolution is crucial for the future of fiscal federalism in India.



**Elaborate on the economic rationale behind increased investment in early childhood care and education (ECCE) in India. Discuss how such investments can contribute to achieving the demographic dividend.**

**Introduction:** Define ECCE.

**Body:** Highlight the need for investing in ECCE & how such investments can contribute to achieving demographic dividend.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

As per UNESCO, the early childhood phase spans from birth to eight years old, characterized by significant growth, especially in brain development. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) surpasses mere preparation for primary schooling. It strives for the comprehensive fulfillment of a child's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical requirements, laying the groundwork for lifelong learning and overall well-being

### **Economic Rationale for Investing in ECCE**

- **Human Capital Development:** ECCE is pivotal in nurturing a child's cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical abilities, laying the foundation for a skilled and robust workforce. Research confirms that high-quality ECCE results in improved educational achievements increased earning prospects, and enhanced health outcomes in later life.
- **Poverty Alleviation:** In India, many children face socio-economic disadvantages. ECCE offers a chance to disrupt the cycle of poverty across generations by guaranteeing equitable access to quality early learning experiences for all. This fosters greater equity and sustainable economic advancement in the long term.
- **Increased Productivity and Economic Expansion:** Enhanced human capital results in a more proficient and efficient workforce, fostering sustained economic progress. Investing early in a child's development yields significant economic dividends, often surpassing initial expenditures.
- **Women's Participation in the Labor Force:** Accessible and excellent ECCE facilities empower women to join and stay in the workforce, bolstering household incomes and advancing both economic growth and gender parity.

### **Achieving India's Demographic Dividend**

- **Healthy and Skilled Workforce:** ECCE establishes the groundwork for a future workforce that is both capable and well-nourished by emphasizing early stimulation, health, and nutrition.
- **High-quality Education and Skills:** The success of later education and training is increased when a solid foundation is established in early childhood. This guarantees that the youthful populace of India possesses the competencies necessary for a rapidly evolving, knowledge-based economy.
- **Social and Economic Stability:** The ECCE can encourage social inclusion through funding. By lowering inequality, it helps prevent political instability and social unrest, both of which are detrimental to long-term economic growth and development.

### **Conclusion**

It is not only a social justice issue but also a sound financial decision to invest in early childhood care and education in India. Over time, ECCE investments can play a significant role in contributing to India's economic growth and development by promoting human capital development, reducing poverty and inequality, and optimizing the benefits of demographic changes.