

ForumIAS

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# Mains Marathon

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*HISTORY  
ECONOMICS  
POLITY  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENT*

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FORUMIAS



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**Evaluate the role of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act in urban governance in India. How can the decentralization of urban governance address the infrastructural and socio-economic challenges in Indian cities? (250 words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight the role of 74 CA in urban governance and how it addresses various challenges

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA), enacted in 1992, marked a significant step toward empowering urban local bodies (ULBs) in India by formalizing their structure, functions, and autonomy.

### Role of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act in Urban Governance

- **Constitutional Status for Urban Local Bodies:** The 74th CAA granted constitutional status to municipalities, thus acknowledging their importance as the third tier of governance in urban areas. This empowerment aimed to reduce the excessive control of state governments over local bodies and promote local self-governance.
- **Devolution of Powers and Responsibilities:** The Act delineated the functional domain of ULBs through the 12th Schedule, listing 18 functions such as urban planning, regulation of land use, water supply, public health, and sanitation.
- **Financial Empowerment:** The Act required the establishment of State Finance Commissions (SFCs) to review and recommend measures for sharing financial resources between the state and local bodies, ensuring a steady flow of funds for municipal functions.

### Addressing Infrastructural and Socio-Economic Challenges Through Decentralisation

- **Responsive Urban Planning:** Decentralisation allows urban local bodies to better understand and respond to the unique needs of their communities, resulting in more effective urban planning and infrastructure development. Local bodies can adopt flexible approaches suited to the specific demographic, environmental, and economic conditions of their areas, improving the relevance and sustainability of urban projects.
- **Enhanced Public Services:** With greater financial autonomy and responsibility, ULBs can enhance basic services like water supply, waste management, and public health. Decentralization promotes local innovation and experimentation, enabling solutions tailored to address traffic congestion, air pollution, and housing shortages.
- **Inclusive Development:** Ward Committees and public consultations enable marginalized communities to voice their needs and priorities, fostering inclusive socio-economic growth. Proximity to citizens enhances the accountability of ULBs, reducing corruption and mismanagement, and improving the quality of governance.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Urban local bodies can initiate local economic development programs that generate employment and skill development for urban residents. Decentralized governance encourages ULBs to mobilize local resources and investments, bolstering local economies and promoting sustainable urban infrastructure projects.

### Conclusion

Indian cities face complex and interlinked challenges ranging from inadequate planning and climate vulnerabilities to socio-economic disparities and governance inefficiencies. Addressing these requires a comprehensive approach that leverages the potential of decentralization under the 74th Constitutional Amendment while ensuring inclusive and sustainable urban development.

**India's approach to 'strategic autonomy' is evident in its balanced relationships with Iran and Israel. Analyze how India's position aligns with its foreign policy goals and the challenges it may face in maintaining this stance. (250 words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** How does India's position align with its foreign policy and the challenges that lie within?

**Conclusion:** Way forward

India's approach to 'strategic autonomy' is prominently showcased in its nuanced foreign policy that enables it to engage independently with countries that may be adversaries. This approach is particularly evident in India's balanced relationships with Iran and Israel.

#### **Alignment with India's Foreign Policy Goals**

- **Strategic Autonomy and Multi-Alignment:** India's policy of strategic autonomy seeks to maintain independence in foreign affairs, enabling it to engage with diverse and often competing interests. By engaging with Iran amid its involvement in the Gaza conflict and concurrently maintaining strong ties with Israel, India underscores its ability to de-hyphenate relationships, pursuing interests independently of external pressures.
- **Enhancing Regional Influence and Diplomatic Credibility:** Iran holds significant strategic value for India beyond traditional cooperation. As an energy-rich nation with substantial reserves of oil and natural gas, Iran offers a vital opportunity for India to bolster energy security and diversify its energy imports.
- **Strategic Connectivity and Trade:** The Chabahar Port exemplifies India's strategic investment to bypass potentially volatile sea routes like the Strait of Hormuz, ensuring consistent trade access to Central Asia and Afghanistan. The expedited 700 km Chabahar-Zahedan railway link, with future connectivity to Zaranj in Afghanistan, further positions India as a critical trade and humanitarian aid provider in the region.

#### **Challenges in Maintaining Strategic Autonomy**

- **Geopolitical and Economic Sanctions:** India's relationship with Iran faces challenges due to U.S.-led sanctions, which complicate bilateral trade and investments. The sanctions have historically affected projects like Chabahar and deterred the full realization of energy cooperation.
- **Regional Conflicts and Diplomatic Sensitivities:** India's engagement with Iran is complicated by the ongoing Gaza war and regional tensions. While Iran appreciates India's potential role in de-escalation, any perceived partiality could strain India's relationship with Israel or Western allies.
- **Political and Religious Sensitivities:** Statements by influential Iranian figures comparing the situation of Indian Muslims to Gaza residents, have the potential to strain bilateral ties. Such remarks can create friction, demanding careful diplomatic navigation to prevent derailment of broader strategic interests.

#### **Conclusion**

India's balanced relationship with Iran exemplifies its pursuit of strategic autonomy—advancing national interests while maintaining flexibility in foreign policy. The meeting at the 16th BRICS Summit reflects India's commitment to revitalizing ties, supported by energy partnerships, trade connectivity, and potential defense collaborations.

**Discuss the Supreme Court's recent stance on secularism with respect to religious and minority educational institutions. How does the judgment on the UP Madarsa Act reflect the concept of 'positive secularism' in India?**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight the main features of the judgment and concept of positive secularism.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Supreme Court's recent judgment in *Anjum Qadri and Anr vs Union of India & Ors* upheld the constitutionality of the *Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004*, reversing the Allahabad High Court's ruling that had struck it down. This verdict provides significant relief to thousands of madrasas and their students and reinforces the constitutional framework supporting minority educational rights.

**Key Points of the Supreme Court's Judgment:**

- **Doctrine of Basic Structure:** The Supreme Court clarified that the doctrine of Basic Structure, established in *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* (1973) and further explored in the *Indira Nehru Gandhi* case (1975), is intended to test the validity of constitutional amendments and not ordinary legislation.
- **Positive Secularism:** The SC reiterated that India's model of secularism emphasizes equal respect for all religions. Drawing on the *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India* (1994) judgment, the Court highlighted that the regulation and recognition of madrasa education by the state is a form of positive action aimed at safeguarding minority rights under Articles 25-30 of the Constitution. These provisions embody the other dimension of secularism—religious tolerance.
- **Educational Rights and Quality Concerns:** The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) opposed the Act, citing the poor quality of education in madrasas and claiming that it infringed on Article 21A's mandate for quality, mainstream education. The Supreme Court, however, found that while the state must ensure educational standards, Article 21A and the Right to Education (RTE) Act contain provisions that exempt minority institutions from compliance, protecting their rights under Article 30(1). This position aligns with the Court's 2014 ruling in *Pramati Educational and Cultural Trust v. Union of India*, which noted that imposing such standards on minority institutions could undermine their constitutional rights.
- **Recognition of Religious Education:** The judgment distinguished between religious instruction and religious education. Article 28 prohibits religious instruction in wholly state-funded institutions but allows religious education with consent in other cases. This view was in contrast to the compulsory prayer practices in *Kendriya Vidyalayas*, which remain contested under Article 28(1). The judgment maintained that theological education, chosen voluntarily, aligns with individual rights and pluralistic values.

**Conclusion**

The Supreme Court's ruling on the UP Madarsa Act reflects a balanced approach to secularism, aligning with India's vision of positive secularism that respects and protects the rights of all religious communities.

**Critically examine the evolving judicial interpretation of Article 39(b) of the Indian Constitution concerning private property rights and economic democracy. How does the recent Supreme Court ruling balance the objectives of socialist principles with a market-based economy?**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight judicial evolution of Art 39(b) and recent SC ruling about the Article.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The recent ruling by the nine-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court of India has brought significant clarity to the interpretation of Article 39(b) of the Constitution and its relationship with private property rights and economic democracy.

### Judicial Evolution of Article 39(b) and Private Property

- **Historical Context and Emergency-Era Policies:** Article 39(b) of the Constitution is part of the Directive Principles of State Policy and advocates for the distribution of material resources to serve the common good. This provision was reinforced through Article 31C, inserted by the 25th Amendment in 1971, to shield laws aimed at fulfilling Article 39(b) from being challenged on the grounds of violating fundamental rights.
- **Protection of Private Property:** The decision underscores that not all private property can be subjected to redistribution under the guise of Article 39(b). This stance protects private ownership rights and reflects India's economic transition that values private investment and entrepreneurship.
- **Guidance for Future Legislation:** While the judgment clarifies broad principles, its application to specific laws remains to be seen. Future cases will determine how this interpretation shapes legislation and state policies aimed at redistributing resources.
- **Economic Policy and Judicial Restraint:** By stating that the role of the court is to facilitate economic democracy rather than lay down economic policy, the ruling highlights the importance of legislative and executive action being guided by constitutional principles while maintaining judicial oversight.

### Balancing Socialist Principles with Economic Modernization:

- The majority opinion led by Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud argued that interpreting Article 39(b) as encompassing all private property would endorse a specific economic ideology. This restrictive interpretation seeks to balance the socialist principles enshrined in the Constitution with the realities of a market-based economy.
- The ruling emphasized that courts should not dictate economic policies but should uphold the Constitution's intent to build an economic democracy. The modern context of private property, encompassing varied assets from data to space, has evolved significantly since the Constitution's framing and liberalization. This acknowledges that private sector participation in wealth generation plays a legitimate role in the broader economic framework.

### Conclusion

The Supreme Court's ruling on Article 39(b) represents a course correction that aligns constitutional interpretation with India's economic evolution. It preserves the balance between the socialist vision of equitable resource distribution and the protection of private property in a market-based economy. The judgment reiterates the judiciary's role in safeguarding constitutional objectives while allowing economic policies to adapt to contemporary needs.



**Examine the key factors leading to the recent diplomatic tensions between India and Canada. How do national security and cultural differences contribute to these frictions? Discuss the implications for India's foreign relations with Western democracies.**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight key factors responsible for tensions and implications for India's relations.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The recent diplomatic tensions between India and Canada highlight complex and longstanding issues involving national security concerns, cultural differences, and geopolitical challenges.

### Key Factors Leading to Diplomatic Tensions

- **Khalistani Separatism in Canada:** India has accused Canada of being a safe haven for Khalistani separatists. Indian authorities perceive Canada's political support and leniency toward Khalistani figures as a threat to India's territorial integrity.
- **Electoral Considerations in Canada:** Sikhs represent only 2% of Canada's population but hold disproportionate political influence due to geographic concentration and active civic engagement. Trudeau's government has previously avoided direct condemnation of Khalistani extremism, possibly to maintain political support, but this has led to India's perception that Canada panders to extremist Sikh factions.
- **Extradition and Legal Standards:** Canada has been reluctant to extradite individuals linked to Khalistani activities to India, citing Canada's stringent legal standards and concerns about human rights in India. This discrepancy in legal standards has been a consistent point of contention between the two nations.
- **National Security:** India views Canada's lenient stance on Khalistani separatism as a direct threat to its security and integrity. In contrast, Canada prioritizes civil liberties, including freedom of expression, which permits advocacy for causes like Khalistan as long as they are non-violent.
- **Cultural Differences:** Additionally, the perception of the Air India bombing as a "foreign tragedy" reflects cultural differences in how the two countries view the legacy of this attack. Canada's delayed recognition of the victims' plight and the failure of the bombing investigation due to systemic racism and institutional failures have contributed to India's mistrust of Canada's commitment to combating Khalistani terrorism.

### Implications for India's Foreign Relations with Western Democracies

- **Trust and Cooperation Challenges:** The recent tensions highlight India's concerns with Western democracies' commitment to countering extremist groups that target India's sovereignty.
- **Legal and Diplomatic Gaps:** India's difficulty in securing extraditions from other countries, including the U.K. and the U.S., reflects the broader diplomatic and legal gaps. Western democracies' reluctance to cooperate fully on extraditions or intelligence sharing related to extremism could impact India's security strategy and reinforce skepticism about its Western allies.
- **Impact on India's Strategic Autonomy:** While Western democracies, particularly the U.S., view India as a key strategic ally in the Indo-Pacific region, such diplomatic tensions could lead India to question the reliability of Western democracies in addressing its core security concerns.

### Conclusion

India and Canada must bridge these gaps, potentially through diplomatic dialogue, clearer extradition frameworks, and mutual respect for each nation's security and legal standards.

**Critically evaluate the challenges faced by India's higher educational institutions, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. What role can policy reforms and institutional collaboration play in bridging the skill gap?**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** What are the key challenges faced by HEI in STEM and policy reforms to address these gaps?

**Conclusion:** Way forward

India's higher education institutions, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields, face considerable challenges in providing quality education that aligns with industry and research needs.

### Key Challenges

- **Skill Gap and Quality of Graduates:** A large percentage of STEM graduates from Indian institutions lack essential skills, which impedes industry and research progress.
- **Poor Pedagogical Standards:** The focus on research output to boost institutional rankings has led many teaching-focused institutions to prioritize publishing papers and patents, often in low-quality outlets, over improving pedagogy.
- **Faculty Shortages and Limited Development:** Faculty in many institutions are overburdened, with little time or incentive for professional development. Faculty recruitment is often localized, leading to a limited diversity of academic exposure and perspectives.
- **Resource Constraints:** Initiatives like quantum computing and artificial intelligence demand skilled professionals, but limited qualified personnel and inadequate training infrastructures threaten to leave these initiatives underutilized.
- **Lack of Institutional Collaboration:** The current structure does not facilitate the exchange of resources, curricula, or faculty, thereby reinforcing the divide between education and research-focused institutions.

### Role of Policy Reforms and Institutional Collaboration

- **Separate Ranking Systems for Teaching and Research Institutions:** By decoupling the evaluation of teaching-focused institutions from research metrics, rankings can reflect teaching quality over research output, reducing the pressure on these institutions to pursue low-quality research.
- **Focused Pedagogy in Teaching Institutions:** Teaching institutions should prioritize pedagogy over research, especially in the initial years, to strengthen foundational skills. A dedicated "teaching track" could be introduced to allow faculty members interested in pedagogy to advance based on their teaching skills rather than research output alone.
- **Establishing Joint Degree Programs:** Research institutions can partner with teaching institutions to create joint degree programs, enabling high-performing students to complete their studies at research-focused institutions. An example of this approach is the collaboration between NIT Surat and IIT Bombay, which allows students to complete advanced studies at a premier institution.
- **Enhanced Funding for Pedagogical Excellence:** Government funding should be directed towards establishing centers of excellence in pedagogy within teaching institutions. These centers would serve as hubs for teacher training, curriculum development, and best practices in STEM education, driving systemic improvements without necessitating large additional resources.

### Conclusion

The challenges facing India's STEM higher education institutions demand a multifaceted approach that includes curriculum modernization, research funding, faculty development, and diversity initiatives. Policy reforms, backed by increased government and industry collaboration, can create a more dynamic, industry-aligned, and inclusive STEM ecosystem.

**Examine the factors leading India to seek modifications to the Indus Waters Treaty. How do changing domestic needs, climate concerns, and geopolitical dynamics shape India's approach to this treaty? (250 Words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight factors that lead India to seek modifications to the Indus Water Treaty

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), a historic agreement between India and Pakistan, was established in 1960 to manage and share the Indus River system. However, India's recent formal notice under Article XII(3) on August 30, 2024, highlights its growing concerns regarding the treaty's adequacy in addressing evolving domestic, environmental, and geopolitical challenges.

### Changing Domestic Needs

- **Population Growth and Agricultural Expansion:** India's population has expanded significantly since the treaty's signing, especially in the Indus Basin region. Agriculture, a vital sector in northern states, depends on reliable water sources.
- **Clean Energy Development:** India aims to meet its climate commitments by accelerating hydropower generation, which requires building dams and infrastructure along the western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab).

### Climate Change Concerns

- **Glacial Melting and Reduced Flow:** The Himalayas, a significant source of water for the Indus River system, have experienced glacial retreat and reduced snowfall, leading to an estimated 30%-40% reduction in water flow. These climate-induced shifts threaten water security, and the IWT's existing structure, which rigidly partitions the eastern and western rivers, limits India's capacity to respond effectively.
- **Transboundary Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA):** Customary international law, upheld by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), obligates riparian states to prevent harm to shared water resources.

### Geopolitical Dynamics

- **Cross-Border Security Concerns:** India has cited ongoing cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir as a barrier to effectively managing its water resources, as security concerns hinder project implementation and affect resource utilization.
- **Divergent Interpretations of Treaty Provisions:** India and Pakistan have adopted contrasting approaches to the IWT's purpose. As the upper riparian state, India interprets the treaty's objective as ensuring optimal utilization of water resources, while Pakistan, as the lower riparian, emphasizes uninterrupted flow.

### Conclusion

India's move to seek modifications to the Indus Waters Treaty stems from a complex interplay of increasing domestic water demands, the urgent need for climate adaptability, and persistent geopolitical concerns. While renegotiation poses diplomatic challenges, exploring cooperative mechanisms and limited adjustments could offer practical solutions.

**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in India has the potential to contribute significantly to agricultural sustainability. Discuss the current limitations in CSR reporting and suggest ways to make CSR contributions more effective in supporting sustainable agriculture.**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight CSR contribution to agriculture and limitations, ways to support agriculture.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in India, legally mandated under Section 135 of the Companies Act 2013, has the potential to significantly impact agricultural sustainability.

### CSR's Contribution to Agriculture

- **Grain banks and farmer schools:** Helping to secure food supplies and educate farmers.
- **Livelihood projects:** Supporting income-generating activities linked to agriculture and allied sectors.
- **Water conservation and energy-efficient irrigation:** Vital in combating water scarcity and improving resource use.

### Main Obstacles in Current CSR Reporting for Agriculture

- **Inability to Track Agriculture-Specific CSR Spending:** Agriculture-related initiatives can fall under as many as 11 of the 29 sectors outlined in Schedule VII of the Companies Act. These broad categories make it difficult to assess CSR spending directly benefiting agricultural sustainability.
- **Diluted Focus on Agricultural Sustainability:** Since the current sectors encompass a range of activities, CSR spending on agriculture can be overshadowed by other unrelated initiatives within the same category.
- **Limited Transparency and Impact Assessment:** Without clear and distinct tracking, the allocation of CSR funds lacks transparency, impeding the ability to assess and analyze the specific impacts of CSR initiatives on agriculture.

### Recommendations to Enhance CSR's Impact on Agricultural Sustainability

- **Create a Separate CSR Category for Agriculture:** Specifying agriculture as a distinct sector within the CSR framework would allow funds to be tracked directly, ensuring that companies with an interest in agriculture can allocate funds more transparently and with accountability.
- **Incentivize Collaboration with Agricultural Experts and NGOs:** Partnering with agricultural experts, NGOs, and research institutions can help ensure CSR funds address the real needs of farming communities. Collaborations enable knowledge transfer, create locally viable solutions, and strengthen the relevance of CSR projects.
- **Promote Transparency Through Third-Party Audits:** Implementing third-party audits for CSR projects focused on agriculture would improve accountability and public trust. Regular audits could ensure that funds are used effectively and that the intended outcomes are achieved, allowing companies to be recognized for impactful work in sustainable agriculture.

### Conclusion

CSR has the potential to drive meaningful change in agriculture, especially as companies increasingly prioritize environmental and sustainability goals

**Discuss the role of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) in promoting solar energy in developing countries. What challenges does it face in achieving its objectives, and how does India's leadership in the ISA contribute to its foreign policy goals? (250 Words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight the role of ISA in promoting solar energy and challenges and India's leadership in ISA.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The International Solar Alliance (ISA), founded by India and France at the 2015 Paris Climate Conference, was created as a platform to foster the large-scale deployment of solar energy, primarily in developing countries.

### Role of the ISA in Promoting Solar Energy

- **Capacity Building and Training:** The ISA establishes STAR (Solar Technology and Applications Resource) centers in partnership with local institutions to train personnel and build local expertise in solar technology, addressing the lack of technical know-how in many developing countries.
- **Regulatory Support:** Many member countries lack experience in executing large power projects and have no regulatory structures for solar projects. The ISA helps governments draft power purchase agreements, create regulatory frameworks, and ensure policy stability, which is crucial for attracting foreign investment.
- **Facilitation of Solar Project Auctions:** The ISA has been involved in facilitating auctions for solar projects, with the first ISA-facilitated project underway in Cuba. Future projects, mainly across Africa, are planned, which may increase ISA's visibility and impact.

### Challenges Faced by the ISA

- **Limited Project Implementation:** Despite its facilitation role, ISA has yet to operationalize solar power projects, highlighting the difficulty in bridging intentions with outcomes. ISA-facilitated projects have been slow to materialize, with the first project only now progressing in Cuba.
- **High Entry Barriers for Smaller Nations:** Smaller developing countries, especially in Africa, face significant challenges in adopting solar energy, including a lack of local developers, limited financing, and regulatory constraints.
- **Under-resourced Organization:** The ISA has faced limitations in staffing and funding, affecting its capacity to implement and coordinate large-scale solar projects effectively. Furthermore, it has struggled with its relationship with India's Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, creating bureaucratic hurdles.

### India's Leadership in the ISA and Foreign Policy Goals

- **Leadership in Climate Action and Renewable Energy:** India's role in establishing the ISA reinforces its image as a leader in climate diplomacy, emphasizing sustainable growth paths suited to developing countries.
- **Strengthening Ties with the Global South:** The ISA strengthens India's outreach to the Global South, particularly in Africa, where many member countries face critical energy shortages.
- **Reducing Global Reliance on Fossil Fuels:** Through the ISA, India can contribute to reducing dependence on fossil fuels in developing countries, helping them transition to affordable and sustainable energy sources.

### Conclusion

While India's leadership in the ISA bolsters its global standing, especially within the Global South, the ISA must address operational constraints and enhance its impact to fulfill its objectives.

**How does the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for climate finance, expected to be finalized at COP29, aim to address the financial needs of developing countries? Discuss the potential impact of broadening the contributor base and the associated equity challenges. (250 Words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight how NCDQ addresses the financial needs of developing countries and its impact on broadening the contributor base and equity challenges.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for climate finance, expected to be finalized at COP29 in Baku, Azerbaijan, aims to address the specific financial needs of developing countries by setting a more ambitious, equitable climate finance target.

### Addressing the Financial Needs of Developing Countries

- **Increased and Needs-Based Funding Levels:** The NCQG is anticipated to surpass the \$100 billion annual target, recognizing the vast financial gap to meet climate goals. By revising funding levels, the NCQG seeks to offer financial support that more accurately reflects the adaptation and mitigation needs of these nations.
- **Public and Grant-Based Finance for Adaptation:** Developing countries emphasize that grants and concessional loans—not solely private investments—should form the NCQG’s core. Grants, in particular, are vital for adaptation and infrastructure resilience, ensuring that financial support does not burden vulnerable countries with debt.
- **Balanced Allocation Between Adaptation and Mitigation:** Developing countries have long advocated for a balanced allocation between adaptation (building resilience to climate impacts) and mitigation (reducing emissions).

### Impact of Broadening the Contributor Base

- **Potential for Increased Funding Sources:** Developed countries advocate broadening the contributor base to include emerging economies and oil-producing nations such as China, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.
- **Incorporation of Private Sector Funding:** By involving the private sector, developed countries aim to leverage additional resources for climate finance. While private investment could accelerate clean energy projects, it is less effective for adaptation needs.

### Equity Challenges in Expanding the Contributor Base

- **Historical Responsibility and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities:** Developing nations emphasize the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” (CBDR). Expanding the contributor base could dilute accountability by shifting responsibility onto emerging economies that are still developing, ignoring historical emissions and the disproportionate impact of climate change on poorer nations.
- **Risk of Unclear Obligations:** Proposals by countries like Switzerland and Canada to include emerging economies based on criteria like emissions and GNI per capita may unfairly target nations such as China. Developing countries worry that this move could sidestep CBDR, shifting undue financial responsibility onto economies that, despite their growth, face their climate-related challenges.
- **Concerns Over the Effectiveness of Private Investments in Climate Finance:** Including private investments in the NCQG may dilute the clarity of climate finance commitments. This over-reliance on private funds risks further complicating climate finance, creating ambiguity about the purpose and scope of contributions.

### Conclusion

The success of the NCQG at COP29 depends on balancing ambition with fairness and providing adequate, needs-based finance that respects the unique challenges of developing countries. A carefully structured NCQG, rooted in the principles of CBDR and prioritizing both adaptation and mitigation equally, will be critical to addressing the urgent climate finance needs of developing nations.

**Discuss the implications of the 'Net Borrowing Ceiling' (NBC) imposed by the central government on states. How does it affect fiscal federalism in India? (250 Words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight the implications of NBC on states and how it affects federalism in India.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The *Net Borrowing Ceiling* (NBC) imposed by the central government in Kerala in 2023 illustrates the complex dynamics of fiscal federalism in India. Kerala's case before the Supreme Court highlights critical issues concerning state fiscal autonomy, central oversight, and the scope of states' borrowing powers under Article 293 of the Indian Constitution.

**Implications of the Net Borrowing Ceiling (NBC) in Kerala and Other States**

- **Restriction of Fiscal Autonomy:** Extending NBC to encompass borrowings by state-owned enterprises adds further constraints, impacting the state's capacity to invest in developmental and welfare activities, crucial for Kerala's fiscal health.
- **Legal and Constitutional Implications:** Kerala argues that NBC infringes on its executive power to borrow on the security of its Consolidated Fund under Article 293. The Supreme Court's interpretation of Article 293, currently under review by a Constitutional Bench, may redefine the extent of states' fiscal powers within India's federal structure.
- **Challenges to Cooperative Federalism:** The NBC has stirred political and legal controversies, particularly regarding cooperative federalism. The rigid borrowing limit without state-specific financial considerations hampers Kerala's ability to address local economic and social challenges.

**Revisiting Article 293 for Strengthened Fiscal Federalism**

- **Establishing an Independent Commission:** An independent commission, similar to the Finance Commission, could assess state borrowing needs vis-à-vis the Centre's fiscal policies. This approach would ensure that borrowing limits are set transparently and equitably, considering both states' fiscal conditions and the national interest.
- **Guidelines for Fair Borrowing Conditions:** The Centre's powers under Article 293(4) should be exercised with transparency, ensuring equitable treatment of all states. Guidelines could require the Centre to consult states before imposing borrowing conditions, fostering a more cooperative approach that respects states' financial autonomy.
- **Promoting Transparency and Accountability:** Transparency in decision-making would allow public insight into the criteria for approving or denying borrowing requests, fostering a balanced fiscal environment that avoids arbitrary decision-making.

**Conclusion**

The NBC imposed on Kerala highlights critical tensions in India's federal framework between maintaining fiscal discipline and respecting state autonomy. Strengthening Article 293 is essential to ensure that states retain sufficient fiscal autonomy to address their unique challenges while upholding national fiscal responsibility, paving the way for a more resilient and equitable fiscal federalism in India.

**"The contribution of the care economy is indispensable but largely unrecognized in India's GDP." Critically analyze this statement, highlighting the importance of unpaid care labor in the Indian economy. (250 Words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight importance of unpaid care labour in Indian economy

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The statement, "The contribution of the care economy is indispensable but largely unrecognized in India's GDP," underscores the significant but often overlooked role of unpaid care labor, primarily performed by women, in supporting the economy and society.

### Importance of Unpaid Care Labor in the Indian Economy

- **Foundation of the Labor Force and Economy:** Unpaid care labor supports the labor force by ensuring family well-being, preparing children for future productive roles, and caring for elders and dependents. This labor, mainly undertaken by women, enables paid workers to participate in the economy, indirectly contributing to GDP.
- **Economic Value of Unpaid Care Work:** Studies estimate that unpaid care work would amount to a significant percentage of GDP if monetized. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), unpaid care work could account for nearly 20% of GDP in countries like India if it were formally recognized and compensated. This figure highlights the enormous but unaccounted contribution to economic productivity.
- **Relieving the State's Welfare Burden:** Unpaid care work also alleviates the government's burden by substituting for public services like childcare and eldercare. This informal support system reduces the state's spending on welfare but comes at a high personal cost to the caregivers themselves, often limiting their opportunities for paid employment.

### Issues Surrounding the Lack of Recognition of Unpaid Care Labor

- **Gender Inequality and Economic Exclusion:** In India, around 90% of unpaid care work is performed by women, leading to gender inequality in economic participation. The unrecognized and uncompensated nature of this work often results in economic exclusion for women, limiting their access to income and reinforcing the gender gap in employment and earnings.
- **Impact on Women's Labor Force Participation:** The substantial demand of unpaid care labor reduces women's ability to join the paid workforce. This is reflected in India's low female labor force participation rate, which stands at around 20% and is among the lowest globally. This exclusion perpetuates a cycle where women remain dependent and their potential economic contributions are unrealized.
- **Psychological and Health Burden on Caregivers:** Unpaid care work is physically and emotionally demanding, often leading to stress, health issues, and lack of personal time. The lack of formal recognition of this labor leaves caregivers without adequate support, and the resulting burnout further impacts their health and economic security.

### Conclusion

Unpaid care labor is essential for India's economic stability and social resilience, yet it remains unrecognized in GDP metrics and undervalued in policy formulation. Recognizing and supporting this labor through appropriate policies would not only enhance gender equality but also increase India's economic productivity.

**Critically analyze the effectiveness of the Public Distribution System (PDS) in India. Discuss the challenges of leakages and suggest ways to enhance its transparency and efficiency. (250 Words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight the effectiveness of PDS and ways to reform and leakages associated with PDS.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Public Distribution System (PDS) in India is a key component of the country's food security strategy, aimed at providing affordable staple grains to vulnerable sections of society.

### Effectiveness of PDS in India

- **Food Security and Poverty Reduction:** PDS has historically contributed to food security by ensuring affordable access to rice and wheat, benefiting millions of low-income households.



- **Economic Support During Crisis:** The PDS played a critical role in cushioning vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic challenges by offering free or subsidized food grains.
- **Technological Interventions:** The integration of Point-of-Sale (PoS) machines in Fair Price Shops (FPS), along with Aadhaar-linked distribution, has helped reduce leakages from an estimated 46% in 2011-12 to around 28% by 2023. This demonstrates progress, though challenges persist.

### Challenges of Leakages in PDS

- **High Leakages and Diversions:** According to recent analyses, 28% of rice and wheat intended for PDS beneficiaries fails to reach them, this leakage is attributed to corruption, diversion to the open market, and inefficiencies in supply chain management.
- **Over-Coverage and Inclusion Errors:** Many beneficiaries are above the extreme poverty line and could potentially contribute by paying part of the minimum support price (MSP) instead of receiving free food, helping contain subsidy costs.
- **Limited Nutritional Impact:** High malnutrition rates, including 35.5% of children under five being stunted, indicate a need for diversified nutritional support rather than exclusive reliance on cereals.
- **Infrastructure and Operational Inefficiencies:** Poor infrastructure in storage and transportation often leads to spoilage and further inefficiencies.

### Suggestions for Enhancing Transparency and Efficiency in PDS

- **Restrict Free Distribution:** Limiting free food benefits to the most impoverished 15% of the population (those below the extreme poverty line) could help rationalize subsidies.
- **Cash Transfers in Place of Grains:** Replacing physical distribution with direct cash transfers to beneficiaries' accounts would reduce intermediaries, decrease leakages, and give recipients the flexibility to purchase food and other essentials according to their specific needs.
- **Diversified Offerings:** Converting selected Fair Price Shops into nutrition hubs that provide access to pulses, millets, eggs, fruits, and vegetables can help address the issue of nutritional security.

### Conclusion

While PDS remains essential to India's food security framework, addressing the challenges of leakages and inefficiencies is crucial for its success.

### Analyze the implications of technological upgrades in wind energy infrastructure on energy production and land use patterns in India. Use Tamil Nadu as a case study.

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight implications of technological upgrades on energy & land use patterns in Tamil Nadu.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

India's renewable energy goals underscore the importance of modernizing its wind energy infrastructure. With India's wind power potential reaching 1,163.86 GW at 150 meters above ground level, Tamil Nadu stands as a crucial contributor with a significant share of the nation's installed wind energy capacity.

### Implications of Technological Upgrades on Energy Production

- **Increased Output through Repowering:** Repowering, which involves replacing old turbines with high-capacity turbines, can dramatically increase energy output. In Tamil Nadu, 10,000 turbines with capacities under 1 MW represent an opportunity for substantial power output gains.
- **Advanced Grid Support:** Updated wind turbines coupled with efficient grid infrastructure can stabilize energy supply, ensuring continuity in power generation. However, Tamil Nadu's existing evacuation and transmission infrastructure needs strengthening to handle increased energy output from repowered turbines.
- **Increased Costs:** Higher-capacity turbines require substantial initial investment in new equipment, technology, and land acquisition.

- **Employment and Skill Development:** Repowering and upgrading technology necessitates a skilled workforce for installation and maintenance, which can create jobs and boost local economies in Tamil Nadu.

### Implications on Land Use Patterns in Tamil Nadu

- **Reduced Footprint:** By replacing small, less efficient turbines with larger, high-capacity models, Tamil Nadu can generate more energy with fewer turbines on the same land area. This allows for more energy production without significantly increasing land demands, mitigating land use conflicts.
- **Dual-Use Models:** Modern turbine designs that enable agricultural activities below can mitigate the impact on farmland. Implementing dual-use land models allows for wind energy generation while preserving agricultural livelihoods, particularly relevant in Tamil Nadu's agrarian regions.
- **Protecting Ecosystems:** Upgraded turbines on ecologically sensitive sites require careful planning to avoid disrupting wildlife habitats. Precise siting based on Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping could mitigate environmental concerns while ensuring optimal land utilization.
- **Community Engagement:** As land use changes affect local communities, particularly in regions where habitation has expanded around old wind farms, engagement with residents is essential. Policy adjustments that account for community needs can foster acceptance and reduce resistance to repowering projects.

### Conclusion

Technological upgrades in wind energy infrastructure hold immense potential for Tamil Nadu, promising to boost energy output, optimize land use, and position the state as a renewable energy leader.

### Analyze the implications of India-China disengagement efforts along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) for regional stability. How might this affect India's geopolitical strategy with its neighboring countries? (250 words)

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight implications for regional stability and its impact on neighboring countries

**Conclusion:** Way forward

India-China disengagement efforts along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) have significant implications for regional stability and India's broader geopolitical strategy. After several border standoffs, especially the Galwan Valley clash in 2020, the de-escalation between India and China indicates cautious progress toward reducing immediate tensions.

### Implications for Regional Stability

- **Focus on Internal Security in Neighboring Regions:** As tensions reduce, both India and China can potentially divert military and diplomatic resources to other pressing regional concerns. India may focus more on internal security challenges in areas like Jammu and Kashmir, while China can concentrate on domestic stability in Tibet and Xinjiang.
- **Reduction in Border Tensions:** The disengagement process, involving troop withdrawal and the establishment of buffer zones, has the potential to lower the risk of sudden escalations along the contested LAC. This helps prevent further confrontations and promotes a more predictable border environment, enhancing regional stability in the short term.
- **Confidence-Building Measures:** If India and China can sustain disengagement, it could lead to renewed confidence-building measures, such as military hotlines, patrol regulations, and protocols for border management. These mechanisms could serve as precedents for managing disputes along other contentious borders in South Asia, fostering a culture of restraint and negotiation.

### Geopolitical Strategy and Engagement with Neighbors

- **Pakistan:** India's approach toward détente with China may influence its policy with Pakistan, especially considering Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar's recent visit to Islamabad for the SCO

summit. By engaging diplomatically, India signals openness to dialogue and may prompt reciprocal steps, potentially easing tensions over Kashmir.

- **Bhutan and Nepal:** The Doklam standoff in 2017 highlighted India's protective role over Bhutanese territory. A stabilized LAC could strengthen India's strategic influence in Bhutan and Nepal, encouraging these countries to maintain balanced relations with both India and China while relying on India's support for security and infrastructure.
- **Regional Diplomacy and South Asia Strategy:** India's reconciliatory stance with China can help reinforce its position as a stabilizing power in South Asia, fostering relationships that are less influenced by the security threat from China. This may encourage smaller neighbors to view India as a partner in regional stability rather than a counterbalance to China.

## Conclusion

India-China disengagement efforts along the LAC mark a pivotal shift that could stabilize regional dynamics and create space for economic cooperation and broader geopolitical maneuvers. However, India must balance diplomatic engagement with strategic caution, addressing unresolved border ambiguities, and fortifying regional ties.

**Examine the role of mule accounts in cybercrime operations in India. Discuss the steps taken by the government to counter this challenge, and suggest measures to further strengthen the cybercrime prevention framework. (250 words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight the role of mule accounts and measures to strengthen the framework

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The increasing misuse of "mule accounts" for laundering proceeds from cybercrimes has become a critical concern in India. Mule accounts are typically created using fraudulent or misappropriated KYC documents and allow cyber criminals to obfuscate the money trail.

## Role of Mule Accounts in Cybercrime Operations in India

- **Money Laundering:** Cybercriminals often use mule accounts to transfer stolen funds, making it difficult to trace the source. Funds are routed through multiple accounts to obfuscate the money trail.
- **Online Fraud:** Mule accounts facilitate various forms of online fraud, including phishing, fake investment schemes, and online shopping scams. These accounts receive stolen money from victims, which is then quickly moved or withdrawn to avoid detection.
- **Recruitment through Social-Media:** Cybercriminals exploit the financially vulnerable, students, or unemployed individuals, often recruiting them via social media and messaging platforms, making them unwitting participants in cybercrime by promising easy money.

## Government Measures to Counter the Challenge of Mule Accounts

- **Freezing Mule Accounts:** In coordination with the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) under the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Centre has frozen around 4.5 lakh mule accounts. I4C monitors cybercrime and coordinates with financial institutions and law enforcement.
- **National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal:** Citizens can report cyber frauds through this portal, which facilitates rapid action by relevant authorities. Over 1 lakh complaints have been filed since January 2023.
- **AI/ML-Based Screening by Banks:** Airtel Payments Bank, for instance, has implemented real-time API integration with I4C's suspect registry and utilizes AI/ML models to detect mule accounts and prevent takeovers. Innovations such as "Face Match" technology verify customers' identities through KYC records, reducing fraud risks.

## Suggested Measures to Strengthen the Cybercrime Prevention Framework

- **Enhanced KYC Norms and Verification:** Banks should implement stricter KYC verification methods and advanced digital identity checks (e.g., biometrics and facial recognition) to detect and deter fraudulent account creation.
- **Cross-Platform Collaboration:** Enhanced cooperation between banks, telecom providers, and financial service providers is essential for sharing data and insights on mule activity.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** To prevent the recruitment of vulnerable individuals as mules, public awareness campaigns should emphasize the risks and consequences of sharing or renting out bank accounts.

## Conclusion

With these measures, India can better protect its citizens from cyber fraud and reinforce the integrity of its financial system.

**“Achieving healthy longevity requires a holistic approach encompassing healthcare accessibility, behavior change, and preventive health measures.” In the context of India’s demographic challenges, critically evaluate the feasibility of implementing the World Bank’s Healthy Longevity Initiative. (250 words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight challenges of implementing the World Bank Project and measures to implement.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The World Bank’s report, *“Unlocking the Power of Healthy Longevity: Demographic Change, Non-communicable Diseases, and Human Capital.”* highlights the need for a Healthy Longevity Initiative (HLI) to address the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and promote well-being across all age groups, particularly as the population ages.

## Key Challenges to Feasibility in India

- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** India’s healthcare infrastructure, particularly in rural and remote areas, is often under-resourced, with limited access to primary healthcare. Preventive and regular screenings for NCDs are sparse, making early detection challenging.
- **High Out-of-Pocket Expenditure:** Healthcare financing in India is skewed towards out-of-pocket expenses, leading to impoverishment for many households, especially the elderly. Despite health insurance schemes like Ayushman Bharat, challenges such as inadequate funding, corruption, and restrictive eligibility requirements limit their effectiveness.
- **Low Awareness of Preventive Health:** Many Indians lack awareness of the benefits of preventive healthcare. High rates of tobacco use, alcohol consumption, and poor dietary habits contribute to the NCD burden.
- **Cost of Unhealthy Diets:** Diets high in refined grains, saturated fats, and red meat are linked to higher risks of diabetes and heart disease. Additionally, increased prices for healthier foods limit access to nutritious options, especially among lower-income groups.

## Strategic Adjustments for Realistic Implementation

- **Implementing Price Controls in Private Healthcare:** Robust regulatory mechanisms to cap healthcare costs and enforce transparency in pricing would help reduce financial stress for patients and promote fair access to treatment.
- **Strengthening Primary Healthcare:** Expanding primary healthcare infrastructure with a focus on preventive care, such as regular screenings for diabetes and hypertension, would enable early diagnosis and reduce the long-term healthcare costs associated with advanced NCDs.
- **Behavioral Change Campaigns:** Nationwide health awareness campaigns targeting risk factors such as tobacco use, unhealthy diets, and physical inactivity could help reduce NCD prevalence. Utilizing local health workers and community-based programs can help reach underserved populations effectively.

## Conclusion

By adapting the initiative to India's unique demographic and socio-economic landscape, significant strides can be made toward reducing the NCD burden and achieving sustainable health outcomes, aligning with India's commitment to SDG 3.

**Analyze the potential economic and strategic benefits of the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC) for India. What are the challenges posed by current geopolitical tensions in West Asia on the IMEC's progress? (250 words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** What are the economic and strategic benefits of IMEC and the challenges faced by IMEC's progress?

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC) is a transcontinental infrastructure project announced in September 2023 on the sidelines of the G20 summit in New Delhi. The corridor aims to drastically reduce transit time and costs by 40% and 30%, respectively, compared to the traditional route through the Suez Canal.

### Economic Benefits for India

- **Boost in Trade and Connectivity:** The IMEC is poised to enhance India's access to both the Middle Eastern and European markets. The direct route between India, the UAE, and Europe would drastically reduce logistics costs and delivery time.
- **Logistical Efficiency and Cost Reduction:** The creation of initiatives like the Virtual Trade Corridor between India and the UAE will simplify customs processes and reduce administrative burdens, directly supporting the smooth flow of goods across the IMEC.
- **Energy Security:** The corridor's promise of energy pipelines and grids linking India, the UAE, and Europe could also contribute to energy diversification, supporting India's transition toward cleaner energy sources.

### Strategic Benefits for India

- **Strengthening Geopolitical Ties:** The IMEC presents India with an opportunity to reinforce its ties with critical countries in the Middle East and Europe. By playing a central role in this corridor, India can solidify its strategic partnerships with key Gulf countries such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan.
- **Regional Stability and Security:** India's leadership in the IMEC could foster greater regional cooperation in West Asia, which would help mitigate security risks.
- **Positioning India as a Global Supply Chain Hub:** By integrating itself into the IMEC, India aims to position itself as an alternative to China's dominance in global supply chains. India can enhance its manufacturing competitiveness by upgrading infrastructure and adopting more efficient logistics systems, thus attracting greater foreign investment.

### Challenges Posed by Geopolitical Tensions

- **Israel-Palestine Conflict:** The escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict in October 2023 has significantly delayed progress on the IMEC.
- **Internal Rivalries within the GCC:** Rivalries within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, such as between Saudi Arabia and Qatar, or tensions between Iran and the UAE, could also pose challenges.
- **Iran's Role and Regional Instability:** Iran's geopolitical position, particularly its rivalry with Israel and its tensions with the US and some GCC states, complicates the IMEC project.
- **Limited Focus on Non-Connectivity Aspects:** While connectivity is gaining momentum, other elements of the IMEC, such as clean energy export, energy grid linkages, and undersea fiber-optic cables, are still in the planning phase and cannot proceed until the security situation in the region stabilizes.

### Conclusion

The IMEC holds tremendous promise for India in terms of boosting trade, energy security, and geopolitical standing. The establishment of an IMEC secretariat and a focus on regional stability and security will also be essential for the project's long-term success.

**Discuss the constitutional and political implications of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) in India. How can its implementation in conflict-prone regions be balanced with democratic values? (250 words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight constitutional and political implications of AFSPA and measures to align it with democratic values.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) has been a contentious law in India due to its significant implications for constitutional principles and democratic values.

**Constitutional Implications & Political Implications**

- **Conflict with Fundamental Rights:** AFSPA grants extensive powers to the armed forces, including immunity from prosecution, which risks violating Article 21 & Article 14. Internet bans and restrictions imposed alongside AFSPA infringe upon Article 19 eroding democratic freedoms.
- **Judicial Oversight and Accountability:** Recommendations by the Jeevan Reddy Committee (2005) and the Second Administrative Reforms Commission to repeal AFSPA highlight the need for accountability mechanisms. However, these suggestions remain unimplemented, raising questions about the state's commitment to balancing security with justice.
- **Ethnic Tensions and Governance Failures:** The Meitei-Kuki conflict, stemming from competing claims over Scheduled Tribe (ST) status and landownership, has exposed the limitations of a law-and-order-centric approach.
- **Regional Security Challenges:** The ongoing turmoil in neighboring Myanmar and Bangladesh adds external dimensions to the conflict. Mismanagement in Manipur risks destabilizing the broader Northeast region, critical to India's Act East Policy.

**Balancing AFSPA's Implementation with Democratic Values**

- **Political Dialogue:** Both the Centre and state government must engage Meitei and Kuki-Zomi communities in structured dialogue. Mediators and civil society groups should be involved to foster trust and promote inclusive solutions.
- **Administrative Reforms:** Rebuilding trust in governance requires strengthening local institutions and addressing socioeconomic disparities that fuel ethnic tensions. Efforts should focus on restoring livelihoods, improving infrastructure, and ensuring equitable development.
- **Gradual Rollback of AFSPA:** Following the model of its rollback in Tripura and Meghalaya, AFSPA should be gradually lifted as security conditions improve. A clear roadmap, tied to benchmarks like the recovery of looted weapons, is essential.
- **Strengthening Local Policing:** Develop and equip state police forces to reduce dependence on the armed forces. Community policing initiatives can play a key role in de-escalating tensions.

**Conclusion**

A collaborative approach, combining dialogue, governance reform, and security sector accountability, is imperative to align AFSPA's implementation with India's democratic values and constitutional principles.

**Analyze the reasons behind India's inability to produce a world-class public policy school despite being the largest democracy. Suggest measures to bridge this gap. (250 words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight reasons behind India's inability to produce world-class public schools and suggest measures

**Conclusion:** Way forward

India, despite being the world's largest democracy, has yet to establish a globally recognized public policy school.

## Reasons

- **Centralization of Power in the Executive:** In India, policymaking is dominated by the executive, with limited entry points for academics, think tanks, and civil society to influence decision-making. The legislature's weak oversight role over the executive further constrains the development of a deliberative policy ecosystem.
- **Lack of a Stable Policy Ecosystem:** Influence in India's policy sphere often depends on alignment with the ruling regime, leading to instability when governments change. This contrasts with more institutionalized democracies, where think tanks and policy institutions maintain influence regardless of political transitions.
- **Overemphasis on Western Models:** Indian policy schools often attempt to replicate Western models, which assume straightforward paths to influence through formal institutions. This approach overlooks India's complex, informal power dynamics, where caste hierarchies, regional elites, and grassroots movements shape governance.
- **Low Empathy for Ground Realities:** Many policy initiatives in India suffer from a lack of understanding of the lived realities of the population, leading to top-down approaches that fail to address local needs effectively. Public policy education in India has not prioritized cultivating empathy and practical adaptability among its students.

## Measures to Bridge the Gap

- **Designing Institutions Suited to India's Realities:** Public policy schools must integrate India's unique governance structure into their curricula, teaching students to navigate informal networks, regional power structures, and grassroots dynamics.
- **Strengthening Empathy and Grassroots Engagement:** Public policy programs should select candidates with a demonstrated commitment to public service and cultivate empathy for India's diverse population. Incorporate experiential learning through fieldwork, case studies, and community interactions to bridge the gap between theory and practice.
- **Promoting Independent Policy Research:** Establish policy incubators and think tanks within institutions to generate evidence-based research that addresses pressing governance challenges. Focus on applied research in areas critical to India's development, such as urban planning, public health, and education.
- **Fostering Partnerships and Collaborations:** Build partnerships with global institutions while tailoring programs to local realities. Engage with policymakers, think tanks and development professionals to create a practice-oriented curriculum.

## Conclusion

A public policy school grounded in these principles could not only transform governance in India but also serve as a model for other developing democracies.

## **"Discuss the implications of the U.S.'s retreat from the Paris Agreement on global climate negotiations and the principle of climate justice." (250 words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight implications of the U.S.'s retreat from the Paris Agreement.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The U.S.'s retreat from the Paris Agreement (PA) under the Trump administration reflected a broader shift in American climate policy that undermined international climate action and principles of climate justice.

## Implications for Global Climate Negotiations

- **Erosion of Multilateral Trust:** The U.S.'s withdrawal from the PA, coupled with its refusal to commit to global climate finance, damaged trust in multilateral frameworks. Developing nations, particularly those in the Global South, viewed the retreat as a shirking of responsibility by the world's largest historical emitter of greenhouse gases (GHGs).

- **Weakening of Climate Finance:** The U.S.'s opposition to "climate reparations" and funding mechanisms like the Green Climate Fund (GCF) hindered resource mobilization for vulnerable countries, forcing them to grapple with mitigation and adaptation challenges without adequate financial support.
- **Undermining Science and Innovation:** The dismantling of federal climate science programs and cuts to research on renewable energy and battery storage impaired global progress on clean energy technologies. This weakened the ability to meet the Paris Agreement's temperature targets and delayed the clean energy transition.

### Implications for the Principle of Climate Justice

- **Abdication of Historical Responsibility:** The U.S. is responsible for approximately 25% of global historical emissions. Its retreat undermined the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR), which holds developed nations accountable for their disproportionate contribution to climate change.
- **Exacerbation of Vulnerabilities:** Least-developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS), already bearing the brunt of climate impacts, suffered from reduced financial and technological support. This further entrenched inequities between the Global North and South.
- **Political Delegitimization of Climate Justice:** By opposing mechanisms like "climate reparations" and ending green subsidies, the U.S. de-emphasized the ethical responsibility of developed nations to aid vulnerable populations. This stymied progress in creating frameworks for equitable climate action.

### Conclusion

For equitable and effective climate action, it is crucial to rebuild trust, reinforce multilateral frameworks, and ensure developed nations uphold their commitments to climate justice.

### Diabetes is a growing public health concern globally and in India. Critically evaluate India's preparedness to meet the 2030 WHO targets for diabetes diagnosis and management." (250 words)

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** What is India's preparedness to meet WHO 2030 targets for diabetes management?

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Diabetes has emerged as a critical public health challenge globally, and India now leads in both prevalence and undiagnosed cases, with 212 million people living with the condition and 133 million over the age of 30 remaining untreated. The rise in diabetes cases in India, driven by lifestyle changes, dietary patterns, and tobacco use, poses significant barriers to achieving the WHO's 2030 target: ensuring 80% of people with diabetes are diagnosed and 80% of them achieve glycemetic control.

### India's Preparedness to Meet WHO 2030 Targets

- **Improved Diagnostic Criteria:** Recent studies incorporating fasting plasma glucose and HbA1c levels provide a more comprehensive assessment of diabetes prevalence. This helps identify undiagnosed cases, particularly in high-burden regions like South Asia.
- **Policy Support:** Initiatives under the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases, and Stroke (NPCDCS) aim to provide free screening and management services. Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) are being utilized to expand access to diagnostics.
- **Role of Technology:** Telemedicine services and mobile health units are increasingly deployed to reach underserved areas. Integration of digital health platforms supports patient tracking and follow-ups.



- **Awareness Campaigns:** National campaigns highlight lifestyle changes such as healthy diets and physical activity to mitigate diabetes risk factors.
- **Large Undiagnosed Population:** With 133 million people over 30 years of age undiagnosed, there is a significant gap in early detection. Many individuals remain asymptomatic or unaware of their condition, particularly in rural and underserved areas.
- **Lifestyle and Behavioral Factors:** Unhealthy diets rich in carbohydrates and saturated fats, sedentary lifestyles, and insufficient public focus on tobacco use as a diabetes risk factor exacerbate the problem. Tobacco use increases the risk of diabetes by 30-40%, yet its connection to diabetes is underemphasized in public health policies.
- **Healthcare Infrastructure Gaps:** Rural areas face significant deficits in diagnostic facilities and trained healthcare personnel. Poor integration of gestational diabetes management into maternal healthcare services increases the long-term risk for mothers and children.
- **Financial Barriers:** High out-of-pocket expenses for diabetes care deter many individuals from seeking timely diagnosis and treatment.
- **Lack of Coordinated Action:** Weak linkages between diagnostic services, treatment facilities, and community-based interventions hinder comprehensive diabetes management.

## Conclusion

While India has taken steps to address diabetes, the magnitude of the challenge requires intensified and coordinated efforts. Scaling up diagnosis, integrating comprehensive care at the primary level, and addressing lifestyle and behavioral factors, particularly tobacco use, are critical to meeting the 2030 WHO targets.

## Evaluate the need for robust healthcare infrastructure in high-altitude regions like the Himalayas. Discuss with examples from Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh.

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight the need for robust healthcare infrastructure in high-altitude regions

**Conclusion:** Way forward

High-altitude regions such as the Himalayas are not only known for their scenic beauty but also for the health challenges they present due to extreme environmental conditions. High-altitude sickness (HAS) is a significant concern for residents and tourists alike.

## Healthcare Needs in High-Altitude Regions

- **Addressing Altitude-Related Illnesses:** High-altitude sickness (HAS), including Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), High-Altitude Pulmonary Edema (HAPE), and High-Altitude Cerebral Edema (HACE), poses severe risks. Example: Ladakh has developed specialized facilities to handle such cases, but similar infrastructure is sparse in other Himalayan states.
- **Lack of Immediate Medical Facilities:** Remote regions often lack well-equipped hospitals or clinics to handle emergencies. Example: In Himachal Pradesh, areas like Lahaul-Spiti have limited healthcare facilities, forcing patients to travel to Shimla or Chandigarh for advanced care.
- **Emergency Response Limitations:** Rapid medical evacuations are essential in high-altitude emergencies but are hindered by the absence of air-ambulance services and adequate road connectivity. Example: The rugged terrain in Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh delays response times, leading to preventable fatalities.
- **Increasing Tourism and Adventure Activities:** The influx of tourists and trekkers increases the demand for preventive and emergency healthcare services. Example: Uttarakhand, a hub for trekking and mountaineering, often witnesses tourist fatalities due to unpreparedness for high-altitude conditions.

## Recommendations

- **Establishing Advanced Medical Facilities:** Create state-of-the-art hospitals equipped to handle high-altitude ailments in major Himalayan tourist hubs. Equip facilities with portable hyperbaric chambers, supplemental oxygen, and necessary medications like acetazolamide and dexamethasone.
- **Implementing Mandatory Health Screening:** Introduce mandatory health checks at base points, similar to the Inner Line Permit system in Ladakh. Example: Screenings for trekkers in Lahaul-Spiti could significantly reduce emergency cases.
- **Promoting Acclimatization Practices:** Enforce guidelines for gradual ascent, limiting daily altitude gain to no more than 500 meters above 3,000 meters. Conduct awareness campaigns on the risks of HAS and the importance of acclimatization.
- **Air-Ambulance Services:** Equip Himalayan states with air-ambulance facilities for rapid medical evacuation. Example: Ladakh's remote villages could benefit significantly from such services.

### Conclusion

Drawing lessons from Ladakh's specialized healthcare efforts and expanding such measures across other Himalayan states will enhance resilience and preparedness in these remote yet vital regions.

### Discuss the concept of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC). How does CBAM undermine this principle in the context of international climate agreements?

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Describe concept of CBDR & CBDR-RC and how CBAM undermine climate agreements.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR), principle of international environmental law establish that all states are responsible for addressing global environmental destruction yet not equally responsible. CBDR was formalized in international law at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro. The CBDR concept has evolved into CBDR-RC with the addition of Respective Capacities term to it, in the Paris Accord. CBDR-RC principle, has since then been a key element in international environmental agreements involving climate change. The principle recognizes historical differences in the contributions of developed and developing States to the creation of global environmental problems like climate change, global warming. At the same time, the principle also recognizes the differences in the economic and technical capacities of developed and developing countries to tackle these problems.

### How CBAM Undermines CBDR-RC

- **Shifting the Burden to Developing Countries:** CBAM forces exporters from developing countries to bear additional costs for complying with EU carbon pricing standards. This contradicts the CBDR-RC principle, which requires developed countries to support rather than penalize developing nations for their lower emissions capabilities and resources.
- **Neglecting Historical Responsibilities:** CBAM applies a uniform tax based on carbon content, ignoring the historical emissions of developed countries like EU members. It disproportionately impacts developing nations that have contributed minimally to historical greenhouse gas concentrations.
- **Trade Barriers and Economic Inequality:** CBAM acts as a trade barrier, making exports from developing countries less competitive in global markets. For example, countries like India and Indonesia, heavily reliant on carbon-intensive industries, may face significant economic disadvantages.
- **Lack of Financial and Technological Support:** CBDR-RC mandates developed nations to assist developing countries with climate adaptation and mitigation. However, CBAM imposes additional compliance costs on these countries without ensuring reciprocal financial or technological support.

- **Risk of Climate Colonialism:** CBAM can be perceived as a form of "climate colonialism," where developed nations impose their climate standards on developing countries without accounting for their unique developmental needs and constraints.

### Conclusion

Protectionist measures like CBAM undermine the cooperative efforts essential for tackling global climate challenges. India's criticism of CBAM as "discriminatory" is justified, as it disproportionately burdens developing nations while disregarding historical emissions and differences in capacities. By championing equity-based approaches, advocating for revenue redistribution, and upholding the principles of CBDR-RC, India can enhance its role as a leader in international climate negotiations and foster a more just and inclusive approach to combating climate change.

**"Without commonly shared moral values, even a free market system cannot thrive." Analyze this statement in light of the relationship between ethical governance and economic development. (150 words, 10 marks)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight the role of morals and ethics as the basis of economic development

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The statement, "*Without commonly shared moral values, even a free market system cannot thrive,*" highlights the interplay between ethical governance, moral values, and economic development. It underscores that a thriving economy, even in a free market framework, depends not only on policies and systems but also on a foundation of shared ethical principles.

### Role of Ethical Governance in Economic Development

- **Building Trust in Institutions:** Ethical governance fosters transparency, accountability, and fairness in public institutions, which are essential for a functioning economy. When citizens and businesses trust institutions, they are more likely to engage in productive economic activities, pay taxes, and invest in the market.
- **Reducing Corruption:** Corruption erodes public confidence, misallocates resources, and stifles innovation. For instance, countries with higher levels of corruption, such as Somalia or Venezuela, struggle to attract foreign investments despite having abundant natural resources.
- **Ensuring Fair Market Practices:** Ethical governance enforces anti-monopoly laws and protects smaller businesses from exploitation by dominant players. This ensures a level playing field, encouraging innovation and competition, which are vital for economic growth.

### Free Markets and the Need for Ethical Frameworks

- **Environmental Degradation:** Unchecked industrialization without regard for environmental ethics can result in long-term damage, such as climate change.
- **Exploitation of Consumers:** Companies with monopolistic power may overcharge consumers or provide substandard products.
- **Income Inequalities:** The absence of ethical business practices exacerbates inequalities, hampering economic growth by reducing the purchasing power of large sections of society.

### Moral Values as the Foundation of Markets

- **Promoting Social Stability:** Shared moral values, such as honesty and fairness, reduce economic uncertainties and enable smooth transactions.
- **Encouraging Responsible Business Practices:** Companies adhering to ethical standards contribute to sustainable development. Unilever's commitment to sustainable sourcing enhances its brand value and profitability while aligning with global sustainability goals.

- **Preventing Exploitative Practices:** Moral values prevent exploitation of vulnerable groups, ensuring inclusive growth. For instance, ethical labor practices help avoid social upheaval, as seen in the Fair Trade movement.

### Conclusion

Policymakers must ensure that economic growth aligns with societal values, creating a virtuous cycle of ethical governance and sustainable development.

**“Ensuring access to justice for undertrial prisoners is a reflection of an ethical justice system.” Discuss the ethical principles involved in implementing BNSS provisions effectively. (150 words, 10 marks)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight ethical principles involved in implementing BNSS provisions effectively

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The plight of undertrial prisoners in India highlights systemic issues in the justice delivery system. The **Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023**, particularly Section 479, aims to address these concerns by introducing relaxed bail standards for first-time offenders.

### Ethical Principles Involved

- **Justice and Fairness:** The principle of justice demands that individuals are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Prolonged detention of undertrials, who constitute over 75% of India's prison population (as per the Prison Statistics India 2022), violates their right to timely justice. Section 479 of the BNSS, mandating bail for first-time offenders after serving one-third of the maximum sentence, upholds the ethical principle of fairness by preventing unnecessary incarceration.
- **Equity and Accessibility:** Justice must be accessible to all, regardless of socio-economic status. Many undertrials remain imprisoned because they cannot afford bail or legal aid. Section 479's provision for automatic bail applications by jail superintendents ensures that systemic inequities do not hinder access to justice.
- **Human Dignity:** Prolonged detention in overcrowded prisons, often without conviction, undermines the inherent dignity of individuals. By addressing the issue of undertrials, the BNSS aligns with the ethical responsibility of safeguarding human dignity.
- **Accountability and Rule of Law:** Effective implementation of Section 479 reflects the state's ethical duty to ensure that the rule of law is not compromised by procedural delays or negligence. The Supreme Court's directive for retrospective application of the BNSS demonstrates institutional accountability.
- **Proportionality:** The ethical principle of proportionality emphasizes that restrictions on liberty must align with the gravity of the offense. BNSS provisions for first-time offenders ensure that imprisonment is not disproportionately punitive for minor infractions.

### Conclusion

Ethical governance, coupled with judicial accountability, can ensure that undertrial prisoners are treated with fairness and dignity, aligning the justice system with constitutional values and global human rights standards.

**“Planetary crises disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, especially children.” Discuss the implications of UNICEF's findings on climate-related challenges for child welfare policies in India. (250 words, 15 marks)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Key implications of UNICEF findings on child welfare policies

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The UNICEF State of the World's Children 2024 (SOWC-2024) report highlights how planetary crises, encompassing climate destabilization, biodiversity loss, and pollution, disproportionately impact children, particularly in vulnerable regions like South Asia.

### Key Challenges Identified by UNICEF

- **Health Impacts**
  - **Pollution:** The developing lungs, brains, and immune systems of children are acutely affected by air and water pollution.
  - **Vector-Borne Diseases:** Rising temperatures fuel diseases like dengue and malaria.
  - **Waterborne Diseases:** Contaminated water from floods exacerbates diarrhea, a major cause of child mortality.
- **Food Security:** Climate-induced disruptions to agriculture threaten children's nutrition and increase risks of stunting and malnutrition.
- **Education:** Over 400 million children globally have experienced school closures due to climate disasters, impeding learning and economic prospects.
- **Psychosocial Impacts:** Exposure to extreme weather and displacement fuels trauma, anxiety, and helplessness among children.
- **Digital Divide:** Low internet penetration in regions like South Asia impedes access to digital learning and innovation, compounding inequality.

### Implications for India's Child Welfare Policies

- **Health Infrastructure Enhancement:** Expand healthcare outreach programs to provide vaccinations, nutritional supplements, and treatments for climate-related diseases. Prioritize air and water quality improvement through stricter regulations and investments in clean energy.
- **Climate-Resilient Nutrition Strategies:** Strengthen food distribution systems like the Mid-Day Meal Scheme to ensure continuity during climate crises. Promote climate-resilient crops and agricultural practices to enhance food security.
- **Education Continuity:** Develop disaster-resilient schools and mobile learning solutions to prevent education disruption. Integrate climate education into curricula to prepare children for future environmental challenges.
- **Child-Friendly Disaster Management:** Include child-specific provisions in disaster management plans, such as safe spaces in relief camps and targeted psychosocial support. Enhance the role of local governments in identifying and safeguarding vulnerable children during crises.
- **Digital Inclusion:** Bridge the digital divide through affordable internet access and investments in rural digital infrastructure under initiatives like Digital India. Strengthen online safety measures to protect children from exploitation and cyber risks.
- **Targeting Climate Hotspots:** Prioritize climate mitigation and adaptation efforts in regions like eastern India, which face frequent floods, and northern hill states, prone to glacial melt impacts. Leverage data-driven tools to identify the most vulnerable children and provide targeted aid.

### Conclusion

The findings of the SOWC-2024 report serve as a call to action. Planetary crises are not just environmental challenges but moral imperatives that require safeguarding the rights and futures of the most vulnerable—our children. By embedding resilience, inclusivity, and sustainability into policies, India can mitigate these challenges and pave the way for a healthier, safer, and equitable future for its children.

**Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) poses a significant global health threat. Analyze how improved immunization coverage can aid in mitigating AMR in India under the 'One Health' framework. (250 words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** How Improved Immunization Coverage Can Mitigate AMR?

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a pressing global health issue, with overuse and misuse of antibiotics driving its rise. In India, a country with high antibiotic consumption and significant healthcare disparities, the role of vaccines is critical in mitigating AMR. Vaccines such as the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) and Haemophilus influenzae vaccine (Hib) can reduce disease burden, antibiotic misuse, and AMR risk, especially when implemented under the 'One Health' framework integrating human, animal, and environmental health.

### How Improved Immunization Coverage Can Mitigate AMR

- **Reduction in Disease Burden:** Diseases caused by Streptococcus pneumoniae and Haemophilus influenzae, including pneumonia, otitis media, and meningitis, lead to high antibiotic use.
- **Curbing Unnecessary Antibiotic Use:** Unvaccinated children are more likely to suffer from preventable infections, leading to antibiotic misuse, even for viral or self-limiting conditions. Enhanced immunization directly reduces the need for antibiotics, slowing the emergence of AMR strains.
- **Equitable Antibiotic Usage:** While antibiotic consumption reduction is most pronounced in wealthier groups due to affordability, vaccination ensures that even economically disadvantaged groups benefit from reduced disease burden, leading to more equitable antibiotic usage.
- **Impact on Livestock and Zoonotic Diseases:** Under the 'One Health' approach, expanding vaccination programs to livestock can reduce the need for antibiotics in animal husbandry, addressing AMR in both humans and animals.
- **Environmental Protection:** By reducing antibiotic consumption, vaccination indirectly minimizes antibiotic residues in the environment, curtailing the proliferation of resistant strains in water and soil.

### Conclusion

Vaccination is a vital, yet underutilized, tool in India's fight against AMR. Increasing coverage of PCV and Hib vaccines can prevent illnesses, reduce unnecessary antibiotic use, and promote equitable healthcare access. Under the 'One Health' framework, integrating immunization with efforts to address human, animal, and environmental health can significantly mitigate AMR, safeguarding public health for future generations.

**The India-UAE Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) reflects a nuanced approach to balancing investment protection and sovereign regulatory rights. Discuss the key changes introduced in this treaty compared to India's 2015 Model BIT and their implications for foreign investments. (250 words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight key changes in BIT and implications for foreign investments

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The recently signed India-UAE Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) reflects a nuanced approach to balancing investment protection with the sovereign regulatory rights of states. While it draws from India's 2015 Model BIT, significant departures reveal evolving priorities in India's investment treaty practices. These changes aim to address the concerns of foreign investors, streamline investor-state dispute resolution, and limit the discretion of arbitration tribunals.

### Key Changes Introduced in the India-UAE BIT

- **Reduced Waiting Period for Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS)**
  - **2015 Model BIT:** Mandated exhaustion of local remedies for five years before initiating ISDS.
  - **India-UAE BIT:** Reduces this period to three years, addressing concerns of delays in India's overburdened judiciary.
- **Definition of Investment**
  - **2015 Model BIT:** Included a criterion that the investment must be "significant for the development" of the host state, leaving room for subjective interpretation.
  - **India-UAE BIT:** Omits this requirement, instead of focusing on objective economic characteristics like capital commitment, profit expectation, and risk assumption.
- **Clarity on Treatment Standards**
  - **2015 Model BIT:** Linked violations such as denial of justice and due process breaches to Customary International Law (CIL).
  - **India-UAE BIT:** Removes reference to CIL, specifying clear grounds for treaty violations.
- **Prohibition of Third-Party Funding and Fraudulent Investments:** Introduces explicit disallowance of third-party funding in disputes and denies ISDS access in cases of alleged fraud or corruption.
- **Exclusion of Most Favored Nation (MFN) Clause and Taxation Measures:** Like the Model BIT, excludes MFN provisions and bars the jurisdiction of ISDS tribunals over taxation measures, even if they are abusive.

#### Implications for Foreign Investments

- **Improved Investment Climate:** Reduced ISDS waiting period and clearer investment definitions create a more investor-friendly framework, fostering confidence, especially among UAE investors.
- **Regulatory Sovereignty:** Exclusions of MFN clauses, taxation measures, and domestic judicial decisions reinforce India's ability to regulate in the public interest while balancing investment protection.
- **Streamlined Arbitration:** By curbing arbitral discretion and excluding ambiguous criteria like CIL references, the treaty aligns with India's aim of reducing treaty abuse and arbitration costs.
- **Strengthening Bilateral Ties:** The treaty aligns with India's broader economic strategy, complementing the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) to attract UAE investments in sectors like infrastructure and energy.

#### Conclusion

The continuity and innovation in India's BIT practices underscore a pragmatic approach to fostering a robust investment ecosystem.

**Evaluate the decline in public-private partnerships (PPPs) in urban infrastructure projects over the last decade. Suggest measures to enhance their viability and effectiveness.**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight factors for the decline of PPPs and measures to enhance their effectiveness

**Conclusion:** Way forward

India's urban population is projected to grow significantly in the coming decades, from 400 million to 800 million by 2050, necessitating large-scale urban infrastructure investments. However, despite the critical need for financial resources, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in urban infrastructure have seen a marked decline in the past decade.

#### Factors Contributing to the Decline of PPPs in Urban Infrastructure Projects

- **Inadequate Municipal Finances:** Municipal finances, which form a crucial part of urban infrastructure funding, have remained stagnant, contributing only 1% of India's GDP over the past few decades.
- **Revenue Collection Inefficiencies:** Inefficiencies in tax collection, particularly property taxes, significantly impact municipal revenues.
- **Low Absorptive Capacity:** Even when funding is available, Indian cities struggle to utilize it effectively. The Fifteenth Finance Commission report indicates that about 23% of municipal revenue remains unspent. This indicates a lack of capacity to absorb available funds and manage large-scale urban infrastructure projects.
- **Decline in PPP Investments:** The viability of PPPs has been severely impacted by a lack of project-specific revenues, making it difficult to ensure the financial sustainability of these projects. Without strong financial backing, proper risk-sharing mechanisms, and guaranteed revenue streams, PPP projects have become less attractive to private investors.

### Measures to Enhance the Viability and Effectiveness of PPPs

- **Strengthening Municipal Finances:** A key reform to enhance PPPs would involve improving municipal financial health. This includes empowering municipal governments with greater financial autonomy and ensuring they can raise revenue independently.
- **Decoupling Project Preparation from Financial Assistance:** Project preparation should be decoupled from financial assistance, ensuring that projects are well-thought-out, and addressing long-term sustainability and resilience, especially in the context of climate change.
- **Leveraging Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):** To enhance the efficiency of urban service delivery, particularly in public transport, leveraging Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) can be transformative.
- **Reforming Regulatory and Policy Framework:** A stable and predictable regulatory environment is essential to attract private investment in PPPs. Reforms should focus on simplifying the regulatory approval process, ensuring transparency, and reducing project delays.

### Conclusion

By addressing these financial and structural challenges, India can revitalize its PPP framework and effectively meet the urban infrastructure needs of its growing cities, ensuring sustainable and inclusive urban development for the future.

**Discuss the potential threats posed by satellite pollutants, such as aluminum oxide, to the ozone layer. Evaluate the role of international agreements like the Montreal Protocol in addressing such emerging challenges. (250 words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Identify threats posed by satellite pollutants and the role of the Montreal Protocol in dealing with such challenges.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

With more than 10,000 active satellites currently in orbit, and projections suggesting a rise to over 100,000 by the 2030s and potentially half a million in the future, satellite pollution is becoming a growing concern for atmospheric scientists. The pollutants released during the burn-up of satellites at the end of their life cycle and from rocket launches present potential threats to the Earth's atmosphere, particularly the ozone layer.

### Satellite Pollution and Its Impact on the Ozone Layer

- **Satellite Burn-Up and Pollutant Emissions:** Satellites, at the end of their operational life, reenter the Earth's atmosphere and burn up. However, during this process, pollutants such as aluminum



oxide, black carbon, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and chlorine gases are released into the stratosphere.

- **Threats to the Ozone Layer:** The ozone layer, which protects Earth from harmful ultraviolet radiation, is highly vulnerable to pollutants. Aluminum oxide, a prominent pollutant from satellite reentries, is a known catalyst for ozone depletion. It can break down ozone molecules, diminishing the layer's ability to absorb UV rays, which are harmful to both humans and ecosystems.
- **The Ripple Effect of Satellite Pollution:** While the immediate consequences of satellite pollution may seem distant, even small changes in the atmosphere can have far-reaching effects. Atmospheric chemistry, which has evolved over billions of years to create a stable environment for life, is highly sensitive to pollutants. Minor disruptions, like the introduction of aluminum oxide and other metals, can lead to unpredictable and potentially catastrophic changes in atmospheric conditions.

### Role of the Montreal Protocol in Addressing Satellite Pollution

- **Success of the Montreal Protocol:** The Montreal Protocol, signed in 1987, was a groundbreaking international agreement aimed at phasing out the production and use of substances that deplete the ozone layer, such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).
- **Limitations of the Montreal Protocol:** While the Montreal Protocol has been highly effective in addressing the issue of ozone depletion caused by industrial chemicals, it does not specifically cover pollutants from satellite reentries and rocket launches. The release of aluminum oxide and other metals from satellites is not currently regulated under this agreement, leaving a significant gap in the protection of the ozone layer.
- **Potential for Expansion of the Montreal Protocol:** There is a clear need for the international community to expand the scope of the Montreal Protocol or develop a new framework to include pollutants from space activities.
- **Technological Innovations:** The development of cleaner propulsion systems, the use of materials that minimize environmental harm, and the adoption of sustainable satellite disposal practices (such as controlled reentry or space debris removal) can help reduce the amount of pollutants released into the atmosphere.

### Conclusion

Through global collaboration, technological advancements, and expanded international agreements, the potential threats from satellite pollutants can be mitigated, ensuring the long-term protection of the ozone layer and the Earth's atmosphere.

### Discuss the challenges faced by developing countries in securing adequate climate financing under the UNFCCC framework. What role can initiatives like the International Solar Alliance play in addressing these challenges? (250 words)

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight challenges faced in securing climate financing and the role of ISA in these challenges

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Climate financing is a critical aspect of addressing climate change, especially for developing countries that face disproportionate vulnerability while lacking adequate resources.

### Challenges Faced by Developing Countries in Securing Climate Financing

- **Inadequate Fund Mobilization:** Despite the commitment of developed countries under the Paris Agreement to mobilize \$100 billion annually by 2020, this target remains unmet. The lack of sufficient funds hampers climate adaptation and mitigation efforts in vulnerable countries.

- **Complex Access Mechanisms:** Climate funds like the Green Climate Fund (GCF) have stringent application processes and require technical expertise, which many developing countries lack. This delays project approvals and disbursement of funds.
- **High Dependence on Loans:** Much of the climate financing is offered in the form of loans rather than grants, increasing the debt burden on developing nations already struggling with fiscal deficits.
- **Limited Private Sector Participation:** Developing countries often fail to attract private sector investments due to perceived risks, such as political instability, lack of regulatory frameworks, and weak financial institutions.

### Role of Initiatives like the International Solar Alliance

- **Alternative Financing Models:** ISA mobilizes concessional financing for solar projects, creating an alternative funding stream independent of UNFCCC mechanisms. This reduces reliance on unpredictable international climate funds.
- **Enhancing Regional Collaboration:** ISA fosters partnerships between developing nations, sharing technology, expertise, and resources to scale solar energy deployment. Such cooperation can reduce costs and dependence on developed countries.
- **Strengthening Negotiation Power:** The success of ISA can serve as a model to unite the Global South at multilateral fora, increasing their bargaining power to demand equitable climate financing.
- **Scaling Renewable Energy:** ISA contributes to the energy transition in developing nations, reducing their carbon footprint and increasing resilience to climate impacts. This complements adaptation needs often neglected by international finance.
- **Building Resilience and Equity:** ISA prioritizes vulnerable nations such as Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), promoting equitable access to renewable energy technologies.

### Conclusion

The inadequacies of CoP 29 in securing sufficient climate finance underscore the need for alternative approaches. Moving forward, the Global South must leverage platforms like ISA to enhance regional collaboration and use multilateral fora to press developed nations for greater financial commitments and innovative mechanisms to address the climate crisis.

### Evaluate the potential impact of the “One Nation One Subscription” scheme on India's research and development ecosystem. How does it align with the objectives of NEP 2020 and Viksit Bharat@2047? (250 words)

**Introduction:** Define ONOS

**Body:** Highlight the impact of ONOS on India's R&D Ecosystem and how it aligns with NEP.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The “One Nation One Subscription” (ONOS) scheme, approved by the Union Cabinet, is a transformative initiative aimed at providing universal access to international scholarly research articles and journals to all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Research & Development (R&D) Institutions managed by the government. It aligns with the broader vision of fostering a robust research culture in India and realizing the goals of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat@2047.

### Potential Impact on India's R&D Ecosystem

- **Bridging Regional Disparities:** ONOS ensures access to international scholarly resources for over 1.8 crore students, faculty, and researchers across 6,300 government institutions, including those in tier-2 and tier-3 cities.

- **Democratization of Knowledge:** By eliminating cost barriers, the scheme enables researchers from underfunded and rural institutions to access high-quality global research, fostering inclusive growth in the R&D landscape.
- **Improved Research Output:** Free access to high-impact journals is expected to improve the quantity and quality of publications by Indian researchers, enhancing India's global scientific standing.
- **Support for ANRF:** ONOS complements the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) by expanding access to research resources, thereby promoting a culture of innovation and R&D in government-funded institutions.

#### Alignment with NEP 2020 and Viksit Bharat@2047

- **NEP 2020**
  - **Equitable Access:** ONOS aligns with the NEP's focus on equitable access to quality education and resources, fostering a research-driven academic environment.
  - **Interdisciplinary Learning:** By promoting access to resources across disciplines, it supports NEP's call for multidisciplinary education and research.
  - **National Research Foundation:** ONOS complements the NEP's objective of creating a strong research foundation through ANRF, enabling global competitiveness.
- **Viksit Bharat@2047**
  - **Building Knowledge Capital:** The scheme strengthens India's intellectual capabilities, essential for achieving economic self-reliance and global leadership in R&D.
  - **Innovation-Driven Growth:** Enhanced access to research resources accelerates innovation, supporting the vision of a technologically advanced India by 2047.
  - **Inclusive Development:** ONOS fosters social and regional equity by ensuring no researcher is left behind, irrespective of their geographic or institutional background.

#### Conclusion

The One Nation One Subscription scheme is a landmark initiative with the potential to revolutionize India's R&D ecosystem.

**Examine the ideological foundations of the Indian Constitution in ensuring an egalitarian society. How has neoliberalism affected the realization of these constitutional principles? (250 words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight the ideological foundations of the Constitution and how has neoliberalism affected it.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Indian Constitution is rooted in a vision of creating an egalitarian society through its ideological framework based on liberalism and social justice.

#### Ideological Foundations of the Indian Constitution

- **Liberal Framework with State Intervention:** The Constitution adopts liberal values, emphasizing individual freedom and equal opportunities. However, the framers recognized that social and economic inequalities prevalent during independence required the state to actively intervene to level the playing field.
- **Egalitarian Society through Justice and Equity:**
  - **Fundamental Rights (Part III):** Guarantee civil liberties, prohibit discrimination (Article 15), and ensure equality before the law (Article 14).
  - **Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV):**
    - **Article 38(2):** Seeks to minimize income and status inequalities.

- **Article 39(b) & (c):** Advocates equitable resource distribution and prevents wealth concentration.
  - **Preamble:** Envisions justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity, underscoring the ideals of political, social, and economic justice.
- **Judicial Interpretations:** In *D.S. Nakara & Others vs Union of India (1982)*, the Supreme Court highlighted socialism as a framework for ensuring social security. In *Samatha vs the State of Andhra Pradesh (1997)*, the Court underscored the importance of reducing income inequalities to establish an egalitarian social order.

### Impact of Neoliberalism on Constitutional Principles

- **Rising Economic Inequality:** Reports like Lucas Chancel and Thomas Piketty's "Indian Income Inequality" (2019) and Oxfam's 2023 data reveal the widening gap between the wealthy and the poor, with extreme wealth concentration violating Articles 38 and 39.
- **Erosion of the Welfare State:** Neoliberalism prioritized private capital investment over state-led welfare initiatives, leading to reduced government spending on health, education, and social security.
- **Social Inequality Overlapping with Economic Inequality:** Constitutional ideals of equal opportunity (Article 16) and inclusive growth are undermined as wealth becomes increasingly concentrated in specific social groups.
- **Extreme Wage Disparities:** The State of Inequality in India Report (2022) highlights stark income disparities, with the top 10% earning over ₹25,000 a month while 90% earn less. The gap between corporate executives and minimum wage earners has widened drastically.

### Conclusion

As Constitution Day marks 75 years, it serves as a reminder to uphold the vision of justice and equality enshrined in the Constitution.

### Discuss the evolution of the Preamble of the Indian Constitution. How have the terms 'socialist' and 'secular' shaped India's democratic framework? (250 words)

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Highlight the evolution of the Preamble and the impact of "socialist" and "secular" frameworks.

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Preamble of the Indian Constitution reflects the philosophy and objectives behind its drafting.

### Evolution of the Preamble of the Indian Constitution

- **Drafting and Adoption of the Original Preamble:** The original Preamble, adopted on November 26, 1949, declared India as a Sovereign, Democratic, Republic. The Constituent Assembly consciously excluded the words 'Socialist' and 'Secular', arguing that the economic ideology and relationship between religion and state should evolve with time and the will of the people.
- **Judicial Interpretations: Berubari Case (1960):** The Supreme Court initially held that the Preamble was not part of the Constitution. *Kesavananda Bharati Case (1973):* The court reversed its stance, declaring the Preamble a part of the Constitution and emphasizing its role in reflecting the vision and values of the document.
- **Amendment through the 42nd Constitutional Amendment (1976):** During the Emergency (1975-77), the words 'Socialist,' 'Secular,' and 'Integrity' were added to the Preamble. This amendment explicitly aligned the Preamble with the evolving socio-political ethos of India, reinforcing the welfare state model and religious neutrality.
- **Contemporary Challenges to the Amendment:** Opponents argued that the terms were ideologically imposed during the Emergency, and any modification to the Preamble should not alter

its original spirit. The Supreme Court dismissed these challenges, reaffirming the amendability of the Preamble under the Constitution's living document doctrine.

### Impact of 'Socialist' and 'Secular' on India's Democratic Framework

- **Socialist Framework:** Emphasizes economic justice, equality of opportunity, and a welfare state while allowing private enterprise. Post-independence democratic socialism guided central planning and state-led industrialization. After 1991, India transitioned to a market-oriented economy, retaining welfare-oriented programs like MGNREGA, subsidized food grains, and direct benefit transfers. Framework balances growth with equity, addressing poverty and inequality while fostering economic development.
- **Secular Framework:** Promotes religious neutrality and the state's role in reforming practices for societal welfare, contrasting with Western secularism's strict separation of religion and state. Constitutional provisions (Articles 25–28) ensure freedom of religion and equality. The state actively reforms practices like untouchability and manages secular aspects of religious institutions. The framework upholds India's 'unity in diversity' by preventing communal dominance and ensuring harmony in a multi-religious society.

### Conclusion

The inclusion of 'Socialist' and 'Secular' in the Preamble reinforces India's commitment to economic equity and religious neutrality. While challenges such as growing inequality and communal tensions persist, these principles serve as guiding ideals for governance. By addressing contemporary challenges through welfare measures and fostering harmony, India continues to evolve as a vibrant and inclusive democracy.

### Critically analyze the implications of China's expanding defense capabilities on India's security framework. How can India leverage international partnerships to address these challenges? (250 words)

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** Implications of China expanding defense capabilities on security framework for India

**Conclusion:** Way forward

China's rapid and expansive military modernization, combined with its growing assertiveness in regional territorial disputes, poses a serious challenge to India's security framework.

### Implications for India's security

- **Strategic Vulnerabilities in the Region:** China's military weight, particularly in terms of naval and missile capabilities, gives it an edge in the Indo-Pacific and along its disputed borders with India.
- **Regional Balance of Power:** China's assertiveness on territorial disputes with its neighbors, including India, further complicates regional dynamics. The ongoing territorial tensions in areas such as the South China Sea and the Eastern Himalayas serve as points of friction between China and many countries in the region, including India.
- **Shifting US Presence and Global Defense Shifts:** The US military's involvement in Asia has traditionally been a stabilizing factor, but its ability to counter China's growing dominance is increasingly under strain.
- **Defense Production and Industrial Modernization:** India's defense industrial base, while progressing, has yet to meet the scale required to close the gap with China. China's defense production capacity, supported by its vast industrial base, outpaces that of India, requiring India to modernize its defense production and boost indigenous capabilities.

### Leveraging International Partnerships to Address These Challenges

- **Enhanced Defense Cooperation with Regional Partners:** India has begun to foster closer defense ties with Australia, Japan, & United States. These partnerships help India to not only modernize its defense capabilities but also gain access to advanced technologies & military assets that it might not be able to produce domestically in the short term.
- **Strategic Alliances with the US and Western Partners:** India's defense cooperation with the United States, France, and other Western powers provides a strategic buffer against China's military power. The defense industrial roadmaps signed with the US and France are crucial for enhancing India's indigenous defense production capabilities.
- **Strengthening Multilateral Security Frameworks:** India should continue to engage in multilateral security forums such as the Quad (with the US, Japan, and Australia), which provides a platform for collective action against common threats, including China's growing influence.
- **Increased Military Diplomacy:** India's growing military diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific and beyond, through joint exercises, defense dialogues, and military exchanges, will be pivotal in fostering regional security.

### Conclusion

India's ability to manage the implications of China's expanding defense capabilities hinges on its capacity to adapt its defense policies, modernize its defense sector, and build strong international partnerships.

### The Election Commission of India is a cornerstone of Indian democracy, yet it faces significant challenges. Discuss the structural and operational reforms needed to ensure its impartiality and efficacy. (250 words)

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** What are the challenges and reforms required to ensure ECI impartiality and efficacy?

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The Election Commission of India (ECI) established under Article 324 has been instrumental in ensuring free and fair elections, a cornerstone of India's democracy.

### Challenges Faced by the ECI

- **Structural Issues:** The Act governing the procedure and service conditions of Election Commissioners (2023) lacks sufficient safeguards. The partial protection for the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the absence of similar protection for other Election Commissioners leave them vulnerable to executive influence. A partisan collegium for the appointment of Election Commissioners raises doubts about neutrality.
- **Operational Concerns:** The unchecked use of black money and criminalization of politics undermines democratic integrity. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, 46% of members had criminal cases, and 93% were crorepatists. Political defections persist, with the Anti-Defection Law proving ineffective against horse-trading. Gender imbalance in political representation remains significant, despite improvements in voter turnout and electoral rolls.

### Proposed Reforms

- **Structural Reforms**
  - **Appointment Process:** Introduce a non-partisan and transparent mechanism for appointing Election Commissioners, ensuring their independence from executive influence.
  - **Tenure Protection:** Provide all Election Commissioners with protection from arbitrary removal, similar to the Chief Election Commissioner.
  - **Enhanced Autonomy:** Strengthen ECI's financial independence by delinking its budget from the Ministry of Law and Justice.
- **Operational Reforms**

- **State Funding of Political Parties:** Establish a National Election Fund for tax-free donations, audited independently, and allocated based on electoral performance to curb reliance on private funding.
- **Expenditure Regulation:** Impose a ceiling on political parties' election expenditures, similar to candidate limits.
- **Strengthening Gender Representation:** Ensure effective implementation of the 33% reservation for women in Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabhas by 2029.
- **Legislative Measures**
  - **Amend Anti-Defection Law:** Tighten provisions to address the evolving nature of political defections and horse-trading.
  - **Criminalization of Politics:** Bar candidates with serious criminal charges from contesting elections until acquitted.

## Conclusion

The Election Commission of India has demonstrated remarkable resilience in upholding democratic values. Only through comprehensive reforms can India ensure that its elections remain a true reflection of the will of its people.

## Discuss the potential benefits and challenges of implementing the National Register of Indian Citizens (NRI) in the context of governance, national security, and welfare delivery. (250 words)

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** What are the benefits and challenges of implementing NRI in India?

**Conclusion:** Way forward

The National Register of Indian Citizens (NRI), grounded in the Citizenship Act, of 1955, represents a significant initiative aimed at creating a definitive database of Indian citizens.

## Benefits of Implementing the NRI

- **Governance**
  - **Streamlined Identity Verification:** The NRI, by maintaining a verified database, reduces identity fraud and duplication, which currently plague governance systems.
  - **Efficient Public Service Delivery:** Targeted welfare programs can ensure that benefits reach only legitimate citizens, improving efficiency and reducing leakages.
- **National Security**
  - **Robust Database of Citizens and Non-Citizens:** A verified registry distinguishes citizens from non-citizens, addressing illegal immigration concerns, especially in border states.
  - **Prevention of Security Threats:** Accurate records help law enforcement and intelligence agencies monitor potential risks more effectively, enhancing counter-terrorism measures.
- **Welfare Delivery**
  - **Equitable Distribution of Resources:** Ensuring only citizens access subsidies and welfare programs optimizes the use of public funds.
  - **Complementary Role of Aadhaar:** While Aadhaar provides identity verification for residents, the NRI focuses on verifying citizenship, and creating a comprehensive system for welfare delivery.

## Challenges of Implementing the NRI

- **Logistical and Administrative Complexities**
  - **Scale of the Exercise:** Creating a nationwide citizen database is an enormous task, requiring coordination across diverse socio-economic and geographic landscapes.
  - **Documentation Gaps:** Vulnerable populations, such as rural residents, migrant workers, and tribal communities, often lack the required documents, risking wrongful exclusion.

- **Privacy and Data Security Concerns**
  - **Potential Misuse of Data:** With the collection of sensitive demographic data, concerns about surveillance and unauthorized use are significant.
  - **Need for Robust Data Protection:** While Aadhaar-related guidelines by the Supreme Court set some precedents, the absence of a comprehensive data protection law makes the NRIC database vulnerable.
- **Social and Humanitarian Implications**
  - **Exclusion Fears:** Assam's NRC exercise demonstrated the risks of stringent documentation requirements, with many residents unable to meet criteria despite long-standing ties to the region.
  - **Risk of Marginalization:** Communities already on the margins, such as the economically weak and less educated, may face further alienation.
- **Financial and Political Costs**
  - **High Financial Outlay:** Implementing the NRIC will demand significant financial resources, which could strain the government's fiscal capacity.
  - **Resistance from States:** Federal tensions may arise, particularly in states that view the initiative as politically or administratively untenable.

### Conclusion

The NRIC has the potential to significantly enhance governance, national security, and welfare delivery by creating an accurate and comprehensive citizen database.

### How do India's civilizational values, such as tolerance and pluralism, reflect in the constitutional principles of secularism and social justice? Illustrate with examples. (250 words)

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** How do civilizational values reflect constitutional principles?

**Conclusion:** Way forward

India's civilizational values, rooted in tolerance, pluralism, and inclusivity, have evolved over millennia through its diverse cultural and religious practices. These values find explicit expression in the Constitution, particularly in its principles of secularism and social justice.

#### Civilizational Roots of Tolerance and Pluralism

- **Tolerance and Secularism in Ancient Traditions:** India's tradition of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family) emphasizes coexistence and acceptance of diversity. Ashoka's Dhamma provided an early model of secularism, promoting ethical governance and respect for all faiths without imposing state-sponsored religion.
- **Inclusivity in Ancient Assemblies:** Historical references to assemblies where scholars debated critical issues highlight India's democratic ethos. Leaders like Purushottam Das Tandon cited these traditions during Constituent Assembly debates, linking them to modern secular governance.
- **Equal Respect for All Religions:** Articles 25-28 ensure freedom of religion, affirming secularism as equal respect for all beliefs rather than a rejection of religion. This aligns with the civilizational values of respecting diverse faiths. The Hindu Mahasabha's 1944 Constitution for a Hindustan Free State declared that there shall be no state religion, emphasizing the civilizational principle of secularism.
- **Vibrant Pluralism in Public Life:** Articles 29 and 30 safeguard the cultural and educational rights of minorities, reflecting the pluralistic ethos of Indian civilization. This protection ensures that diversity is celebrated, not suppressed.

#### Reflection in Social Justice



- **Equity and Inclusion:** Social justice principles in the Constitution address historical inequities, echoing India's tradition of dharma (righteousness). Reservation policies (Articles 15 and 16) seek to uplift marginalized groups, recognizing the need to correct the systemic exclusion of Dalits, Adivasis, and women.
- **Adivasi Perspectives:** Constituent Assembly member Jaspal Singh highlighted the democratic traditions of Adivasis, affirming that the Constitution builds upon their historical practices of inclusion and collective decision-making. Protective measures for Scheduled Tribes under Articles 244 and 275 reflect India's commitment to social justice rooted in its civilizational values.

## Conclusion

India's civilizational values of tolerance and pluralism are seamlessly woven into the constitutional principles of secularism and social justice. By protecting diversity and promoting equity, the Constitution both honors the nation's historical ethos and addresses the shortcomings of its past. As Jawaharlal Nehru remarked, the Constitution represents a "transition from the old to the new," blending the wisdom of India's civilizational journey with the aspirations of a modern, inclusive nation.

## India has made significant progress in combating HIV/AIDS through partnerships and community-driven approaches. Discuss how these models can serve as templates for addressing other public health challenges. (250 Words)

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** How do HIV combating models serve as templates for addressing public health challenges?

**Conclusion:** Way forward

India's remarkable success in combating HIV/AIDS reflects a strong partnership approach between the government and communities, supported by human rights-driven frameworks and targeted interventions.

### Key Elements of India's HIV/AIDS Response

- **Community-Centric Approach:** Community-led organizations deliver 80% of prevention services and provide crucial testing and treatment outreach to vulnerable populations. The Test and Treat Programme under NACO ensures that those diagnosed receive free treatment promptly.
- **Human Rights as the Core:** Addressing stigma and discrimination, particularly towards marginalized groups such as LGBTQ individuals, sex workers, and people who inject drugs, has reduced barriers to healthcare access. Progressive policies align with UNAIDS' "Take the Rights Path," advocating for decriminalization and societal inclusion.
- **Focused Prevention and Education:** Massive awareness campaigns and comprehensive sexuality education reduce vulnerabilities, especially for women and young people. Gender-based violence and denial of education are tackled to curb the risks of HIV.
- **Data-Driven Targeting:** Programs cater to at-risk groups using epidemiological data to guide prevention and treatment strategies.

### Lessons for Other Public Health Challenges

- **Tackling Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs):** Use of community leadership for promoting healthier lifestyles, similar to HIV education campaigns. Targeted interventions focus on vulnerable populations, such as low-income groups prone to diabetes or cardiovascular diseases.
- **Pandemic Preparedness:** Community engagement for vaccine outreach and combating misinformation. Rights-based approaches ensure equitable access to healthcare, mirroring HIV treatment distribution systems.
- **Maternal and Child Health:** Community-led services can increase immunization coverage and combat malnutrition. Addressing socio-cultural barriers to healthcare for women and children.

- **Tuberculosis (TB):** Focused community interventions, including treatment adherence support, mirroring the ART program for HIV. Rights-based approaches to ensure equitable access to diagnostic and treatment facilities.

### Conclusion

By accelerating HIV prevention and expanding this model to other health challenges, India can not only achieve its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but also inspire global health systems to adopt inclusive, community-centered, and human rights-focused strategies.

### **Air pollution in Delhi has reached crisis levels, with profound implications for public health and sustainable development. Discuss the primary contributors to Delhi's air pollution and suggest long-term solutions to address this challenge. (250 Words)**

**Introduction:** Contextual Introduction

**Body:** What are the primary contributors to Delhi's air pollution and suggest long-term solutions to address these challenges?

**Conclusion:** Way forward

Delhi's air pollution crisis exemplifies a severe environmental and public health challenge, exacerbating premature mortality, long-term illnesses, and economic losses. The issue transcends national boundaries, affecting nearly half a billion people across South Asia.

### Primary Contributors to Delhi's Air Pollution

- **Vehicular Emissions:** Delhi's dense vehicular population, reliance on diesel-powered vehicles, and traffic congestion contribute significantly to particulate matter (PM2.5 and PM10) and nitrogen oxides.
- **Crop Residue Burning:** Stubble burning in neighboring states, particularly Punjab and Haryana, adds to Delhi's winter smog, carrying fine particulates over long distances.
- **Industrial Emissions:** Industries around Delhi emit sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and volatile organic compounds, often bypassing emission controls.
- **Construction Dust:** Large-scale urbanization without proper dust management has intensified particulate pollution.
- **Winter Meteorology:** The temperature inversion during winter traps pollutants closer to the ground, aggravating air quality issues.
- **Waste Burning:** Burning of solid waste, including plastic and biomass, releases toxic pollutants into the air.
- **Dirty Fuels and Household Energy:** The use of coal and firewood for cooking and heating in urban slums and rural areas contributes to toxic emissions.

### Long-Term Solutions

- **Sectoral Interventions**
  - **Transportation:** Transition to electric vehicles (EVs), expand public transportation, and enforce vehicle scrappage policies.
  - **Agriculture:** Provide farmers with bio-decomposers and incentivize crop diversification to reduce stubble burning.
  - **Energy:** Promote renewable energy sources and universal adoption of LPG/PNG for cooking.
- **Policy and Regulation:** Enforce stringent emission norms for industries and power plants. Mandate the use of anti-smog devices in construction projects and deploy dust suppression technologies.

- **Regional Collaboration:** Establish cross-border agreements for coordinated action on transboundary air pollution. Share best practices and technology among South Asian nations to combat air pollution collectively.
- **Public Participation and Awareness:** Launch campaigns on the health hazards of air pollution and the importance of individual actions like carpooling and reducing waste burning. Encourage citizen reporting of pollution violations.
- **Strengthen Governance Mechanisms:** Expand and enforce the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) across North India. Increase accountability of regulatory bodies to ensure long-term compliance.

### Conclusion

Delhi's air pollution crisis is a reminder of the urgency to address this man-made disaster with robust policies, regional cooperation, and community participation. Tackling air pollution not only mitigates its dire health and environmental consequences but also offers a unique opportunity for India and its neighbors to collaborate on a shared challenge, fostering regional solidarity and sustainable development. The time for action is now, for the air we breathe knows no borders, and our collective well-being depends on immediate, united efforts.