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GENERAL STUDIES PAPER-1

History

1. The ideals of liberty, equality, and nationalism shaped the course of revolutions and redefined the global order in the 18th and 19th centuries. (250 words)

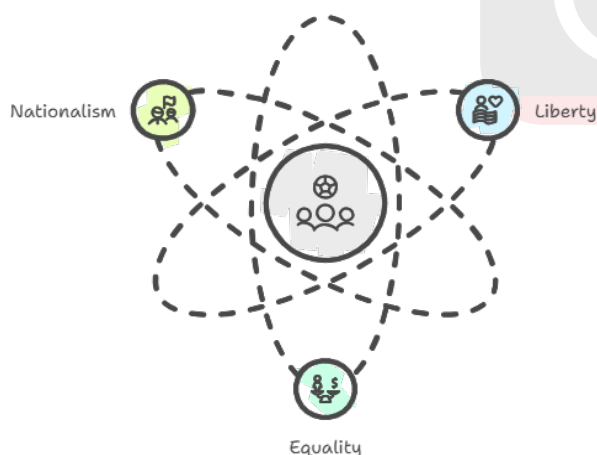
Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about revolutions of 18th and 19th centuries
- Highlight Liberty and its Influence, Equality and its Role in Revolution and Nationalism and its Impact
- Conclude with a quote.

Introduction:

The 18th and 19th centuries were defining eras in world history, where the ideals of liberty, and equality challenged long-standing empires and monarchies. Inspired by Enlightenment thinkers, revolutions like the **American Revolution and the French Revolution** ignited the global quest for freedom and democratic governance.

Ideals Shaping Global Order in 18th and 19th Century



- Nationalism, as seen in the unifications of Italy and Germany, reshaped political landscapes, while the rise of self-determination movements sowed the seeds for decolonization.

Body

Liberty and its Influence:

- ◆ **The Enlightenment Ideals:** The 18th century Enlightenment thinkers such as **John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Voltaire** introduced the concept of liberty as an inalienable right of the individual.
 - **Locke's notion of natural rights and Rousseau's social contract** inspired revolutionary movements.
- ◆ **The American Revolution (1776):** The American Revolution, inspired by Enlightenment principles, resulted in the **Declaration of Independence**, which asserted the inherent **right to liberty and freedom from colonial rule**. It laid the foundation for democratic principles in the new nation.
- ◆ **The French Revolution (1789):** The French Revolution was a direct response to the absolute monarchy and feudal system.
 - The slogan "**Liberté, égalité, fraternité**" (**Liberty, Equality, Fraternity**) became emblematic of the revolution, as the French sought to establish a republic based on the rights of individuals.

Equality and its Role in Revolution

- ◆ **Social and Political Equality:** The French Revolution and the subsequent Napoleonic reforms championed the cause of equality, **particularly the abolition of aristocratic privileges** and the declaration of the equality of all men before the law.
 - The **Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789)** was a critical document in affirming equality as a fundamental right.
- ◆ **Abolition of Slavery:** The ideals of equality also contributed to the abolition of slavery, **particularly after the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804)**, which led to the establishment of the first independent black republic in the world, challenging the racial hierarchies of the colonial powers.

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- ◆ **Extension of Suffrage:** Throughout the 19th century, equality also translated into political rights, as the expansion of suffrage began to take place in various European nations and the Americas, laying the **groundwork for universal adult suffrage in the 20th century.**

● Nationalism and its Impact

- ◆ **Emergence of Nationalist Movements:** Nationalism, as a political ideology, emphasized the importance of a nation-state defined by shared culture, language, and history.

- This was a **reaction against imperialism and the dominance of multinational empires**, particularly in Europe and Latin America.

- ◆ **The French Revolution and Nationalism:** The French Revolution, by breaking away from the old feudal order, gave rise to a sense of French national identity, which was further solidified during the Napoleonic Wars.

- **Napoleon's conquests spread nationalist ideas across Europe**, triggering similar movements in other nations.

- ◆ **The Rise of Nationalism in Europe and Latin America:** The early 19th century saw the spread of nationalist sentiments across Europe (e.g., the **unification of Germany and Italy**) and Latin America (e.g., the **independence movements of Simon Bolívar and José de San Martín**), as these regions sought to throw off colonial rule or unify their fragmented territories.

- ◆ **The Revolutions of 1848:** Known as the **"Springtime of Nations,"** these uprisings across Europe were fueled by nationalist and democratic ideals.

- Although they were largely suppressed, they laid the foundation for future nationalist and liberal movements in the region.

● Impact on the Global Order

- ◆ **End of Monarchical Absolutism:** The ideals of liberty and equality played a critical role in the decline of absolute monarchies and the spread of republicanism.

- The American and French Revolutions, as well as the **rise of nationalist movements**, **challenged the traditional power structures** that had dominated the globe for centuries.

- ◆ **Rise of New States and Political Systems:** The 19th century witnessed the formation of new states based on nationalism, such as Italy and Germany, and the dissolution of empires, including the **Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Empire**, which was significantly weakened by nationalist movements within its territories.

- ◆ **Colonial Impact:** Nationalism and the demand for self-determination also had significant repercussions in the colonial world.

- As European powers were engaged in internal upheavals, colonial territories, particularly in **Asia and Africa**, began to resist imperial domination, planting the seeds for **20th-century decolonization.**

Conclusion

The ideals of liberty, equality, and nationalism were **transformative forces that redefined global politics in the 18th and 19th centuries.** They not only shaped revolutions but also laid the groundwork for modern democratic societies. As Thomas Jefferson once said, **"The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants."** These ideals continue to inspire the pursuit of justice and freedom worldwide.

- Evaluate the role of moderates and extremists in shaping the early phase of the Indian National Movement. Were their methods complementary or contradictory? (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about moderates and extremists
- Give Role of Moderates and Extremists in the National Movement
- Delve into their complementary and contradictory aspects
- Conclude suitably.

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Introduction

The early phase of the Indian National Movement (1885–1907) was largely shaped by two major ideological strands within the Indian National Congress (INC): the Moderates and the Extremists.

- While the Moderates laid the foundation of **constitutional nationalism**, the Extremists brought **mass mobilization and assertive demands to the forefront**.

Body:

Role of Moderates in the National Movement

- Constitutional and Political Reforms:** Leaders like **Dadabhai Naoroji**, **Gopal Krishna Gokhale**, and **Pherozeshah Mehta** championed the cause of responsible government, Indian representation in legislative councils, and administrative decentralization.
 - Their tools were **petitions, resolutions, deputations, and speeches**, both in India and in Britain (e.g., formation of the **British Committee of INC** and the journal *India* in 1890).
- Economic Critique of British Rule:** The **Drain Theory**, articulated by Naoroji, exposed the economic exploitation under colonialism.
 - They advocated for policies to support **agriculture, Indian industry, irrigation, and education**.
- Social Reform and Civil Rights:** Emphasized **freedom of speech, press, and association**, and worked to **eradicate social evils** and improve primary education.
 - Gokhale's **Servants of India Society** aimed to spiritually and intellectually elevate Indian society.
- Nation-Building:** Though confined largely to the **middle class**, the Moderates laid the **intellectual and ideological base** for Indian nationalism.

Role of Extremists in the National Movement

- Assertive Nationalism and Demand for Swaraj:** Leaders like **Bal Gangadhar Tilak**, **Lala Lajpat Rai**, and **Bipin Chandra Pal** rejected the Moderates' conciliatory tone and declared **Swaraj as a birthright**.
 - Their politics were emotionally charged and rooted in **cultural nationalism**, invoking symbols like **Shivaji** and **Ganapati**.

- Mass Mobilization: The Swadeshi Movement (1905–08)**, launched in response to the **Partition of Bengal**, was a key turning point. It included:
 - Boycott of foreign goods
 - Promotion of indigenous industry (Swadeshi)
 - National education
 - Passive resistance
- Revival of Indian Traditions:** They reinterpreted Indian philosophy to justify political action. For instance, **Tilak's Gita Rahasya** interpreted the Gita as a guide to selfless action for national service.
- Linking Nationalism with Popular Sentiment:** Though **non-violent**, they viewed **petitioning as weak**, and emphasized **emotive nationalism** to awaken the masses.

Were Their Methods Complementary or Contradictory?

- Complementary Aspects**
 - Common Goal:** Both aimed at **Indian self-rule**, though the path diverged.
 - Foundational Work:** Moderates prepared the ground through awareness and institution-building; Extremists **expanded the scope to include masses**.
 - Ideological Influence:** Later leaders like **Gandhi** synthesized both traditions—drawing constitutional morality from **Gokhale** and mass politics from **Tilak**.
- Contradictory Aspects**
 - Methods of Engagement:**
 - Moderates:** Constitutional, cautious, dialogue-based.
 - Extremists:** Assertive, direct-action oriented.
 - Attitude Toward British Rule:**
 - Moderates saw **reform within the Empire** as feasible.
 - Extremists believed in **ending colonial rule entirely**.
 - Public Perception:** Extremists accused Moderates of being **too loyal to British interests**, while Moderates feared the **confrontational approach** would **provoke repression**.

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Conclusion

The Moderates and Extremists, though ideologically distinct, were **not mutually exclusive** but rather represented **different phases** in the evolution of Indian nationalism. As Gandhiji later demonstrated, **mass mobilization (from Extremists)** and **moral high ground (from Moderates)** could be harmonized. The learning from this early phase laid the strategic and philosophical base for the **Gandhian era** that followed.

3. Evaluate how the emergence of economic nationalism laid the intellectual foundation for political nationalism in India. (150 words)

Approach:

- Briefly define economic nationalism and political nationalism.
- Discuss the key features of economic nationalism.
- Explain that economic nationalism intellectually prepared the ground for political nationalism.
- Conclude with a scholarly remark.

Introduction:

Economic nationalism refers to the **ideological and intellectual resistance against the colonial economic policies** of the British Raj that led to exploitation, poverty, and underdevelopment in India. The rise of economic nationalism during the late 19th century laid a **critical foundation for political nationalism**, as it exposed the exploitative nature of colonial rule and mobilized public opinion towards the demand for self-governance.

Body:

Key Features of Economic Nationalism

- **Early Nationalist Leadership:**
 - ◆ Pioneered by moderate leaders such as **Dadabhai Naoroji**, **Gopal Krishna Gokhale**, and **R.C. Dutt**, economic nationalism emerged through well-reasoned critiques of British economic policies.
- **Focus on Drain Theory:**
 - ◆ **Dadabhai Naoroji's 'Drain Theory'** (highlighted in his book *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*) argued that Britain was draining India's wealth without any fair return.

● Protection of Indigenous Industry:

- ◆ Leaders criticized the **unfair tariff structure**, which promoted British goods at the cost of Indian handicrafts.
- ◆ They called for **protective tariffs**, **promotion of Swadeshi goods**, and **state support** for Indian entrepreneurs.

● Demand for Fiscal Autonomy:

- ◆ Gokhale and others emphasized **Indian control over revenue, expenditure, and economic policymaking**.
- ◆ They opposed excessive military expenditure and the use of Indian revenue for British imperial interests.

Transition from Economic to Political Nationalism

● Exposure of Colonial Economic Intent:

- ◆ Economic critiques highlighted the **inherent conflict between Indian welfare and British interests**.
- ◆ The realization grew that economic relief was **impossible without political freedom**.

● Growth of Political Movements:

- ◆ The **Swadeshi Movement (1905)**, initially an economic boycott of British goods after the Bengal partition, evolved into a **mass political movement** demanding **Swaraj** (self-rule).
- ◆ Economic slogans like **"Boycott British goods"** became tools of mass mobilization and political assertion.

● Demands for Administrative and Constitutional Reforms:

- ◆ Nationalists demanded the **Indianisation of the civil services**, asserting that **only Indians** would **prioritize national interest**.
- ◆ This was coupled with demands for **constitutional reforms**, including **greater Indian participation in legislatures, control over budgets, and responsible government**.
- ◆ Movements like the **Home Rule League (1916)** and the **Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms** debate further reflected the growing demand for **institutional political change** driven by **underlying economic dissatisfaction**.

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Conclusion:

Thus, historian **Bipan Chandra** rightly underscores that *"the entire critique of colonialism found its focal point in the **Drain of Wealth theory**,"* and that this *"understanding of the **complex economic mechanisms** of modern imperialism"* laid the **intellectual foundation** for both **anti-colonial** and subsequently **anti-imperialist politics** in India.

Geography

4. How do regional variations in soil types across India influence patterns of cropping intensity and land degradation? (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about soils in India and regional vulnerability
- Give Regional Soil Types and Their Impact on Cropping Intensity
- Highlight Impact of Soil Degradation on Agriculture
- Delve into Sustainable Agriculture Practices to Combat Degradation
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

India's vast and diverse geographical expanse gives rise to a variety of soil types, each with its unique characteristics. The regional variations in soil composition, texture, and fertility significantly influence **agricultural practices, cropping intensity, and patterns of land degradation**.

- With regions like **Punjab facing soil depletion** due to intensive farming, and **states like Rajasthan battling desertification**, the country's soil challenges are region-specific.

Body**Regional Soil Types and Their Impact on Cropping Intensity:**

- **Alluvial Soils:** Found predominantly in the Indo-Gangetic plains, these soils are fertile and support high-intensity cropping.
 - ◆ The rich nutrient content allows for multiple cropping cycles per year, especially in states like **Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh**.

- ◆ **Wheat, rice, and sugarcane are common crops.** However, over-cropping in these regions can lead to nutrient depletion, making crop rotation necessary for sustainability.

- **Black Soils:** Found mainly in **Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh**, and parts of **Gujarat** and Tamil Nadu, black soils (regur soils) are rich in minerals like **lime, iron, and magnesium, making them ideal for cotton cultivation**.

- ◆ These soils support moderate cropping intensity but are prone to waterlogging during excessive irrigation, affecting crop yields.

- **Red Soils:** Red soils, common in southern India (**Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh**), are low in **nitrogen, phosphorus, and organic matter**, leading to lower cropping intensity.

- ◆ Crops such as groundnut, cotton, and pulses are more common in these regions, but poor fertility often limits the number of crops grown annually.

- **Desert Soils:** Found in the arid and semi-arid regions like **Rajasthan**, desert soils are low in nutrients and moisture.

- ◆ **Cropping intensity is relatively low**, with only drought-resistant crops like millet and pulses being cultivated.

- ◆ These regions face challenges of water scarcity, limiting cropping patterns and making agriculture highly dependent on irrigation.

- **Laterite Soils:** Found in the western and eastern coastal regions, particularly in **Kerala, Karnataka, and Goa**, these soils are rich in iron and aluminium but poor in essential nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus.

- ◆ This makes the region's cropping intensity lower, with crops like cashew, rubber, and tea being predominant.

Impact of Soil Degradation on Agriculture:

- **Erosion and Desertification:** The topography and soil composition in regions like Rajasthan, parts of Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh make them highly prone to soil erosion and desertification, especially when agricultural practices like **overgrazing, deforestation, and monocropping are not properly managed**.

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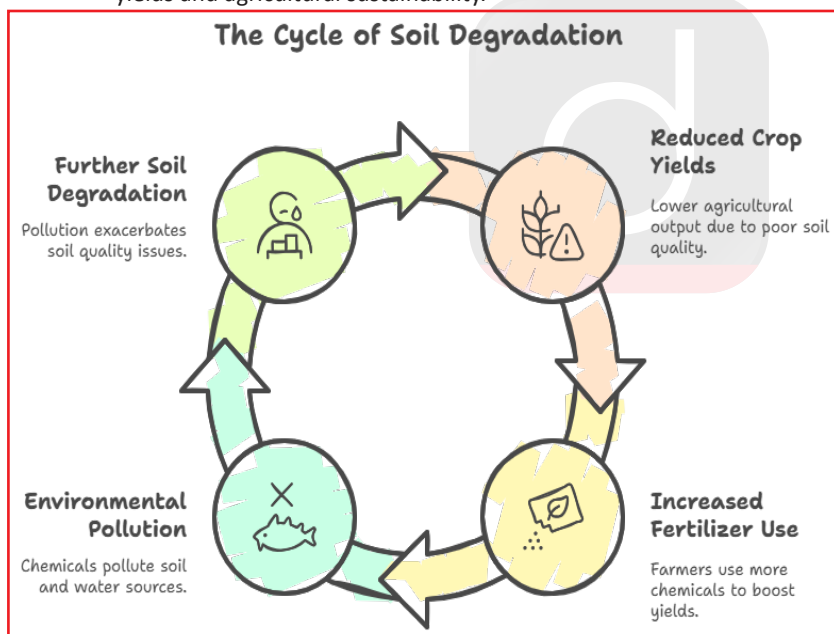
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- ◆ **Soil erosion strips the land of fertile topsoil, reducing agricultural productivity.**
- **Salinization and Waterlogging:** In regions where irrigation is intensive, such as in the Indo-Gangetic plains, excessive use of water leads to **waterlogging and salinization of soils**. This makes the land less productive, reducing the cropping intensity.
 - ◆ The rise of salts in the soil not only degrades its structure but also makes it unsuitable for many crops.
 - ◆ Areas in Uttar Pradesh face these challenges, reducing long-term agricultural viability.
- **Loss of Soil Fertility:** Continuous monocropping, especially in areas with fertile alluvial soils, depletes essential nutrients, leading to soil exhaustion.
 - ◆ This is seen in the **high-intensity cropping zones of Punjab and Haryana**. Overuse of chemical fertilizers to compensate for the loss of natural fertility leads to soil health deterioration over time.
- **Acidification:** Some regions, particularly those with laterite soils in Kerala and parts of Tamil Nadu, are vulnerable to **soil acidification due to the excessive use of chemical fertilizers**.
 - ◆ This reduces the soil's ability to retain nutrients, thus affecting crop yields and agricultural sustainability.



Sustainable Agriculture Practices to Combat Degradation:

- **Crop Rotation and Diversification:** Encouraging crop rotation and diversified cropping systems can help restore soil fertility and reduce the risk of soil exhaustion.

- ◆ In regions with black and alluvial soils, alternating cereals with legumes and pulses can improve soil health.

- **Water Conservation Techniques:** In water-scarce regions, like those with desert soils, the adoption of rainwater harvesting, drip irrigation, and other water-efficient farming practices can mitigate the impact of waterlogging and salinization.
- **Organic Farming:** Using organic fertilizers, mulching, and reducing the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers can help maintain soil health, especially in areas with red and laterite soils, where natural fertility is low.
- **Agroforestry and Soil Conservation:** In regions prone to erosion, such as the western ghats and parts of the Himalayas, agroforestry and soil conservation practices (like contour plowing and terracing) can help prevent further degradation and maintain soil structure.

Conclusion:

Regional variations in soil types across India have a profound impact on cropping intensity and land degradation. As **Mahatma Gandhi** rightly said, *"The earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed."* Sustainable management of soil resources is essential to meet the growing demands of agriculture while

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protecting the environment and progressing towards **Land Degradation Neutrality by 2030**.

Indian Heritage and Culture

5. Discuss the architectural innovations introduced during the Mughal period, focusing on the fusion of Persian and Indian styles. (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about Mughal architecture.
- Delve into the Architectural Innovations Introduced During the Mughal Period
- Conclude by mentioning the key UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Introduction:

Mughal architecture, representing fusion of **Persian, Central Asian, and Indian architectural traditions**, gave birth to a distinctive style that marked the cultural and artistic zenith of the Mughal era.

- The blending of Islamic architectural features with local Indian elements, such as **Rajput designs**, led to the creation of monumental structures that still stand as iconic symbols of India's rich heritage.

Body:

Architectural Innovations Introduced During the Mughal Period:

- **Fusion of Persian Domes and Indian Arches:** The Mughal architectural style prominently featured large, **bulbous domes**, a **hallmark of Persian architecture**, combined with traditional Indian arches and columns.
 - ◆ This fusion created grand and symmetrical structures such as the **Taj Mahal**, where **Persian-inspired domes were paired with Indian arches and decorative motifs**.
- **Charbagh Garden Layout:** The Persian-inspired **charbagh (four-part garden) layout**, symbolizing **paradise**, was integrated into Mughal architecture, particularly around tombs and palaces.
 - ◆ This style was combined with **Indian horticultural elements**, such as **water channels and fountains**,

to create beautifully designed gardens around key structures like the **Taj Mahal and Humayun's Tomb**.

- **Symmetry and Geometric Precision with Indian Decorative Motifs:** Mughal buildings are known for their strict adherence to **symmetry and geometric precision**, influenced by **Persian design principles**.

- ◆ Indian decorative elements like **lotus flowers, yali (mythical lion) carvings, and intricate carvings** were incorporated into Mughal structures.
- ◆ These motifs, often blended with Islamic calligraphy and geometric patterns, added an Indian touch to the otherwise Persian-inspired designs.
 - This is particularly evident in the decoration of the **Jama Masjid and Red Fort**.

- **Influence of Hindu Temple Architecture:** Mughal rulers, particularly Akbar, incorporated elements of Hindu temple architecture into their designs.

- ◆ This included the use of **chhatris (elevated pavilions) and pillars from Hindu temple structures**, merging them with the Persian-style arches and domes.
- ◆ This blend is visible in structures like the **Diwan-i-Khas** in Fatehpur Sikri and the **Tomb of Akbar** at Sikandra.

- **Elaborate Inlay Work (Pietra Dura):** A hallmark of Mughal decoration, particularly during Shah Jahan's reign, was **pietra dura (stone inlay work)**.

- ◆ Persian techniques of inlay were adapted to feature Indian motifs, including floral patterns and semi-precious stones.
- ◆ This intricate detailing is most famously seen in the **Taj Mahal**, where the **marble is adorned with beautiful semi-precious stones** in geometric and floral patterns.

- **Large, Monumental Gateway Designs:** Mughal architecture is known for grand gateways, such as the **Buland Darwaza** at Fatehpur Sikri, which **blend Persian and Indian architectural elements**.

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- ◆ Interestingly, this Mughal gateway design shares a conceptual similarity with the **gopurams** of **Southern Indian temples**, particularly in the **Dravidian architectural style**.

- **Use of Red Sandstone:** Red sandstone, widely used by Akbar in monumental structures like the Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri, is deeply rooted in Indian architectural practices, particularly in the **Rajput architecture**.

Conclusion:

The fusion of Islamic geometric precision with Indian craftsmanship resulted in some of the most iconic and enduring structures in history. As **UNESCO World Heritage Sites**, monuments like **Taj Mahal** and the **Red Fort** stand as testaments to the Mughal Empire's architectural legacy, preserving the harmonious blend of Persian and Indian styles for posterity.

Indian Society

- The rise of digital media has reshaped the traditional fabric of Indian society. Discuss the impact of social media on social behavior, political engagement, and identity formation in contemporary India. **(250 words)**

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about the rise of social media and impact on Indian society
- Give its impact on social behavior, political engagement, and identity formation separately.
- Suggest measures to strengthen regulation of social media
- Conclude with a relevant quote.

Introduction:

The rise of social media has dramatically transformed Indian society, influencing how individuals interact, engage politically, and shape their identities. With over **600 million internet users**, platforms like **Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp** have not only revolutionized communication but have also become tools for **mobilization, social change, and political discourse**.

Body:

Impact of Social Media on Social Behavior:

- **Transformation of Communication Patterns:** Social media has revolutionized communication by making it instantaneous and widespread.
 - ◆ Platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook groups have led to the rise of virtual communities, enabling people to stay connected across geographies.
 - ◆ However, this shift has led to a decline in face-to-face interactions and the development of digital dependencies.
- **Rise of Social Influence and Trends:** Social media fosters peer influence through likes, shares, and comments.
 - ◆ It has given rise to a culture of "virality" where social behavior is often driven by online trends and influencers. This influences consumption patterns, lifestyles, and opinions, especially among younger generations.
 - ◆ Trends like #VeganMovement, which gained significant momentum through Twitter and Facebook, highlighted societal issues, influencing social norms.
- **Degradation of Social Skills:** While digital media has brought convenience, it has also eroded traditional social skills. Younger generations often find it more difficult to engage in in-person conversations, which affects their interpersonal relationships and emotional intelligence.
 - ◆ Studies have shown that the **overuse of social media in India has contributed to a rise in mental health issues, especially among teenagers**, like anxiety and depression, due to cyberbullying or online comparison.

Impact of Social Media on Political Engagement:

- **Amplification of Political Voices:** Social media platforms have democratized political discourse, allowing individuals from all backgrounds to express their opinions.

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- ◆ This has given a voice to marginalized groups and helped in amplifying political issues that would otherwise go unnoticed.
- ◆ The **2020 Farmer's movement** utilized social media extensively to mobilize support, with Facebook and Twitter being used for organizing protests and raising awareness.
- **Political Polarization:** While social media has increased political engagement, it has also contributed to a rise in polarization.
 - ◆ Algorithms on platforms like Facebook and Twitter often amplify content that aligns with users' existing beliefs, leading to the creation of echo chambers.
 - ◆ The **2019 and 2024 Indian General Elections** saw the strategic use of social media by political parties to target voters with tailored content, often polarizing opinions and deepening divisions.
- **Misinformation and Fake News:** The spread of fake news, misinformation, and hate speech has become a significant challenge on social media.
 - ◆ The WhatsApp forwards during the **2019 general elections, particularly relating to fake news about political candidates**, played a significant role in shaping voter behavior.

Impact of Social Media on Identity Formation:

- **Creation of Digital Identities:** Social media allows individuals to present curated versions of themselves, leading to the formation of digital identities.
 - ◆ These identities are often more polished and idealized compared to real-life personalities. This influences self-esteem and how individuals perceive their social status.
 - ◆ Platforms like **Instagram encourage** users to share photos and videos that project a certain lifestyle, which often leads to a sense of competition and comparison, especially among youth.
- **Affirmation of Social and Cultural Identity:** Social media platforms have become spaces where people assert and reinforce their social, cultural, and religious identities. Communities can share and celebrate their

heritage, leading to a greater sense of belonging and solidarity.

- ◆ The rise of **hashtags like #DalitLivesMatter** has provided a platform for marginalized communities to discuss issues related to caste discrimination and advocate for social justice.
- **Influence of Globalization on Local Identities:** While social media connects individuals globally, it has also led to the erosion of local cultures in some cases. Western ideals, lifestyles, and cultural norms often dominate online spaces, leading to a shift in the self-identity of young people in India.
 - ◆ The **increasing popularity of Western fashion trends, music (such as K-pop), and lifestyle choices** is influencing the aspirations and identities of Indian youth, particularly in urban areas.

Considering the profound impact of social media on social behavior, political engagement, and identity formation, it is crucial to **implement effective measures to regulate and enhance its positive impact while mitigating its potential harm.** The following measures can help achieve this balance:

- **Comprehensive Social Media Regulation through a Digital Code of Ethics:** A detailed Digital Code of Ethics should be introduced as per **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021** to ensure platforms adhere to ethical content-sharing standards.
 - ◆ This should build on the **Shreya Singhal ruling**, ensuring that any regulation of online speech remains within the confines of the Constitution and does not lead to arbitrary censorship.
- **Fastracking Implementation of the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPB):** It would ensure that personal information is collected, stored, and shared only with informed consent, thereby enhancing privacy and preventing misuse, which is crucial in today's data-driven world.
- **Mandatory Digital Literacy and Cyber Ethics Curriculum in Schools:** Introducing **mandatory digital literacy programs in educational curricula** can equip

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young people with the necessary skills to navigate social media responsibly.

- ◆ Teaching students about online ethics, privacy protection, and digital security will create a generation of informed users who are less susceptible to online manipulation and more responsible in their online engagement.
- **Stronger Enforcement of Accountability for Algorithmic Manipulation:** Social media platforms often manipulate user feeds through algorithms that promote sensationalist or divisive content.
 - ◆ Regulations should **enforce transparency in algorithms, mandating platforms to disclose how content is prioritized** and how user data is used to shape online experiences.
 - ◆ This would help mitigate the dangers of echo chambers, filter bubbles, and the amplification of harmful content.

Conclusion:

Social media has brought about transformative changes in Indian society. While it has enhanced social behavior, political engagement, and identity formation, it has also presented challenges like polarization, misinformation, and the erosion of traditional norms. **"The more we elaborate**

our means of communication, the less we communicate." Thus, it is essential to navigate the digital space responsibly, ensuring that its benefits outweigh the pitfalls.

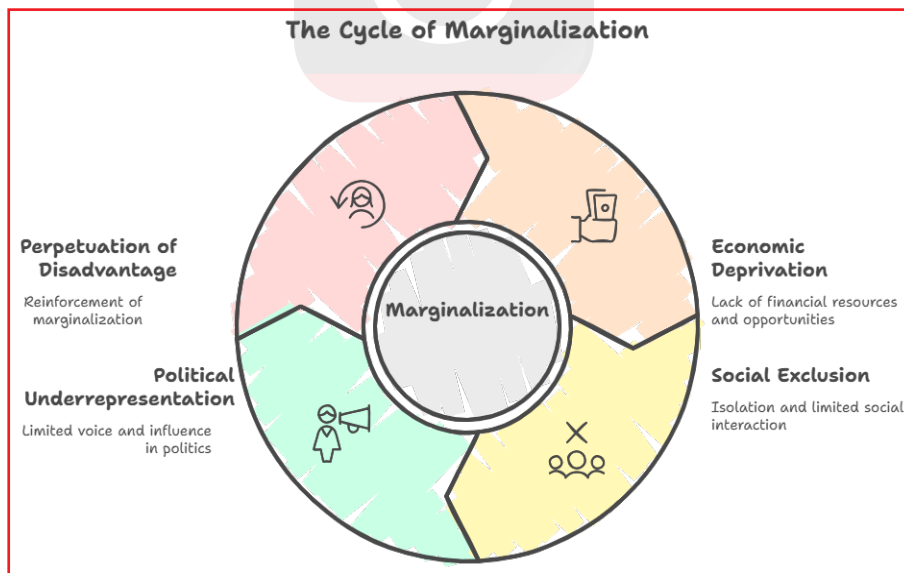
7. "Marginalized communities in India face layered vulnerabilities that go beyond economic deprivation." Analyze with examples. **(150 words)**

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about layered vulnerability of marginalised in India
- Delve into different Dimensions of Layered Vulnerabilities in India
- Suggest Measures to Mainstream Marginalized Communities
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

The recent challenges faced by **transgender persons in digital access, recent evictions of tribes from Nagarhole Tiger Reserve**, and the disproportionate impact of natural disasters on coastal fisherfolk demonstrate that marginalized communities in India confront multi-layered vulnerabilities — **rooted not just in poverty, but also in identity, geography, social stigma, legal invisibility, digital backwardness and institutional neglect.**



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Body:**Dimensions of Layered Vulnerabilities in India**

- **Social Hierarchies and Caste-Based Exclusion**
 - ◆ **Dalits and Adivasis** still face untouchability, landlessness, and discrimination despite affirmative action.
 - ◆ **Example:** Manual scavenging is predominantly practiced by Dalits despite being legally banned (**Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers Act, 2013**).
- **Gender and Intersectionality**
 - ◆ **Women from marginalized communities** (e.g., Dalit, tribal women) face **multiple layers** of disadvantage—patriarchy, caste, poverty.
 - SC/ST women have **higher maternal mortality rates** and lower access to institutional delivery.
- **Political and Institutional Marginalization**
 - ◆ Many groups remain **underrepresented in political institutions**, limiting their voice in policy-making.
 - ◆ **Example:** Transgender and tribal persons are rarely seen in legislatures despite legal provisions.
 - Also, despite the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019**, transgender individuals struggle with **access to housing, employment, and healthcare**.
- **Geographical and Environmental Exclusion**
 - ◆ **Fisherfolk, forest dwellers, and urban slum dwellers** often lack formal land titles, affecting access to welfare and security.
 - **Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) violations** lead to eviction of fishing communities without adequate rehabilitation.
- **Digital Divide and Educational Inequality**
 - ◆ Digital illiteracy excludes marginalized communities from education, employment, and e-governance services.
 - NSSO (National Sample Survey Office) data reveals a staggering disparity, **only 24% of rural households have internet access**.

Measures to Mainstream Marginalized Communities

- **Strengthen Identity and Legal Recognition**
 - ◆ **Universal Social Registry:** Build a *digitally inclusive database* (with offline options) to ensure that marginalized persons, including nomadic tribes, transgender individuals, and urban poor, are not excluded due to lack of documents.
 - ◆ **Legal Aid Clinics in Marginalized Areas:** As per Article 39A, expand *free legal aid* to ensure access to justice in SC/ST-dominated villages and slums.
- **Inclusive Education Reforms**
 - ◆ **Bridge Curriculum for First-Generation Learners:** Tailored programs to ease the transition into mainstream schooling for children from marginalized backgrounds (e.g., tribal areas, minority-dominated pockets).
 - ◆ **Representation in Curriculum:** Integrate contributions of Dalit, tribal, and minority leaders (e.g., Savitribai Phule, Birs Munda) into textbooks to promote *dignity and identity*.
- **Economic Empowerment Beyond Quotas**
 - ◆ **Community-Owned Enterprises:** Encourage *tribal, Dalit, and minority cooperatives* through subsidized loans, skill training, and market linkages (e.g., tribal honey collectives, Dalit food startups).
 - ◆ **Social Procurement Policy:** Reserve a percentage of government procurement from enterprises led by SC/ST, PwDs, transgender persons, and women's SHGs.
- **Gendered and Intersectional Welfare Schemes**
 - ◆ **Intersectional Budgeting:** Extend Gender Budgeting into *Caste-Sensitive and Disability-Sensitive Budgeting* with clear allocations in health, housing, education, etc.
- **Accessible Infrastructure and Public Services**
 - ◆ **Design for All Mandate:** Enforce *universal accessibility standards* in all public infrastructure under a time-bound **"Accessible Bharat 2.0" mission**.
- **Monitoring and Accountability**
 - ◆ **Social Inclusion Audit:** Like social audits in MGNREGA, conduct third-party audits of inclusion across flagship schemes.

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- ◆ **Real-Time Disaggregated Data Dashboards:** Publish community-wise outcomes (education, employment, health) to track progress and identify gaps.

Conclusion

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”- Martin Luther King Jr. Mainstreaming marginalized communities in India requires **targeted, inclusive, and data-driven interventions**, guided by empathy, representation, and constitutional morality. Only then can India fulfill the promise of **“Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas” with Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas.**

- Examine how globalization has influenced the cultural fabric of Indian society. Does it threaten traditional values or foster pluralism? (250 words)

Approach:

- Briefly introduce the concept of globalization.
- Discuss Globalization as a catalyst for cultural pluralism in India.
- Discuss Globalization as a threat to fostering pluralism.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

Introduction:

Globalization, defined as the increasing **interconnectedness** of the world through the movement of **goods, ideas, information, and people**, has had a profound impact on the **cultural fabric of Indian society**. While it has opened new avenues for **cultural exchange** and **pluralism**, it has also led to concerns about the **erosion of indigenous traditions, languages, and value systems**.

Body:

Globalization as a Catalyst for Cultural Pluralism in India :

- **Global Recognition of Indian Traditions:** Practices like **Yoga, Ayurveda, and Indian cuisine** have gained global recognition, with the UN declaring **June 21 as International Yoga Day**, indicating the reverse flow of cultural influence.
- **Cultural Hybridization:** Indian society has demonstrated remarkable adaptability by absorbing global influences while retaining its indigenous identity.

- ◆ The international success of films like *Lagaan* and *RRR* showcases cultural fusion with global appeal.

- **Empowerment and Social Change:** Global exposure has amplified discourses around **gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, and environmental sustainability**, encouraging shifts in social attitudes especially among urban youth.

- ◆ The 2018 decriminalization of **homosexuality (Section 377)** was partly influenced by global human rights movements.

Globalization as a Threat to Traditional Values and Practices:

- **Cultural Homogenization and Westernization:** There is growing concern that Western ideals, consumerism, and media are displacing traditional Indian practices.

- ◆ Festivals are increasingly commercialized, and traditional attire is often replaced by Western clothing.

- ◆ Valentine's Day, an imported concept, is now widely celebrated, often seen as overshadowing indigenous festivals like **Basant Panchami**.

- **Language Displacement:** English is increasingly becoming the dominant medium in education and employment, leading to the marginalization of regional languages and literature.

- ◆ According to the **People's Linguistic Survey of India 2013**, around 220 languages have been lost in the last 50 years and 197 have been categorised as Endangered.

- **Family and Social Structures:** The traditional **joint family system** is giving way to nuclear families, particularly in urban areas, leading to weakening intergenerational bonds and value transmission.

- ◆ A **NSSO survey (2011-12)** showed a marked rise in nuclear households across India post-1990s economic liberalization.

Conclusion:

As sociologist **Anthony Giddens** notes, **“Globalization is a dialectical process—it both enables and constrains.”** India's cultural journey reflects this **dual impact—enriching pluralism while challenging traditions**. The path forward lies in **balancing heritage with global modernity** through **conscious cultural negotiation**.



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GENERAL STUDIES PAPER-2

Polity and Governance

9. The advent of Artificial Intelligence and automation in public administration is reshaping governance structures in India. Assess the institutional and procedural challenges of integrating AI into public services. (250 words)

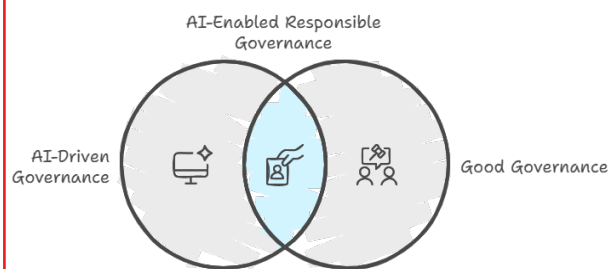
Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about advent of Artificial Intelligence and automation in public administration
- Delve into Key Applications of AI and Automation in Governance
- Highlight Institutional and Procedural Challenges
- Give Measures to Tackle Challenges of AI and Automation Integration in Public Services
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

The integration of **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation into public administration** is revolutionizing governance in India. A recent milestone, the **Paris AI Action Summit**, co-chaired by India and France, exemplified India's pivotal role in shaping the global AI narrative around governance.

Where AI Meets Governance



Body:

Key Applications of AI and Automation in Governance:

- **Enhancing Policy Formulation and Decision-Making:** AI enables data-driven decision-making, where vast

datasets help predict socio-economic trends and optimize resource allocation.

- ◆ For example, **NITI Aayog's collaboration with IIT Delhi to develop an AI tool for predicting socio-economic conditions** using satellite images.
- **Strengthening Public Service Delivery:** AI-driven automation improves service efficiency, reduces delays, and minimizes human error, especially in grievance redressal systems and welfare disbursements.
 - ◆ The **India Urban Data Exchange (IUDX)** under the Smart Cities Mission is an AI-powered data-sharing platform aimed at enhancing urban governance.
- **Improving Law Enforcement and Internal Security:** AI tools such as facial recognition and predictive policing are helping law enforcement agencies track criminal activities and enhance public safety.
 - ◆ The **Delhi Police's use of AI in facial recognition systems** helps identify criminals and locate missing persons.
- **Revolutionizing Healthcare and Pandemic Management:** AI-driven tools for diagnostics, robotic surgeries, and disease surveillance are improving health outcomes and enabling timely intervention.
 - ◆ Startups like **Niramai** are leveraging AI to detect breast cancer early, demonstrating AI's potential in healthcare.
- **Optimizing Agricultural Productivity:** AI-based precision farming techniques are improving crop yields, optimizing irrigation, and detecting pests.
 - ◆ Tools like **'Kisan e-Mitra'**, an AI-powered chatbot, are providing farmers with real-time information about government schemes.

Institutional and Procedural Challenges:

- **Institutional Challenges:**
 - ◆ **Lack of AI Literacy and Skills:** According to a report by NITI Aayog, **only 22% of firms in India** use AI in any business process, showing the widespread gap in AI adoption across the country.

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- To keep pace with technological advancements, there is a pressing need for rapid reskilling initiatives, as **AI-driven automation is projected to displace 75 million jobs in India** by 2025, according to a **World Economic Forum** study.
- ◆ **Data Privacy and Security Concerns:** AI systems rely heavily on large datasets, raising privacy concerns. Key datasets like Aadhar are highly vulnerable.
 - A study by the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)** suggests that over 1.2 billion people's data is stored in the **Aadhaar system**, presenting a significant risk if not safeguarded properly.
- ◆ **Algorithmic Bias and Ethical Challenges:** AI's potential to perpetuate biases is well-documented globally.
 - For instance, **Amazon's AI-based recruitment tool** was discontinued after it was found to be biased against female candidates.
- This is not an isolated case. A report by **AI Now Institute** highlights that many AI algorithms used in governance could inadvertently replicate caste, gender, and regional biases.
- ◆ **Regulatory and Legal Gaps:** India is still working towards a comprehensive AI regulatory framework.
 - A recent **OECD report** pointed out that **India lacks specific AI laws** like the European Union's **AI Act**.
 - This leaves a significant legal vacuum in AI adoption, making it unclear who is accountable when AI errors lead to unfair outcomes.
- **Procedural Challenges:**
 - ◆ **Infrastructure and Technology Gaps:** According to **NSSO data**, only **24% of rural households in India** have access to the internet, compared to 66% in urban areas.
 - This digital divide makes it difficult for AI-driven governance models to reach all citizens equitably, particularly in rural and underserved regions.
 - Additionally, India's reliance on foreign AI technologies, such as **cloud services** and **advanced chips**, further highlights the infrastructure gap.
- ◆ **Resistance to Change in Bureaucratic Systems:** Traditional bureaucratic systems are often slow to adopt new technologies, including AI.
 - There is a significant **resistance to change** due to entrenched work cultures, hierarchical structures, and fear of job displacement among public servants.
- ◆ **Data Accessibility and Interoperability Issues:** AI requires vast and diverse datasets to function effectively. However, there is a **lack of centralized, standardized datasets** across various government departments, making it difficult to integrate AI tools across the entire public administration system.
 - Different government departments often maintain **disparate data silos**, leading to **interoperability issues**.

Measures to Tackle Challenges of AI and Automation Integration in Public Services:

- **Enhancing AI Literacy and Reskilling Programs:** India must invest in training centers, universities, and online platforms to enhance AI literacy among public sector employees and citizens.
 - ◆ The **National AI Portal** can be expanded to offer free online courses on AI for government officials.
 - ◆ Foster collaborations between tech companies and academic institutions, as seen with **NITI Aayog's partnership with IIT Delhi** for AI-driven socio-economic predictions.
- **Strengthening Data Privacy and Security Framework:** Amend the Digital Personal Data Protection Act to **specifically address AI-related concerns**, such as ensuring transparency in algorithmic decision-making and setting clear guidelines for AI-driven surveillance.

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- ◆ **Promote data localization**, where sensitive data, especially personal or biometric data, is stored within India. This will mitigate risks from foreign data breaches and enhance privacy.
- ◆ **Establish AI ethics committees in government departments**, responsible for regular audits of AI systems to ensure compliance with data privacy norms and prevent the misuse of personal data.
- **Mitigating Algorithmic Bias and Ensuring Fairness:** Develop and implement robust frameworks for bias detection in AI systems.
 - ◆ Ensure that AI models are trained on diverse and representative datasets.
 - ◆ Initiatives like the **Bhashini project** can be expanded to create inclusive language models, accounting for the diversity in India's population.
 - ◆ Mandate the **use of Explainable AI (XAI) tools**, which can provide transparency in AI decision-making processes.
- **Developing a Comprehensive AI Regulatory Framework:** India must expedite the creation of a **National AI Act**, similar to the EU's **AI Act**, with provisions for AI classification, accountability, ethical use, and transparency in governance.
 - ◆ This will help mitigate risks associated with AI adoption, such as wrongful decision-making or misuse of AI for surveillance.
 - ◆ Introduce regulatory sandboxes where AI-based solutions can be tested in real-world scenarios under relaxed regulations to ensure their safety.
 - Similar to the **RBI's FinTech sandbox**, such an initiative could facilitate experimentation in sectors like healthcare, taxation, and law enforcement.

Conclusion:

AI holds immense potential to transform governance in India. The framework for AI in governance should prioritize **3Ps: Protection** of privacy, ensure **Progress** in service delivery, and foster **Participation** from all stakeholders to create an **inclusive and transparent system**.

10. Discuss the challenges in maintaining judicial independence while ensuring judicial accountability in India. To what extent do the existing mechanisms address this tension? (250 words)

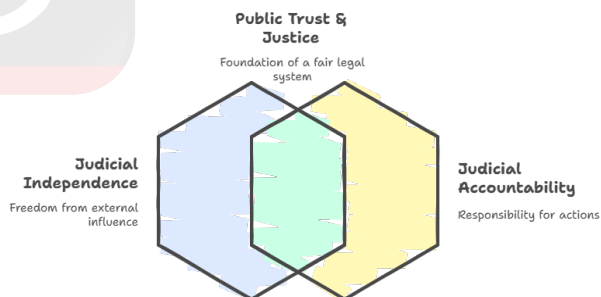
Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about Judicial independence and highlight recent current events where judicial accountability was in question.
- Highlight Challenges in Maintaining Judicial Independence While Ensuring Accountability
- Delve into the Extent to Which Existing Mechanisms Address the Tension
- Give Measures to Ensure Robust and Balanced Judicial Accountability in India.

Introduction:

Judicial independence ensures **impartiality and safeguards the judiciary from external pressures**, while **accountability** ensures judges act within constitutional and ethical boundaries. The **recent move by the Union Government to initiate impeachment proceedings against an Allahabad High Court judge** over alleged financial misconduct has once again brought this inherent tension to the forefront.

The Synergy of Judicial Independence and Accountability



Body:

Challenges in Maintaining Judicial Independence While Ensuring Accountability

- **Ineffectiveness of Existing Accountability Mechanisms:** The **Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968**, provides for impeachment, but it is complex, rare, and heavily dependent on political will.

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- ◆ No judge has ever been removed under this process, leading to a **perception of institutional immunity**.
- **Lack of Statutory and Transparent In-House Mechanism:** The **in-house mechanism** created by the judiciary operates without statutory authority and lacks transparency or public scrutiny.
 - ◆ In serious cases like that of **Justice Yashwant Varma**, internal investigations remain behind closed doors, raising concerns about effectiveness and impartiality.
- **Judicial Independence as a Shield Against Scrutiny:** Excessive insulation has led to **judicial independence being misused to resist oversight**.
 - ◆ There is no **external regulatory body** to monitor judicial ethics or conduct, unlike in the executive or legislative branches.
- **Opaque Collegium System:** The **judicial appointment process**, controlled by the collegium, lacks transparency and objective criteria.
 - ◆ This non-transparent system fuels perceptions of nepotism, lack of meritocracy, and **limits external checks on performance or conduct**.
- **Absence of Uniform Standards for Misconduct:** No codified or binding **Judicial Conduct Code** exists, leading to **inconsistencies in handling misconduct** across courts.
 - ◆ Disparate and discretionary application of disciplinary measures erodes faith in internal mechanisms.
- **Risks of Politicization:** Strong accountability mechanisms, if not insulated, can be **misused by the executive to influence or punish the judiciary**.
 - ◆ The proposal to bring judges under the Lokpal, though stayed, raises concerns of **executive overreach**.
- ◆ The process being invoked for the first time in a High Court case shows its **extreme underutilization**, despite repeated allegations.
- **Internal Mechanisms Offer Control but Lack Credibility:** The **in-house mechanism** provides **autonomy**, thus safeguarding independence.
 - ◆ However, the **lack of transparency and enforceability** limits its ability to inspire public confidence or ensure accountability.
- **Lapsed Reforms Reflect Institutional Hesitancy:** The **Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill (2010)** could have introduced an independent oversight committee, but its lapse in Rajya Sabha in 2014 **highlights the judiciary's resistance to external checks**.
- **Judicial Review as a Check on Lower Judiciary, Not Conduct:** **Judicial review** allows higher courts to scrutinize lower court rulings, but it does not function as a conduct-monitoring tool.
 - ◆ **Allegations of corruption or misconduct often result in quiet resignations**, with little or no explanation to the public.

Measures to Ensure Robust and Balanced Judicial Accountability in India:

- **Establishment of an Independent Judicial Oversight Body:** Create a **National Judicial Oversight Committee** with statutory authority, comprising retired judges, legal experts, and eminent citizens.
 - ◆ Empower it to receive complaints, conduct investigations, and recommend disciplinary action, while insulating it from political influence.
 - ◆ This would provide **external checks** without compromising judicial independence.
- **Revamp the Impeachment Process: Simplify and streamline** the procedure under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.
 - ◆ Introduce **clear timelines**, ensure **transparency**, and provide a **public complaints mechanism**.
 - ◆ Make the process less vulnerable to political manipulation, ensuring it acts as a **credible deterrent**.

Extent to Which Existing Mechanisms Address the Tension:

- **Impeachment Offers Theoretical Deterrence but Lacks Practical Teeth:** While the Constitution enshrines judicial independence, the **impeachment mechanism is too rigid, slow, and politicized** to act as a real deterrent.

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- **Public Disclosure of Assets and Liabilities:** Make annual asset declarations by judges mandatory and public, similar to public servants.
 - ◆ This increases transparency and helps detect **disproportionate wealth accumulation**, serving as a preventive measure against corruption.
- **Codify a National Judicial Conduct Code:** Introduce a **binding Code of Conduct** that defines ethical standards, conflict-of-interest rules, and expected behavior.
 - ◆ Ensure that the code is **enforceable** through an independent mechanism, and periodically reviewed.
- **Introduce a Judicial Performance Review System:** Periodically evaluate judges on parameters like **judicial reasoning, pendency reduction, adherence to ethical standards**, and case disposal rates.
 - ◆ Publish **aggregate, anonymized performance reports** to maintain public accountability while respecting individual independence.
- **Whistleblower Protection in Judiciary:** Establish a mechanism for court staff, lawyers, and litigants to **report judicial misconduct** safely.
 - ◆ Provide legal protection to whistleblowers from retaliation by the judicial establishment.
- **Legislative Revival of Judicial Reforms:** Reintroduce and pass the **Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill** with appropriate checks and balances.
 - ◆ Incorporate provisions for **independent inquiry**, public participation, and safeguarding judicial autonomy.

Conclusion:

As former CJI D.Y. Chandrachud aptly said: **“True judicial independence is not a shield to protect wrongdoing, but an instrument to secure the fulfilment of constitutional values.”** Striking the right balance between independence and accountability is essential to **preserve the legitimacy and moral authority of the judiciary.**

11. “The promise of democratic decentralization, envisioned through the constitutional amendments, remains far from fully realized due to various constraints.” Discuss. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about constitutional amendments promoting democratic decentralization in India
- Delve into the provisions of 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments of 1992
- Give Key Constraints Hindering Effective Democratic Decentralization
- Suggest Measures for Strengthening Democratic Decentralization
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

The promise of democratic decentralization, as envisioned through **73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments of 1992** were landmark reforms aimed at empowering **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** by giving them legal recognition and specific functions in governance.

- Despite these legal advancements, democratic decentralization faces numerous constraints that prevent local bodies from becoming effective instruments of self-governance.

Body:

Promise of Democratic Decentralization: Constitutional Provisions and Amendments

The **73rd Amendment** (for Panchayats) and the **74th Amendment** (for Municipalities) are pivotal for local governance in India. These amendments brought the following reforms:

- **Three-Tier System:** Rural areas have a system of Panchayats at the village, intermediate, and district levels, while urban areas are governed by Municipalities and Municipal Corporations.
- **Elections and Reservations:** They mandated direct elections to local bodies and reserved one-third of the seats for women and marginalized communities (SCs/STs).
- **Fiscal Devolution:** Provision for a **Finance Commission at the state level** to recommend financial devolution to local bodies.

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- **Planning and Development:** Panchayats were entrusted with preparing plans for economic development and social justice on the subjects in the Eleventh Schedule, including agriculture, health, education, and rural development.

Despite these progressive measures, the core promise of decentralization remains hindered by structural and functional constraints.

Key Constraints Hindering Effective Democratic Decentralization:

- **Fiscal Dependence and Weak Revenue Autonomy:** According to the RBI Report (2022-23), Panchayats generated only 1% of their revenue through taxes, with 80% coming from central government grants.
 - ◆ Local bodies face a serious **revenue autonomy** issue as they do not have control over critical sources of income such as land revenue and professional tax.
 - ◆ The **State Finance Commissions (SFCs)**, which are supposed to ensure financial devolution, often fail to implement their recommendations, further restricting the fiscal capacity of local governments.
- **Limited Representation and Participation:** While the 73rd and 74th Amendments reserved seats for women, SCs, and STs, the actual political power often remains with dominant groups.
 - ◆ As highlighted in the Webseries *Panchayat*, **Women sarpanches** (village heads) and councilors often face **proxy representation** (Pradhan Pati), where male family members exercise power.
 - ◆ This severely undermines the effective empowerment of women and marginalized communities.
 - Furthermore, there is a **lack of capacity-building programs** and **institutional support**, making it difficult for marginalized groups to play an active role in governance.
- **Political and Bureaucratic Interference:** Local bodies often face **political interference** that undermines their decision-making power.
 - ◆ According to the **Ashok Mehta Committee**, local governance remains controlled by state

governments, which restricts the autonomy of Panchayats and ULBs.

- ◆ The **transfer of 29 subjects** under the **11th Schedule** to Panchayats remains inconsistent, as states hesitate to cede control over certain subjects.
- ◆ This results in a structural contradiction, where local bodies are responsible for service delivery but lack the **power to execute decisions** effectively.
- **Corruption and Electoral Reluctance:** **Corruption** and **electoral considerations** also hinder effective governance.
 - ◆ Elected representatives often hesitate to **impose taxes**, such as property taxes, out of fear that doing so will negatively impact their **electoral prospects**.
 - ◆ In many areas, this reluctance to **collect taxes** results in insufficient local revenue, making local bodies overly reliant on external grants.
 - ◆ Additionally, the **freebie culture** in certain regions has discouraged tax compliance, as local governments avoid enforcing taxes for fear of losing political support.
- **Weak Institutional Capacity for Monitoring:** A major issue is the **inconsistent implementation** of key provisions, such as **District Planning Committees (DPCs)**, which remain **non-functional** in several states.
 - ◆ A **2020 report** indicated that many **DPCs** failed to prepare integrated plans in **15 states**, and in urban areas, staffing vacancies in **municipal corporations** were found to be around **30%**.

Proposed Measures for Strengthening Democratic Decentralization:

- **Enhancing Fiscal Autonomy:** States must ensure the timely implementation of **SFC recommendations**, and local bodies should be encouraged to generate **own-source revenue (OSR)**.
 - ◆ The **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2nd ARC)** recommended enhancing the revenue base of local bodies and introducing **transparent fiscal devolution mechanisms**.

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- ◆ Additionally, **municipal bonds** and **pooled financing mechanisms** (like the **Indore Model**) should be encouraged to diversify revenue sources
- **Empowering Local Bodies with Administrative Autonomy:** Local governments should be granted full **administrative autonomy**, including the power to **recruit personnel**, regulate **service conditions**, and independently plan and execute budgets.
 - ◆ The practice of **state governments approving local budgets** should be abolished, enabling **elected representatives** to exercise complete control over their financial decisions.
 - ◆ Additionally, Panchayats and ULBs should be equipped with **dedicated secretariats** and **trained staff** to handle administrative tasks effectively.
- **Improving Accountability through Participatory Governance:** Engaging citizens in decision-making through **Gram Sabhas** and **Ward Committees** can lead to **inclusive governance**.
 - ◆ The **Balwant Rai Mehta Committee** emphasized the importance of **community participation** in governance, which should be made mandatory for enhancing accountability and responsiveness.
- **Capacity Building and Training:** Local governments should be equipped with the technical expertise to implement these tools, building on the **recommendations from the G.V.K. Rao Committee**.
 - ◆ The establishment of **Local Governance Training Institutes (LGTIs)** in each state can help bridge this gap by offering **continuous training programs** for elected officials and officials.
 - ◆ Furthermore, **e-Governance tools** should be integrated to improve efficiency, transparency, and service delivery in local governance.
- **Strengthening Urban Governance:** The **Mayor-in-Council system**, as suggested by the **2nd ARC**, can streamline governance by providing a directly elected mayor with executive powers.
 - ◆ Additionally, urban local bodies should focus on **land banks** and **municipal bonds** to generate revenue independently of state allocations.

- ◆ **PPP models** should be promoted for infrastructure development to reduce dependence on state transfers.

Conclusion:

To achieve true democratic decentralization, India must focus on the **Three F's: Fiscal Autonomy** for financial independence, **Functional Autonomy** for decision-making powers, and **Fair Representation** to ensure inclusive governance and active citizen participation. Only then can the **vision of Gram Swaraj and urban self-rule truly** take root in India's democratic fabric.

12. "The Vice President's role as Rajya Sabha Chairperson is central to the spirit of bicameralism." Discuss the constitutional and practical significance of this role in ensuring federal balance. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about Constitutional Provisions related to Vice President
- Give Constitutional Significance of Vice-President's Role as Rajya Sabha Chairperson
- Delve into Practical Significance in Sustaining Bicameralism and Federalism
- Highlight key limitations and measures to enhance the role of the office of Vice-President
- Conclude with a quote.

Introduction:

Article 63 of the Constitution of India provides for a Vice-President, who under Article 64 is the **ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha** (Council of States).

- In this unique dual role, the Vice-President belongs to the **Executive branch, yet presides over the Upper House of Parliament** — embodying the spirit of bicameralism and acting as a crucial link between federalism and parliamentary procedure.

Body:

Constitutional Significance of Vice-President's Role as Rajya Sabha Chairperson

- **Presiding Officer of the Council of States:** Under **Article 64**, the Vice-President serves as the ex-officio Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, responsible for

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conducting the proceedings of the House in a neutral and orderly manner.

- ◆ Ensures **legislative efficiency** and **procedural discipline** in the Upper House, which represents the states in India's federal structure.
- **Protection of Federal Balance:** The Rajya Sabha exists primarily to protect the interests of the states in the Union.
 - ◆ As Chairperson, the Vice-President facilitates **meaningful debates on issues affecting the states**, such as state finances, federal schemes, and legislative encroachments.
- **Upholding Parliamentary Traditions:** Although the Vice-President is not a member of either House, his constitutional role ensures **non-partisan conduct**, reinforcing parliamentary dignity and federal neutrality.
- **Stability During Executive Vacancies:** Under **Article 65**, the Vice-President discharges the functions of the President in times of vacancy or incapacity, ensuring **continuity of constitutional governance** — a reflection of cooperative federalism.

Practical Significance in Sustaining Bicameralism and Federalism

- **Facilitating Diverse Representation:** The Rajya Sabha is a chamber of second thought, offering **state perspectives** on national legislation.
 - ◆ The Chairman ensures that regional voices are **not drowned by majoritarianism**, which may occur in the Lok Sabha.
- **Balanced Legislative Deliberation:** The Vice-President, through the Chair, enables **constructive debate** and **checks hasty legislation**, safeguarding the federal compact.
- **Neutral Arbiter in Political Contests:** The Rajya Sabha often becomes a forum for intense Centre-State contestation. The Vice-President's **impartial conduct as Chair** is crucial in maintaining decorum and **trust among diverse political units**.
- **Encouraging Institutional Synergy:** The Vice-President, with his unique vantage point, helps in **harmonizing the functioning** of the Executive and the Legislature — contributing to better Centre-State coordination.

Key Limitations:

- **No Voting Power Except in a Tie:** As per **Article 100(1)**, the Vice-President (as Rajya Sabha Chairman) does **not participate in voting** on bills or motions except in case of a **tie**.
 - ◆ This **limits his legislative influence**, especially in shaping key federal legislations.
- **Limited Role in Legislative Business Formulation:** While the Chairperson presides over certain committees like the **Business Advisory Committee of Rajya Sabha**, his **influence over legislative scheduling is relatively limited compared to the proactive role of the Lok Sabha Speaker**.
 - ◆ This weakens his role in **setting priorities** or ensuring state-centric issues are given time.
- **No Control Over Money Bills:** The Rajya Sabha and its Chairman **have no role** in the introduction or passage of **Money Bills**, as per **Article 110**, which are exclusive to the Lok Sabha.
 - ◆ This significantly **dilutes the power of the Upper House**, and by extension, the role of the Vice-President in financial federalism.

Measures to Enhance the Role of the Vice-President as Rajya Sabha Chairperson:

- **Institutionalising Greater Procedural Powers:** Provide the Chairman a **greater say in Business Advisory Committee** decisions, similar to the Lok Sabha Speaker, to allow more effective scheduling of debates on state-centric issues.
- **Strengthening Neutrality through Reforms:** Consider a **cooling-off period** from active politics before assuming the Vice-President's role, to safeguard **institutional neutrality and public trust**.
 - ◆ Create a **Code of Conduct** for the Chair to reinforce impartiality, especially during contentious legislative debates.
- **Encouraging Cooperative Federalism through Dialogue:** Use the Vice-President's stature to host **regular informal dialogues** among Rajya Sabha members from different states on issues like GST implementation, water disputes, etc.

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- ◆ Facilitate **state-specific discussion days** in the Rajya Sabha to bring regional concerns into national spotlight.

Conclusion:

"The essence of federalism lies in unity without uniformity." In this spirit, the Vice-President, as Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha, serves as a silent yet steadfast sentinel of India's federal structure. His dual role adds both **resilience and balance** to India's constitutional framework.

13. "Declining legislative productivity reflects a deeper crisis in parliamentary democracy and national consensus." Examine with reference to recent parliamentary sessions in India. (150 words)

Approach:

- Briefly explain the concept of legislative productivity.
- Discuss the recent trends in legislative productivity.
- Highlight the key implications of the lower productivity of the legislature.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

Introduction:

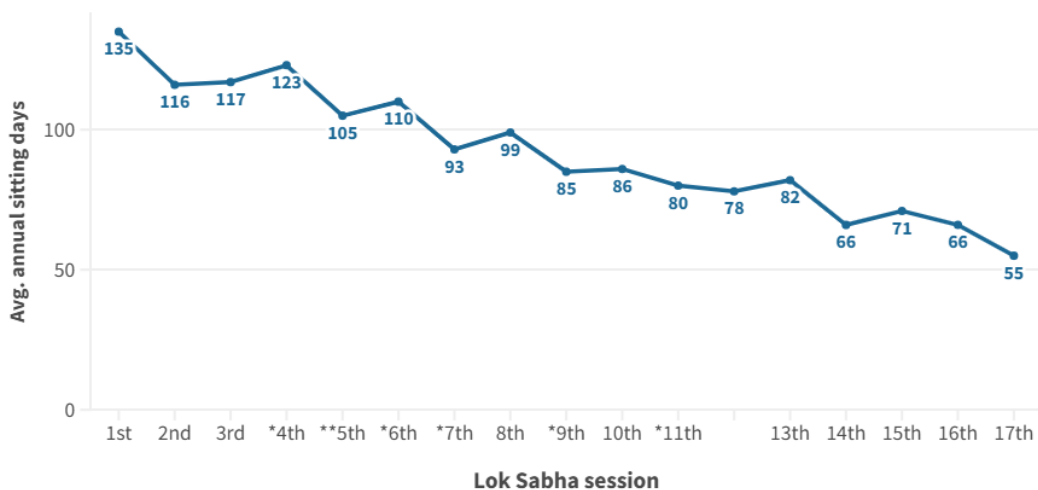
Legislative Productivity refers to the **efficiency and effectiveness** with which **Parliament and State Legislatures** perform their core functions—**lawmaking, executive oversight, budget approval, and debate on public issues**. A **persistent decline** in output signals not just **procedural lapses**, but a deeper **crisis of democratic functioning** and **erosion of national consensus**.

Body:

The recent trends in legislative productivity :

- **Number of Sitting Days:** Parliament's **sitting days** have declined from around **135 days/year** in the **1st Lok Sabha** to just around **55 days/year** in the **17th Lok Sabha**.

Average annual sitting days



Source: [PRS India](https://prsindia.org) • * indicates a term less than five years; ** indicates a six year term | The Hindu Graphics

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- ◆ Despite fewer sitting days, the **17th Lok Sabha** passed **over 200 Bills**, reflecting a high volume of legislative activity.
- **Length of Each Sitting:** Longer sittings are essential for in-depth legislative deliberation.
 - ◆ However, in the **2023 Budget Session**, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha functioned for only **33%** and **24%** of scheduled time respectively, making it the **6th shortest Budget Session** since **1952**.
- **Number of Members Present:** A strong quorum is vital for meaningful debate and informed decision-making.
 - ◆ In the **17th Lok Sabha (2019–2024)**, average MP attendance was **79%**, but debate participation remained low, with MPs averaging only **45 debates** each.
- **Level of Disruption:** Frequent disruptions, such as slogan shouting and walkouts, drastically reduce debate time.
 - ◆ The **15th Lok Sabha (2009–14)** lost over **30%** of its scheduled time to disruptions, severely affecting legislative productivity.
- **Examination by Parliamentary Committees:** In the **17th Lok Sabha**, only **10%** of Bills were referred to committees, a sharp drop from the **14th LS (60%)**, **15th (71%)**, and **16th (25%)**, with just **14 Bills** reviewed.
- **Functioning of Debates: Question Hour & Zero Hour**, essential tools for executive accountability, remain underutilized or absent.
 - ◆ In the **17th Lok Sabha**, Question Hour functioned for only **19%** of scheduled time in Lok Sabha and **9%** in Rajya Sabha.

Implications for Democracy

- Weakens institutional checks and balances by sidelining Parliament's oversight role.
- Reflects a crisis of representation, where public concerns are not adequately discussed.
- Reduces transparency and public trust in democratic institutions.
- Accelerates the ordinance route, bypassing legislative scrutiny (e.g., three farm laws of 2020 introduced as ordinances first).

Conclusion:

As political theorist **Rajni Kothari** noted, "Democracy is not just about numbers; it's about negotiated consensus." Reviving institutional respect, enhancing cross-party dialogue, and promoting reforms like **NeVA** and increased committee scrutiny are essential to restore parliamentary integrity.

International Relations

- 14.** Discuss India's approach to leveraging the SCO for its geopolitical goals while managing the challenges posed by its bilateral relations with China and Pakistan. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about what SCO offers to India and highlight a recent event to set a context for issues related to it.
- Highlight India's Strategic Goals Through the SCO
- Mention Challenges Posed by Bilateral Relations with China and Pakistan
- Delve into India's Strategy for Managing These Challenges
- Conclude with a quote.

Introduction:

The **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** offers India an opportunity to advance its geopolitical goals in **Central Asia**, particularly in terms of counter-terrorism, regional security, and economic cooperation.

- However, India's refusal to sign the **2025 SCO Defence Ministers' joint statement over terrorism** highlights the challenges posed by China's support to Pakistan within the SCO.

Body:

India's Strategic Goals Through the SCO

- **Counter-Terrorism Cooperation:** India aims to combat cross-border terrorism, a primary threat posed by Pakistan. The **SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)** provides a platform to address such issues.
 - ◆ India has consistently pushed for strong action on terrorism within SCO forums, though Pakistan's

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influence and China's protective stance towards it undermine these efforts.

- **Regional Connectivity:** India seeks to enhance its connectivity with **Central Asia through projects like the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**, which can facilitate trade and improve access to Eurasian markets.
 - ◆ By fostering greater connectivity, India aims to integrate itself into regional economic networks, ensuring access to energy and resources crucial for its growth.
- **Economic Cooperation and Energy Security:** SCO offers India a platform to **cooperate on energy resources and regional economic initiatives**, which are crucial for India's energy security.
 - ◆ India's participation in SCO can allow greater access to energy resources from Central Asia, with countries like **Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan having significant energy reserves**.
- **Geostrategic Balance in Central Asia:** India's full membership in the SCO allows it to balance China's growing influence in the region.
 - ◆ India seeks to engage with Central Asia and prevent it from becoming a Chinese sphere of influence by fostering relationships through SCO.
- **Stabilizing Afghanistan:** India has a vested interest in Afghanistan's stability, which is a key concern of the SCO, particularly after the US military drawdown.
 - ◆ As a full member, India can contribute to regional peace-building efforts in Afghanistan, ensuring that instability in the region doesn't spill over into India.

Challenges Posed by Bilateral Relations with China and Pakistan

- **China's Dominance within the SCO:** China has a disproportionate influence within the SCO, often overshadowing India's objectives, **especially in terms of strategic cooperation and decision-making**.
 - ◆ China's close relationship with Pakistan further complicates India's ability to achieve its security goals within the forum.
- **Pakistan's Hostile Stance:** Pakistan's presence in the SCO, alongside India, raises challenges, particularly as

it continues to **promote its narrative on Kashmir and other contentious issues with India**.

- ◆ The consensus-based decision-making structure of the SCO makes it difficult for India to advance its interests when Pakistan's objections can derail discussions.
- **Regional Diplomatic Polarization:** The differing priorities and interests between India, China, and Pakistan create a **geopolitical divide within the SCO**, making it hard for India to pursue cohesive regional strategies, especially in areas like counter-terrorism and connectivity.

India's Strategy for Managing These Challenges

- **Strategic Diplomacy and Assertiveness:** India has taken an assertive stance when its core interests are threatened, as seen with the **refusal to sign the joint statement at the 2025 SCO Defence Ministers' meeting**.
 - ◆ By prioritizing its **anti-terrorism agenda**, India sends a clear message that it will not compromise on its national security, even in multilateral forums.
- **Selective Engagement:** India focuses on areas where cooperation is most beneficial, such as **economic development, energy security, and counter-terrorism efforts**.
 - ◆ Despite the challenges, India remains actively engaged in the SCO's efforts to address regional security threats, particularly in Central Asia, where its interests align with some SCO members.
- **Balancing Relationships with Major Powers:** India is not reliant solely on the SCO but continues to engage with other important regional and global players, including the **US, UK and Israel, to further its strategic interests**.
 - ◆ By maintaining strong bilateral ties with key nations, India ensures that its regional and global security goals are not solely dictated by the dynamics within the SCO.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** India's approach to the SCO reflects its broader foreign policy doctrine of **strategic autonomy**, ensuring that it can navigate multilateral forums while safeguarding its national interests.

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- ◆ India remains firm in **maintaining an independent foreign policy** and avoids being dragged into any bloc politics within the SCO.
- **Engagement with Alternative Multilateral Platforms:** Recognizing the limitations of the SCO, India has increasingly turned to alternative forums, such as the **India-Central Asia Summit, to pursue its regional objectives.**
- ◆ India's decision to strengthen ties with smaller, more focused multilateral forums highlights its pragmatic approach to international diplomacy.

Conclusion:

"India's diplomacy is grounded in pragmatism, driven by national interests, and guided by the pursuit of peace, security, and prosperity." As India navigates the complexities of its relations with China and Pakistan while reaping benefits from SCO, its foreign policy will remain shaped by the principle of **"engagement with caution and cooperation with clarity."**

15. "The Indo-Pacific is not just a geographic space but a strategic vision." Analyze India's Indo-Pacific strategy in the backdrop of China's assertiveness and evolving regional alliances. **(250 words)**

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about significance of Indo-Pacific region for India with a current affair linkage
- Give arguments to Indo-Pacific as a Strategic Vision for India
- Delve into China's Assertiveness as a Strategic Challenge
- Highlight Opportunities for India in Evolving Regional Alliances
- Give Measures to Strengthening India's Indo-Pacific Strategy
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

The launch of the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** at the G20 Summit in 2023 and India's upcoming **Chairmanship of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (2025–27)** reflect India's evolving approach to the **Indo-Pacific as a strategic theatre**, not just a geographic expanse.



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Body:**Indo-Pacific as a Strategic Vision for India:**

- **Maritime Security & Strategic Autonomy:** Over **95% of India's trade by volume** and energy imports traverse the Indo-Pacific, especially through chokepoints like the **Strait of Hormuz and Malacca**.
 - ◆ India's **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)** doctrine and **mission-based deployments** signal its maritime-first approach in countering China's growing naval presence.
- **Economic Growth and Trade Diversification:** The Indo-Pacific underpins India's efforts to **de-risk from overdependence on China**, by joining the **Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)** and signing **FTAs with Australia and UAE**.
 - ◆ India is leveraging the **China+1 strategy** to integrate into global supply chains, particularly in **semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, and clean tech**.
- **Connectivity and Infrastructure Diplomacy:** The **IMEC corridor** and revitalisation of the **Chabahar Port** indicate India's intent to shape trans-regional connectivity.
 - ◆ India's launch of the **Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository (GDPIR)** reflects its soft-power leadership through digital infrastructure.
- **Blue Economy and Climate Resilience:** India is leading ocean sustainability through **IORA, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), and Blue Economy initiatives**, aiming to counter China's infrastructure-heavy BRI with **climate-sensitive development**.

China's Assertiveness: A Strategic Challenge

- **Maritime Militarisation:** China's **expansion in South China Sea**, development of **dual-use ports in Djibouti, Gwadar, and Hambantota**, and **PLA Navy modernisation** pose threats to SLOC security.
- **Debt Diplomacy and Geo-economic Leverage:** Through the **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**, China has entrenched

economic dependencies, which India counters through **sustainable infrastructure diplomacy**.

- ◆ China also has a geo-economic upper hand due to deeper pockets giving it an edge, while **India struggles with funding gaps, tech catch-up, and slower project execution**.
- **Digital and Normative Contestation:** China is promoting **closed, state-centric digital infrastructure**, in contrast to India's **open digital public goods** model through GDPIR and G20 diplomacy.

Evolving Regional Alliances: Opportunities for India

- **Mini-laterals and Strategic Convergences:** **Quad (India-USA-Japan-Australia)** focuses on maritime security, supply chains, and emerging tech.
 - ◆ **India-France-Australia** and **India-Indonesia-Australia** trilaterals foster issue-based coalitions in the Indian Ocean and Pacific theatres.
- **Multilateral Economic Platforms:** **IPEF**, though India opted out of the trade pillar, offers an avenue for supply chain resilience, clean economy, and fair standards.
 - ◆ India's participation in **BIMSTEC** and **IPOI** reinforces its presence in regional groupings with economic and security convergence.

Strengthening India's Indo-Pacific Strategy

- **Expand Maritime Capacity and Forward Presence:** Accelerate **naval modernisation**, mission-based deployments, and develop **dual-use logistics agreements** with Indo-Pacific nations.
 - ◆ Invest in **deep-sea ports, MDA (Maritime Domain Awareness) systems**, and **coastal radar networks**.
- **Enhance Economic Integration:** Deepen FTAs with **ASEAN, Australia, UAE**, and actively participate in **supply chain, digital economy, and clean tech pillars** of IPEF.
 - ◆ Expand **trade facilitation infrastructure**, customs efficiency, and ease of doing business.
 - ◆ If India aspires to be a major global player, **it must become a \$10 trillion economy in the next 10–15 years**. This will require ramping up investments, improving project execution, and overcoming structural bottlenecks.

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- **Lead in Blue Economy and Climate Diplomacy:** Use IORA chairmanship to **mainstream blue economy**, island sustainability, and **climate financing** under India-led platforms like ISA and CDRI.

Conclusion

India's Indo-Pacific vision must move from a patchwork of initiatives to a **coherent, multi-dimensional strategy** that blends security, economic integration, climate diplomacy, and civilizational leadership. *"In the turbulent waters of the Indo-Pacific, nations that navigate with vision, values, and veracity will shape the tides of the future."* India must rise as such a nation.

Social Justice

16. How effective are the policies aimed at ensuring social justice for differently-abled persons in India? Discuss the gaps that still exist in the implementation of these policies. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce by highlighting a recent milestone upholding the rights of differently-abled persons in India
- Delve into Key Policies for Social Justice for Differently-abled Persons in India
- Highlight Effectiveness of the Policies
- Mention Gaps in the Implementation of Policies and suggest Measures for Improvement
- Conclude with a related convention.

Introduction:

In the **recent *Rajive Raturi vs. Union of India (2023)* case**, the Supreme Court reaffirmed that the **right of differently-abled persons to access services and opportunities is a fundamental human right**.

- However, despite legal advancements like the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016**, gaps remain in the implementation of these rights, with PwDs still facing barriers in accessibility, education, and employment.

Pathways to Social Justice



Body:

Key Policies for Social Justice for Differently-abled Persons in India:

- **The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016:** The RPWD Act expanded the definition of disability to 21 categories and guarantees the rights of PwDs across **education, employment, healthcare, and accessibility**.
 - ◆ The Act mandates **4% job reservations in government jobs** and 5% in higher education, aiming to integrate PwDs into mainstream society.
- **Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan):** Launched in 2015, this campaign focuses on improving the accessibility of public spaces, transportation systems, and digital infrastructure for PwDs.
- **National Trust Act, 1999:** This Act provides support for PwDs with **autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation, and multiple disabilities** through various welfare measures.
- **Mental Healthcare Act, 2017:** It addresses the rights and care needs of persons with mental illness, aiming for inclusive mental healthcare services.

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Effectiveness of the Policies:

- **Positive Developments:**
 - ◆ **The Supreme Court's guidelines for media representation** are helping to challenge stereotypes and promote a more inclusive and respectful society for PwDs.
 - A notable example of this is the recent movie *Sitare Zameen Par*, which serves as a hallmark of such positive portrayals.
 - ◆ **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1** covers a wide range of recommendations for making web content more accessible.
 - The **broadcasting of IPL matches with sign language interpretation** is a significant step in the right direction.
- **Areas of Limited Effectiveness Due to:**
 - ◆ **Digital Exclusion:** A study by the **Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF, 2024)** found that **only 36.61% of PwDs regularly use digital services**, primarily due to inaccessible websites and lack of assistive technology.
 - ◆ **Employment Barriers:** PwDs face significant challenges in finding employment due to workplace discrimination, inaccessible work environments, and limited vocational training.
 - Despite the 4% reservation, **only 34 lakh of the 1.3 crore employable PwDs are employed.**

Gaps in the Implementation of Policies:

- **Legal and Bureaucratic Hurdles:** The implementation of policies often remains on paper due to bureaucratic inefficiencies.
 - ◆ For instance, many states have not constituted **State Advisory Boards on disability** as mandated by the **RPWD Act, 2016**.
 - ◆ PwDs often face challenges in obtaining a **Unique Disability ID (UDID)** due to complex procedures and lack of digital infrastructure, further hindering their access to benefits.
- **Societal Stigma and Awareness:** Despite legal frameworks, societal attitudes remain deeply rooted in

ableism. PwDs continue to be viewed through the lens of charity rather than equality, leading to exclusion in social, educational, and employment settings.

- ◆ Media representation of PwDs is minimal and often stereotypical, reinforcing negative perceptions.
- **Inaccessibility in Rural and Marginalized Communities:** A significant portion of the **PwD population lives in rural areas (around 69%)**, where accessibility remains a major issue.
 - ◆ **Gender, caste, and rural-urban divides exacerbate the challenges faced by PwDs**, with women and marginalized groups facing multiple layers of discrimination.
- **Infrastructure and Healthcare Gaps:** Although the RPWD Act mandates accessible infrastructure, **only 3% of India's buildings are fully accessible**.
 - ◆ Moreover, **healthcare services are often not disability-friendly**, and public health schemes like **Ayushman Bharat** do not adequately cover assistive devices or long-term disability care.

Measures to Enhance Effectiveness of the Policies:

- **Strengthening Implementation and Monitoring:** Establish robust mechanisms for monitoring and accountability to ensure full enforcement of the **RPWD Act, 2016**.
 - ◆ **Regular audits of government and private sector compliance** with disability-inclusive measures are essential to address non-compliance.
- **Inclusive Employment Practices:** Implement a **national-level disability-inclusive employment policy that mandates accessible work environments**, reasonable accommodations, and flexibility in hiring processes.
 - ◆ Provide incentives for companies to hire PwDs and track their employment progress.
- **Comprehensive Healthcare Services:** Integrate disability-specific needs into national healthcare schemes like **Ayushman Bharat**, covering assistive devices, long-term rehabilitation, and specialized mental health services.

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- **Simplifying Bureaucratic Processes:** Streamline the process of obtaining a **Unique Disability ID (UDID)** and make welfare applications more accessible through mobile apps, ensuring PwDs can easily access benefits without bureaucratic delays.
- **Increased Awareness and Sensitization:** Launch nationwide awareness campaigns to change societal attitudes and promote the inclusion of PwDs.
 - ◆ **Schools, workplaces, and media should be engaged to foster a culture of respect and empathy** for people with disabilities.

Conclusion:

"The only true disability is the inability to accept and respect differences." It is crucial that India moves beyond the compliance mindset and fosters a culture of full inclusion, ensuring that **Divyangs** can participate meaningfully in the nation's progress, both in digital and physical spaces upholding the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**.

17. "The concept of social justice in India is intertwined with the principles of equality, affirmative action, and social empowerment." Discuss how the Constitution of India addresses social justice, particularly for marginalized communities. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about ideals of Social Justice in Indian Constitution and how it is intertwined with the principles of equality, affirmative action, and social empowerment
- Give arguments to Principles of Equality in the Constitution Affirmative Action and Special Provisions for Marginalized Communities and Social Empowerment
- Conclude with a quote.

Introduction:

Social justice aims at creating a fair and equitable society by removing historical disadvantages, ensuring equal opportunities, and empowering the marginalized. The **Preamble as the identity card of the Constitution** sets the tone by committing the Indian State to justice—**social, economic, and political**.

- It is reinforced through **Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy**, it is inseparable from the principles of **equality, affirmative action, and social empowerment**.



Body:

Principles of Equality in the Constitution

- **Equality Before Law (Article 14):** Article 14 guarantees that **all citizens are equal before the law and entitled to equal protection of the laws**.
 - ◆ This provision ensures that no individual or group is discriminated against, establishing the foundation of equality in Indian democracy.
- **Prohibition of Discrimination (Article 15):** Article 15 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of **religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth**.
 - ◆ It ensures that marginalized communities cannot be discriminated against in public places, educational institutions, or employment.
- **Equality of Opportunity (Article 16):** Article 16 ensures **equality of opportunity** in matters of public employment.
 - ◆ It specifically prohibits discrimination in employment on the grounds of **religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth**, reinforcing the idea that public service should be accessible to all citizens.

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- ◆ These provisions form the bedrock of social justice by guaranteeing **equality** and **non-discrimination**, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable sections of society.

Affirmative Action and Special Provisions for Marginalized Communities:

- **Reservation of Seats in Legislatures (Article 81 & 170):** The Constitution provides for **reservations** in the **Lok Sabha** and **Rajya Sabha** for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).
 - ◆ **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam** reserves **one-third of all seats for women** in the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies.
- **Reservation in Educational Institutions (Article 15(4), 15(5)):** Article 15(4) empowers the state to make special provisions for the advancement of **socially and educationally backward classes** of citizens.
 - ◆ Similarly, Article 15(5) specifically allows reservations for **OBCs, SCs, and STs** in **educational institutions**, aiming to provide them access to quality education, thereby breaking the cycle of poverty and backwardness.
- **Reservation in Employment (Article 16(4)):** To ensure adequate representation and participation in public services, Article 16(4) allows for **reservations** for **backward classes, SCs, and STs** in **public employment**.
 - ◆ This helps rectify the historical underrepresentation of these communities in government jobs, which are crucial for social mobility and empowerment.
- **Special Provisions for STs (Article 46):** Article 46 promotes the **welfare of Scheduled Tribes** by directing the state to **protect** and **advocate** for their **educational and economic interests**.
 - ◆ It emphasizes protecting the interests of these communities against exploitation, thereby empowering them socially and economically.

Social Empowerment:

- **Right to Dignified Life:** Rights such as the **Right to Education (Article 21A)** and **Right to Life and Personal Liberty (Article 21)** are particularly significant. These rights protect individuals from exploitation and discrimination, providing avenues for empowerment.

- **Protection from Exploitation (Article 23 & 24):** Article 23 prohibits **human trafficking** and **forced labor**, which disproportionately affect marginalized communities. Similarly, **Article 24** prohibits the employment of children under the age of 14 in hazardous occupations, directly addressing exploitation within vulnerable sections of society.
- **India as a Welfare State (DPSPs):** While **DPSPs** are not enforceable by courts, they reflect the aspirations of the state to promote social justice.
 - ◆ **Article 38** urges the state to promote the **welfare of the people** by securing a **social order** based on justice, and **Article 39A** calls for equal justice and free legal aid, ensuring that justice is not denied to any citizen due to economic or social barriers.

Empowering Marginalized Communities through Specific Laws and Programs

The Constitution also facilitates the empowerment of marginalized communities through specific **laws** and **programs** aimed at addressing the historical and systemic injustices they face.

- **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989** seeks to prevent the exploitation and **discrimination** of SCs and STs by providing legal remedies and punishment for crimes such as **untouchability** and **exploitation**.
 - ◆ This reinforces the Constitution's vision of **dignity and equality** for marginalized communities.
- The Constitution establishes bodies like the **National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)** and the **National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)** to monitor the implementation of policies and safeguard the interests of these communities.
- The **Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA)** and the **Forest Rights Act, 2006** empower **tribal communities** by recognizing their **rights over land, resources, and governance** structures.
 - ◆ These legal provisions support the inclusion and **empowerment** of tribal people in local governance and the protection of their resources.

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Conclusion:

The **Constitution of India** treats social justice not as an abstract ideal, but as a guiding principle for inclusive nation-building. As Dr. B.R. Ambedkar rightly said, *"Justice is the soul of the Constitution."* To truly realise this soul, the State must ensure that justice is not only promised but delivered where it is needed most.

18. While India ranks high in consumption equality, it continues to witness deepening wealth concentration. Analyse the disconnect between economic expansion and distributive justice in India. What policy measures are needed to bridge this gap? (250 words)

Approach:

- Briefly introduce the paradox of consumption equality and deepening wealth concentration in India.
- Analyse the disconnect between economic expansion and distributive justice in India.
- Suggest that some policy measures are needed to bridge this gap.
- Conclude with a scholarly remark.

Introduction:

India, now the **world's fourth-largest economy (PIB)**, presents a striking **paradox**. While it ranks among the **most equal societies** in terms of consumption, with a **Gini Index of 25.5** (World Bank), placing it fourth globally, it suffers from **severe wealth concentration**.

Body :**Consumption Equality**

- **Welfare Schemes Ensure Basic Parity:**
 - ◆ Government programs like the **Public Distribution System (PDS)**, **PM-KISAN**, **Ayushman Bharat**, and **MGNREGA** have provided **minimum consumption security** for the poor.
 - ◆ These schemes have led to **consumption parity**, reflected in metrics such as Gini coefficients on consumption.

● **Absence of Asset Equality:**

- ◆ While consumption is temporarily equalised, **access to wealth-generating resources**—education, jobs, property, credit—remains **highly skewed**.
- ◆ Thus, structural inequality persists beneath the surface of daily consumption levels.

Disconnect Between Growth and Distribution

- **Oxfam India (2023):** The top 1% of Indians hold over 40% of total wealth.
- **World Inequality Report (2022):** India is among the most unequal countries in the world, with the top 10% and top 1% of the population holding 57% and 22% of the total national income respectively.
 - ◆ The share of the bottom 50% has gone down to 13%.

Reasons for Rising Wealth Inequality

- **Regressive Tax Regimes:** Decline in corporate and wealth taxation; rising indirect tax burden on the
- **Skewed Asset Ownership:** Land, stocks, and real estate are concentrated in a few hands.
- **Jobless Growth:** Automation, gig economy, and informalisation have limited income opportunities.
 - ◆ The Informal sector employs over **90%** of the workforce but remains underpaid.
- **Limited Social Mobility:** Due to inadequate access to quality **healthcare, education, and credit**.
 - ◆ Around 74% of India's population could not afford a healthy diet, and 39% fell short of a nutrient-adequate one.
- **Corporate-Centric Growth:** Economic liberalization favored large enterprises over MSMEs.
- **Crony Capitalism:** Privatisation and regulatory capture have disproportionately favoured business elites.
- **Tax Burden on Poor:** Approximately 64% of the total goods and services tax (GST) in the country came from the bottom 50% of the population, while only 4% came from the top 10% in 2021-22. (Oxfam Report, 2023)

Implications for Distributive Justice

- **Social Fracturing:** Rising inequality can fuel resentment and identity-based politics.

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- **Reduced Social Mobility:** Poor access to quality education, healthcare, and digital tools traps the poor in poverty.
- **Democratic Deficit:** Unequal influence on policymaking undermines the ideal of one-person-one-vote.

Policy Measures to Bridge the Gap

- **Progressive Taxation:** Consider reintroducing an **inheritance tax** and revisiting **capital gains taxation** for high-net-worth individuals.
- **Universal Basic Services:** Ensure access to **education, health, and internet** to enhance capabilities.
- **Labour Market Reforms:** Strengthen **minimum wage laws**, extend **social security** to gig workers.

- **Asset Redistribution:** Land reforms, housing for the landless, and targeted **MSME** credit.
- **Rural Employment and Infrastructure:** Expand **MGNREGA** and invest in rural connectivity.
- **Transparent Data:** Conduct regular **inequality audits** to inform targeted policies.

Conclusion :

As **Amartya Sen** asserts, **true development** lies in expanding **capabilities** and promoting **equity**, not merely economic growth. Fulfilling **SDG Goal 10 (Reducing Inequality)** requires targeted policies, **redistributive taxation**, and universal access to public services. Only through such measures can **economic expansion** align with **distributive justice**.



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GENERAL STUDIES PAPER-3

Economy

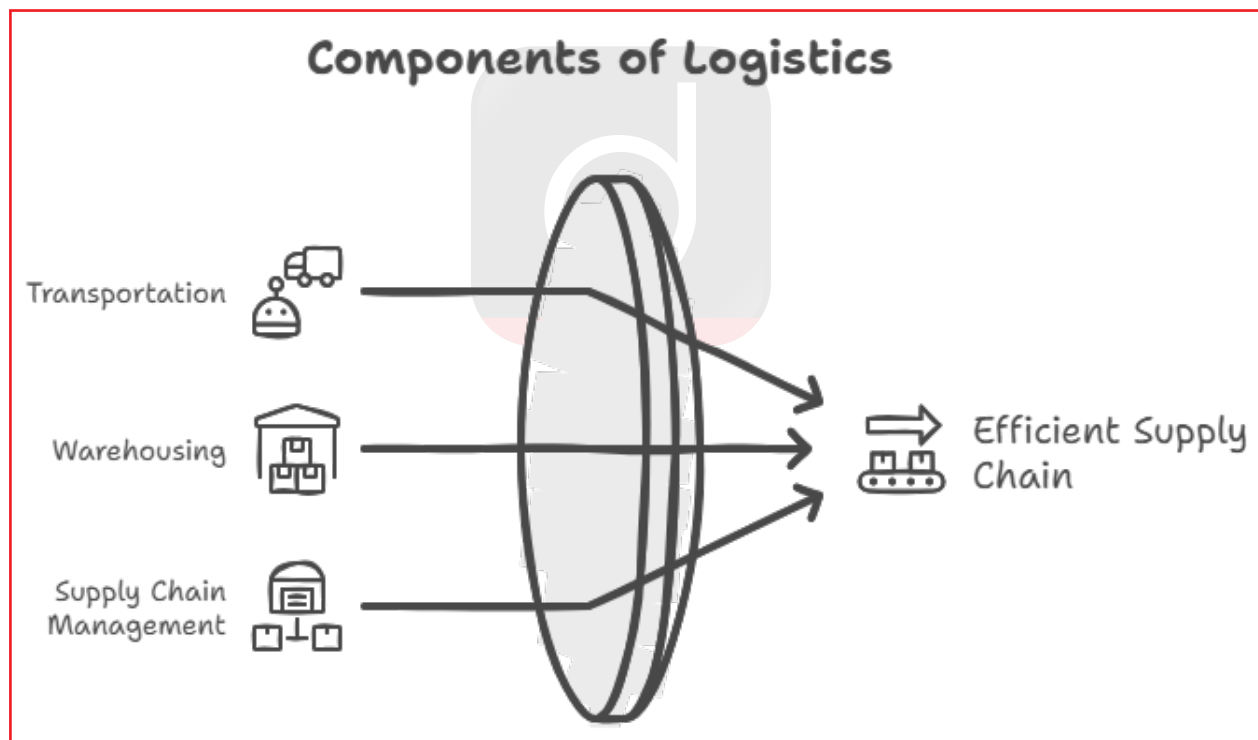
19. "Logistics is the backbone of a nation's economic efficiency, and its transformation is essential for India's journey from a developing economy to a developed one." Discuss. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about Logistics sector in India
- Give arguments to Logistics as the Backbone of Economic Efficiency
- Highlight Transformational Growth Trends in India's Logistics Sector
- Delve into Persisting Challenges in India's Logistics Sector and Suggest Transformational Reforms
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

Logistics, encompassing transportation, warehousing, and supply chain management, plays a pivotal role in enabling economic growth by ensuring the smooth movement of goods and services.



- In India, the logistics sector contributes around **13-14% of the GDP**, a figure higher than global benchmarks (~8%), indicating both its importance and inefficiencies.

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Body:**Logistics as the Backbone of Economic Efficiency:**

- **Enabling Supply Chain Resilience:** Logistics ensures time-sensitive delivery of goods, critical for sectors like pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and e-commerce.
 - ◆ **Efficient cold chains reduce post-harvest losses (~₹92,000 crore annually),** enhancing food security.
- **Supporting Manufacturing and Exports:** With the **PLI schemes and 'Make in India', manufacturing-led growth requires robust end-to-end logistics.**
 - ◆ For instance, **India's merchandise exports reached \$447.46 billion in 2022–23,** heavily reliant on efficient port and multimodal connectivity.
- **Driving Employment and Formalisation:** The sector employs **22 million people,** expected to add **10 million more jobs by 2027.**
 - ◆ Formalisation through policies like GST and National Logistics Policy enhances productivity and workforce skills.
- **Enabling Regional and Global Connectivity:** Initiatives like **India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC)** and **Sagarmala** improve trade linkages and maritime efficiency.

Transformational Growth Trends in India's Logistics Sector:

- **Robust Market Expansion:** The sector grew at **11% CAGR (2019–24)** and is projected to reach **₹35.3 trillion by 2029.**
- **Policy Support and Government Interventions:** **National Logistics Policy (NLP)** aims to reduce logistics cost to 8% of GDP by 2030.
 - ◆ **PM Gati Shakti Master Plan** integrates 1400+ data layers to improve multimodal infrastructure planning.
- **Infrastructure and Modal Shift:** Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFCs), **35 multimodal parks under Bharatmala,** and improved port connectivity are reshaping the modal mix.
 - ◆ **Modal shift from roads to rail, coastal, and inland waterways** is critical for cost efficiency.

- **Digital Transformation:** Platforms like **ULIP, e-Sanchit,** and tools like **FASTag, IoT,** and **AI-based route optimization** are streamlining logistics.
 - ◆ India improved 6 places to **38th in the World Bank's Logistics Performance Index (2023).**
- **Rise of E-commerce and Last-Mile Logistics:** E-commerce projected to reach **\$200 billion by 2026,** with logistics companies like **Delhivery** driving last-mile efficiency.
 - ◆ Tech-enabled micro-warehousing and reverse logistics are expanding in Tier-II/III cities.

Persisting Challenges in India's Logistics Sector:

Challenge	Implications
High Logistics Cost	Reduces competitiveness of Indian exports and MSMEs
Modal Imbalance	Over-reliance on road (66%) inflates cost and emissions
Fragmented and Unorganised Market	Over 90% remains informal, limiting tech adoption
Sustainability Issues	Diesel-dependency and only 6,000 EV charging stations for commercial logistics
Cybersecurity Risks	Increasing digitisation exposes SMEs to data breaches and cyberattacks

Transformational Reforms to Enhance Efficiency:

- **Integrated Infrastructure Development:** Fast-track DFCs, multimodal logistics parks, and last-mile rural connectivity.
 - ◆ Emulate models like **Mumbai Trans Harbour Link,** improving access to Jawaharlal Nehru Port.
- **Regulatory Simplification and Single-Window Clearance:** Expand **e-Sanchit** to all logistics-related processes.
 - ◆ Harmonise state regulations and enable **faceless customs clearance.**
- **Digitisation and Technology Incentives:** Promote tech adoption in MSMEs through subsidies and access to **ULIP APIs.**

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- ◆ Develop India-specific logistics innovations in partnership with startups.
- **Skill Development and Certification:** Partner with e-commerce giants for last-mile skilling programs.
 - ◆ Establish logistics-specific ITIs and certification standards.
- **Green Logistics Push:** Launch **Green Logistics Certification Program**. Promote **EV adoption**, coastal shipping, and low-carbon corridors (e.g., Sagar Sethu).
- **Multimodal Integration and Freight Rationalisation:** Implement multimodal hubs at economic clusters.
 - ◆ Offer incentives to shift cargo from roads to railways and inland waterways.

Conclusion:

The **National Logistics Policy (NLP)** marks a transformative shift in India's approach to logistics by aiming to reduce logistics costs to **8% of GDP**, enhance **multimodal integration**, and **improve global competitiveness**. With effective implementation, it can become a key enabler of **India's transition from a developing to a developed economy**, driving economic **efficiency**, **export growth**, and **inclusive development**.

20. "In a country where deprivation wears many faces, economic policy must begin at the margins, not the median." Examine in the context of poverty alleviation strategies in India. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about poverty in India and key deprivation factors
- Delve into Poverty Alleviation Strategies in India: From Median to Margins
- Highlight Current Faces of Deprivation in India
- Give Policy Recommendations to Address Poverty from the Margins
- Conclude with a quote.

Introduction

India has made commendable progress in poverty reduction, with **MPI falling from 29.17% in 2013–14 to 11.28% in 2022–23**. Yet, with **129 million people** still living under \$2.15/day, deprivation remains multidimensional—

spanning **nutrition, sanitation, education, and livelihood insecurity**—necessitating a further policy shift from the **median (the average income group benefiting from growth)** to the **margins (the ultra-poor and most excluded)**, where vulnerability is deepest.

Body:

Poverty Alleviation Strategies in India: From Median to Margins

- **Traditional Approach: Median-Centric**
 - ◆ **Calorie-based poverty lines** (Dandekar-Rath, 1971; Lakdawala, 1993).
 - ◆ **Tendulkar Committee (2009)** introduced a broader consumption basket.
 - ◆ These approaches, while useful, failed to capture **multidimensional deprivation**.
- **Current Paradigm: Margins-Focused**
 - ◆ **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)** includes health, education, and living standards.
 - ◆ India's adoption of **Graduation Approach (BRAC model)** for poverty alleviation:
 - Combines *livelihood support, financial inclusion, and social protection*.
 - Focuses on **sustainable poverty exits** rather than short-term relief.

Current Faces of Deprivation in India:

- **Income and Wealth Inequality:** Top 10% hold **57% of national income**, bottom 50% hold just **13%** (World Inequality Report, 2022).
 - ◆ Growth has disproportionately benefited the upper echelons.
- **Informal Sector Vulnerability:** Over **80%** of workers are in the informal sector, lacking job security and social benefits.
 - ◆ Urban unemployment rates remain high at **8.9%**(CMIE, 2024).
- **Rural-Agricultural Distress:** Agriculture employs **46%** of the workforce but contributes only **18%** to GDP.
 - ◆ **More than 80% of farmers** are small and marginal; their incomes are vulnerable to price shocks and climate change.

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- **Health and Educational Deprivations:** Out-of-pocket expenditure is **58.7%** of total health spending.
 - ◆ **56.1%** of Indian children suffer from learning poverty (World Bank, pre-pandemic), **80%** of rural Grade 3 children can't read a Grade 2 text (ASER 2022).
- **Climate Vulnerability:** Climate change disproportionately impacts agriculture, fishing, and livelihoods of the poor.
 - ◆ Events like **Cyclone Amphan** (2020) displaced 2.4 million, mostly from poor communities.

Policy Recommendations to Address Poverty from the Margins

- **Strengthening Social Safety Nets:** Expanding the coverage and efficiency of **DBTs, Ayushman Bharat, and PM-KISAN** can improve the resilience of the ultra-poor.
- **Livelihood Diversification in Rural Areas:** Strengthening **MGNREGA with skill-based and asset-building activities** can promote sustainable livelihoods.
 - ◆ Integrating schemes like **Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme under DAY-NRLM** can support rural entrepreneurship and reduce dependence on agriculture.
- **Skilling and Employment Generation:** Revamping **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)** with localized, industry-aligned training will improve employment outcomes for the marginalized.
 - ◆ Partnerships with private enterprises and MSMEs can create demand-driven jobs, especially in backward regions.
- **Empowerment of Women and Marginalised Groups:** Scaling Self Help Groups coverage and improving credit access through **Stand-Up India can enable women-led enterprises.**
 - ◆ Implementing gender budgeting and land rights reforms can ensure institutional support for vulnerable communities.
- **Nutrition and Basic Services Access:** Strengthening Poshan Abhiyan and the PDS with **fortified food will reduce malnutrition in high-burden districts.**
- **Climate-Resilient Development:** Expanding PM Fasal Bima Yojana and incentivising **solar irrigation through PM-KUSUM** will safeguard farmer incomes.

- ◆ **Jal Shakti Abhiyan must be scaled in drought-prone areas** to enhance water security and reduce rural distress.
- **Digital and Infrastructure Inclusion:** Accelerating BharatNet implementation and rural digital literacy campaigns can bridge the digital divide.
 - ◆ Platforms like **e-Shram can link informal workers to benefits**, financial tools, and employment opportunities.
- **Region-Specific Poverty Strategies:** **A one-size-fits-all approach to poverty alleviation often fails to address the unique socio-economic and geographic challenges of different regions.** Therefore, context-specific interventions are essential to ensure inclusive and effective outcomes.
 - ◆ Tailored interventions under the **Aspirational Districts Programme** can address local development gaps.
 - ◆ Flood-prone states need **resilient infrastructure**, while **tribal regions require investments in health, education, and land rights.**

Conclusion:

As Mahatma Gandhi said, "The true measure of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members." To build an inclusive and just society, **India must design from the margins**—ensuring that every citizen, no matter how vulnerable, becomes a participant in the development process.

21. Despite being the largest cotton producer globally, India lags in productivity. Critically examine the key challenges in cotton productivity in India and evaluate the role of recently launched "Mission for Cotton Productivity" in addressing them. (250 words)

Approach:

- Start by stating that India is the largest cotton producer in the world, but ranks lower in productivity.
- Critically examine the key challenges in cotton productivity in India.
- Evaluate the role of recently launched "Mission for Cotton Productivity" in addressing them.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

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Introduction:

Despite being a **leading cotton producer**, India's **productivity** remains **low** at **448 kg/ha**, well below **global benchmarks**. This **yield gap**, rooted in **structural** and **agronomic challenges**, is the focus of the **"Mission for Cotton Productivity"**, which aims to improve output through **targeted, technology-led, and farmer-centric strategies**.

Body :**The Key Challenges in Cotton Productivity in India:**

- **Low Productivity:** India ranks 1st globally in cotton acreage, with 130.61 lakh hectares under cultivation, accounting for ~40% of the world's total cotton area (324.16 lakh hectares).
 - ◆ However, in terms of productivity, India stands 39th in the world, with an average yield of just 447 kg/ha.
- **Rising Dependence on Imports:** Cotton imports surged from USD 518.4 million in 2023–24 to USD 1.04 billion in 2024–25, while exports fell from USD 729.4 million to USD 660.5 million.
- **Stagnation after Success:** Despite the success of **Bt (Bacillus thuringiensis)** cotton and **Bollgard-II technologies**, India has not approved any new genetically modified (GM) cotton variants since 2006.
- **Infestation:** The decline in cotton production is mainly due to the increased infestation of the **pink bollworm (PBW)**.
 - ◆ Initially, Bt cotton offered effective pest control, but over time, PBW developed resistance to Bt proteins.
- **Missed Opportunities in Global Markets:** Countries like the US and Brazil, with robust biotech adoption, are capturing the export space once dominated by India.

Role of the Mission for Cotton Productivity:

- It is a **five-year initiative** launched by the Government of India in the **Union Budget 2025-26** to significantly enhance cotton production in the country.
- It seeks to **enhance cotton productivity** by adopting advanced scientific methods and developing climate-smart, pest-resistant, and high-yielding varieties, including **Extra Long Staple (ELS) cotton**.

- ◆ **The Agricultural Export Policy (2018)** highlights the need to boost export-oriented varieties like ELS cotton to strengthen India's role in global agri-markets.

- It will provide scientific and technological support to cotton farmers, aligning with the **Government's 5F vision- Farm to fibre, fibre to factory, factory to fashion, fashion to foreign for the textile sector**.
- It will utilize advanced breeding techniques and biotechnology tools to improve fibre quality.
 - ◆ **Digital Agriculture Mission 2021–25** advocates the use of emerging technologies in agriculture.
- It will equip farmers with cutting-edge technology to build resilience against climatic and pest-related challenges.
 - ◆ **The Ashok Dalwai Committee** recommends climate-resilient practices to address water stress.

Conclusion:

If implemented with urgency and scientific rigour, the **Mission for Cotton Productivity** can lift yields, cut import dependence, revive exports, raise farmer incomes, and green the cotton value chain, directly advancing **SDG-2 (Zero Hunger & productivity)**, **SDG-8 (Decent Work & growth)**, and **SDG-9 (Innovation)**.

Biodiversity and Environment

22. "India's renewable energy transition is necessary, but not yet sufficient." Analyse the environmental and socio-economic trade-offs in large-scale solar and wind energy projects. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about India's renewable energy ambitions
- Delve into India's Renewable Energy Transition: Necessity vs. Limitations
- Highlight Environmental and Socio-economic Trade-offs in Large-Scale Renewable Energy Projects
- Suggest measures for Just and Sustainable Energy Transition and conclude suitably.

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Introduction

With India's renewable capacity surpassing 200 GW in 2024, the shift is both timely and necessary to reduce emissions and ensure energy security to achieve 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity by 2030.

- However, **this transition is not yet sufficient**, as large-scale solar and wind projects often generate complex environmental and socio-economic trade-offs, raising concerns about their long-term **sustainability, equity, and inclusiveness**.

Body:**India's Renewable Energy Transition: Necessity vs. Limitations**

The Necessity of Renewable Energy Transition	Why the Transition Is Not Yet Sufficient
Climate Commitments: India is the third-largest global emitter of GHGs . Reducing fossil fuel use is vital to meet NDCs under the Paris Agreement and SDG 13 .	Ecological Justice Overlooked: Many renewable projects follow extractive models, harming biodiversity and replicating past environmental injustices .
Energy Security: With 85% crude oil import dependency , renewables can reduce external vulnerabilities and enhance self-reliance.	Socio-economic Inequity: Marginalised groups like rural poor, tribals, and women often remain excluded from the benefits of renewable expansion.
Rising Energy Demand: India will make up the biggest share of energy demand growth at 25% over the next two decades, renewables offer a sustainable way to meet this.	Underdeveloped Circular Economy: Absence of effective e-waste management policies for solar panels and turbine blades threatens long-term sustainability.
Global and Domestic Leadership: Initiatives like ISA and the National Green Hydrogen Mission boost India's global clean energy stature.	Grid and Storage Challenges: Lack of grid integration and storage leads to energy curtailment, reducing efficiency of renewable generation. Currently, India requires 74GW/411GWh of energy storage by 2032.

Environmental Trade-offs in Large-Scale Renewable Energy Projects

- **Land Use and Habitat Fragmentation:** Solar and wind farms require vast stretches of land.
 - ◆ For example, **Pavagada Solar Park** in Karnataka spans over **13,000 acres**. Such projects often encroach upon **commons, forestland, or ecologically fragile zones**, leading to biodiversity loss and deforestation.
- **Impact on Wildlife and Avifauna:** Wind turbines have been linked to high mortality rates of birds, including **endangered species like the Great Indian Bustard** in Rajasthan and Gujarat.
 - ◆ Solar farms can disrupt **desert ecosystems**, changing surface albedo and disturbing local flora and fauna.
- **Pressure from Critical Mineral Extraction:** The renewable energy supply chain depends on **rare earth metals and critical minerals** (lithium, cobalt, nickel), the extraction of which causes significant ecological degradation and often violates Indigenous land rights, particularly in developing countries.
- **Water Footprint of Solar Energy:** Though solar PV systems use less water during operation, **solar thermal plants** require significant water for cooling and cleaning, potentially stressing **water-scarce regions** like Rajasthan.
- **End-of-Life Disposal and E-Waste:** By 2050, India is projected to generate **1.8 million tonnes** of solar PV waste. In the absence of a robust recycling ecosystem, this poses a looming environmental hazard.

Socio-Economic Trade-offs of Large-Scale Projects

- **Land Acquisition and Livelihood Displacement:** Projects often displace small and marginal farmers, pastoralists, and forest-dependent communities. In **Gujarat's Kutch region**, renewable parks have led to **conflicts with Maldhari pastoral communities**, affecting traditional grazing rights.

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- **Energy Access and Centralisation:** While large-scale projects feed into the central grid, they often **bypass energy-poor rural areas**. This centralised model benefits industry and urban centres but does little for **decentralised energy access** and local development.
- **Job Creation vs. Job Quality:** Renewable energy sectors, though employment-generating, often offer **temporary, low-skilled construction jobs**.
- **Lack of Community Participation:** Many projects are executed without **Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC)** of local communities, leading to social unrest. Poor transparency and lack of compensation mechanisms aggravate discontent.

Towards a Just and Sustainable Energy Transition

- **Promote Decentralised Renewable Models:** Encourage **rooftop solar, community-based microgrids, and solar-wind hybrid projects** in rural and tribal areas to ensure local benefits and reduce land use conflicts.
- **Strengthen Environmental Regulation:** Mandate comprehensive **Environmental and Wildlife Impact Assessments (EIA/WIA)** for large-scale projects, especially in eco-sensitive zones.
- **Ensure Inclusive Land and Livelihood Policies:** Implement fair land acquisition practices, ensuring **FPIC**, timely compensation, and **livelihood restoration**. Land lease models can also ensure regular income for farmers.
- **Develop a Circular Economy for Renewables:** Create guidelines for **solar PV recycling**, and incentivize R&D in low-impact technologies. Invest in **green mineral supply chains** with environmental and social safeguards.
- **Improve Grid and Storage Infrastructure:** Invest in **smart grids, battery storage, and pumped hydro** to manage intermittency and reduce energy curtailment.

Conclusion:

India's renewable energy transition is vital for a low-carbon future, but it must evolve from being merely **technologically efficient** to becoming **ecologically sensitive and socially inclusive**. Afterall, *"Sustainability is not only about switching to clean energy—it's about ensuring that the benefits of that energy reach everyone."*

Science and Technology

23. Examine the role of nanotechnology in medical applications, especially in drug delivery systems. What are the potential health risks and regulatory challenges associated with its widespread use? (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about Nanotechnology in medicine with example
- Highlight the Role of Nanotechnology in Medical Applications
- Delve into Potential Health Risks and Regulatory Challenges
- Suggest Measures for Responsible Use of Nanotechnology in Medicine
- Conclude suitably

Introduction:

Nanotechnology, particularly in drug delivery systems, has been rapidly advancing, offering transformative potential in healthcare. For example, **nanoparticle-based Covid-19 vaccines (like Pfizer-BioNTech)** utilize lipid nanoparticles to deliver mRNA, significantly improving the efficiency and targeting of vaccines.

Role of Nanotechnology in Medical Applications

- **Targeted Drug Delivery:** Nanoparticles allow drugs to be delivered directly to affected areas, reducing systemic side effects.
 - ◆ For instance, **Doxil, a liposomal formulation of the chemotherapy drug doxorubicin**, targets cancer cells more efficiently, minimizing harm to healthy cells.
- **Enhanced Bioavailability:** Nanoparticles increase the bioavailability of poorly soluble drugs by improving absorption and distribution.
 - ◆ An example is the **nanocrystal formulations of drugs like paclitaxel** that improve cancer treatment efficacy.
- **Controlled and Sustained Release:** Nanotechnology enables drugs to be released over time, ensuring consistent therapeutic levels.

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- ◆ **Magnetic nanoparticles** can be used to target tumors and release drugs in a controlled manner, enhancing cancer treatment while reducing the need for frequent dosing.
- **Gene Therapy and Immunotherapy:** Nanoparticles can be engineered to deliver genetic material to cells for gene therapy.
 - ◆ Moreover, nanoparticles are being used as **adjuvants** in vaccines, enhancing immune responses. For example, **nanoparticle-based HIV vaccines** show promise in improving immunity.
- **Diagnostics and Imaging:** Nanomaterials improve diagnostic techniques by enhancing imaging. **Gold nanoparticles** are being used in imaging techniques like **CT scans** and **MRI** to increase the resolution and sensitivity of tests for diseases like cancer.

Potential Health Risks

- **Toxicity:** Due to their small size and high surface area, nanoparticles can exhibit toxic effects. For instance, **silver nanoparticles** can cause oxidative stress and inflammation in the body.
- **Unintended Distribution:** Nanoparticles can accumulate in organs such as the **liver, kidneys, and spleen**, potentially leading to organ damage or dysfunction over time. This accumulation can also cause unforeseen consequences if nanoparticles are not cleared from the body.
- **Immune System Activation:** Nanoparticles may trigger the immune system, leading to inflammation or allergic reactions.
 - ◆ For example, **carbon nanotubes** have been linked to pulmonary issues when inhaled, raising concerns about their use in inhaled therapies.
- **Unknown Long-Term Effects:** The long-term effects of nanoparticles within the body are not fully understood.
 - ◆ Continuous accumulation or interaction with biological systems could lead to chronic diseases or other unforeseen health complications.
- **Environmental Risks:** Nanoparticles could also pose environmental risks if they enter ecosystems, potentially affecting plant, animal, and human health.

Regulatory Challenges

- **Lack of Clear Regulations:** Current medical regulations were designed with conventional drugs and devices in mind and **are not fully equipped to address the unique properties of nanomaterials**.
 - ◆ For instance, existing standards for testing toxicity may not account for the behavior of nanoparticles at a molecular level.
- **Safety and Toxicity Testing:** Traditional safety protocols may not fully capture the risks of nanomaterials.
 - ◆ New testing protocols that account for the unique behavior of nanoparticles in biological systems must be developed to ensure their safety before they are approved for clinical use.
- **Inconsistent Global Standards:** Different countries have varied approaches to regulating nanomedicine.
 - ◆ This creates challenges for the global acceptance and standardization of nanotechnology-based treatments. Inconsistent regulations can also delay the widespread adoption of these treatments.
- **Ethical Considerations:** Nanotechnology raises ethical concerns, especially regarding its ability to alter human biology at the molecular level.
 - ◆ Issues such as **informed consent, privacy, and the potential for misuse (e.g., in gene therapy)** need careful consideration before widespread adoption.

Measures for Responsible Use of Nanotechnology in Medicine:

- **Rigorous Safety Testing**
 - ◆ **In vivo and in vitro testing:** Develop and implement specialized protocols to assess the toxicity and long-term effects of nanomaterials.
 - Ensure that nanoparticles **undergo thorough safety evaluations using advanced testing models** to simulate their interaction with human tissues and biological systems.
 - ◆ **Nanotoxicology research:** Invest in research focused on understanding the behavior of nanomaterials in biological environments, identifying any potential harmful interactions or accumulations in organs.

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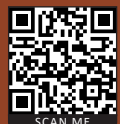
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● Standardized Regulatory Frameworks

- ◆ **Clear, unified global regulations:** Governments and international bodies (e.g., WHO, FDA, EMA) need to develop clear and standardized regulations specifically designed for nanotechnology in medicine.

- This includes safety protocols, approval processes, and post-market surveillance to monitor any adverse effects.

- ◆ **Adaptive regulatory pathways:** Regulators should adopt flexible and adaptive frameworks to keep pace with rapid advancements in nanotechnology.

- This could involve **faster approval processes for well-studied nanoparticles** and continuous monitoring once they are on the market.

● Ethical Oversight

- ◆ **Ethical review boards:** Nanomedicine applications should undergo ethical reviews to assess their implications, especially in areas like gene therapy, where biological alterations are involved.

- These reviews should **ensure that potential treatments respect patient rights and autonomy**.

- ◆ **Informed consent:** Patients should be fully informed about the potential risks and benefits of nanotechnology-based treatments, especially regarding the use of nanoparticles that might have unknown long-term effects.

● Minimizing Environmental Impact

- ◆ **Sustainable production:** Encourage the use of environmentally friendly materials in the production of nanoparticles and other nanomaterials to reduce ecological impacts.

- This includes **using biodegradable or non-toxic materials whenever possible**.

- ◆ **Waste disposal regulations:** Establish proper disposal methods for nanomaterials, ensuring that any waste containing nanoparticles is carefully handled to prevent environmental contamination.

● Public Awareness and Education

- ◆ **Engage the public:** Governments, regulatory bodies, and research institutions should actively engage with the public, raising awareness about the benefits and risks of nanotechnology. This transparency helps build trust and facilitates informed decision-making by patients and healthcare providers.

- ◆ **Educational programs:** Incorporate nanotechnology into medical and scientific curricula to train future healthcare professionals in the safe and responsible use of **nanomedicines**.

Conclusion:

Nanotechnology holds immense potential in revolutionizing medicine, particularly in drug delivery, diagnostics, and immunotherapy. However, its widespread use is hindered by significant health risks and regulatory challenges. Addressing these challenges requires a careful approach that includes **3Ns: Nurturing Innovation, Navigating Safety, and Navigating Regulations**.

24. India's participation in the Axiom Mission marks a shift towards global human spaceflight collaboration. Analyze its implications for India's space sector. (150 words)

Approach :

- Briefly introduce the Axiom-4 Mission.
- Discuss its significance and implications for India's space sector.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

Introduction :

The **Axiom-4 Mission**, launched on **June 25, 2025**, represented **India's official return to crewed human spaceflight** after more than four decades. This mission, organized by **Axiom Space** in partnership with **SpaceX, NASA, ESA, and ISRO**, carried a **diverse international crew**, with **Indian Air Force Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla** serving as Mission Pilot.

Body :

Significance and the Shift Toward Global Collaboration:

- **Return to Space after Four Decades:** Shubhanshu Shukla's journey comes **41 years** after **Rakesh Sharma**,

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India's first and only astronaut (1984), marking a historic milestone and India's return to the crewed spaceflight community.

- **Embracing International and Commercial Partnerships:** India's involvement in a privately organized, multinational mission signals a transition from bilateral, government-to-government missions to globally integrated, commercially driven collaborations.
- **Learning through Global Platforms:** Shukla trained at Russia's Gagarin Cosmonaut Center and with NASA/ISRO assets, gaining hands-on experience aboard the SpaceX Dragon and aboard the ISS, which operates under the aegis of five major space agencies.

Key Implications for India's Space Sector

- **Direct Human Spaceflight Experience:** Indian teams participated in pre-launch, in-orbit, and ground operations at the highest level, gaining knowledge of international crew practices, orbital emergency management, and biomedical monitoring, all crucial for future missions.
- **Critical Learning Before Gaganyaan:** Lessons from Axiom-4 are informing crew training, mission planning, astronaut medical protocols, and communication procedures for India's upcoming Gaganyaan human spaceflight (uncrewed launch target: Dec 2025; crewed launch: 2026–27).
- **Technology Sharing:** The mission involved use of indigenously developed experiment kits (by IITs, IISc, DBT), testing Indian biotech, life science, and materials technology in true microgravity—unprecedented for Indian teams.
 - ◆ Experiments included studying the growth of microalgae (potential sustainable food for long-duration missions), protein crystallization, and muscle cell research, directly benefiting Gaganyaan and space station planning.
- **Growth of Space Startups:** India's space policy reforms and such landmark missions have seen the number of space startups grow to over 328 by 2025. The sector's budget nearly tripled over the past decade, rising to ₹13,416 crore for 2025–26.

- ◆ **Liberalized FDI norms** (up to 100% in many space activities), alongside platforms like **IN-SPaCe** and **NewSpace India Limited**, are attracting foreign investment and sparking domestic entrepreneurship.

- **Recognition as a Trusted Partner:** Participation in an international crew and collaboration with top spacefaring nations showcase India as an equal, competent partner, building confidence for joint missions, shared research, and future space station collaborations.

Conclusion:

India's participation in the **Axiom-4 mission** positions India not just as a participant but as a **co-leader in global space exploration**. It also lays the groundwork for India's long-term vision of building the **Bharatiya Antariksha Station by 2035**, marking its steady rise toward a **self-reliant and collaborative space future**.

Internal Security

25. "India's counter-terrorism strategy has evolved over time in response to changing patterns of terrorism". Discuss the key components of India's current counter-terrorism strategy and evaluate its effectiveness in curbing cross-border terrorism. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about India's counter-terrorism strategy
- Delve into Key Evolving Components of India's Current Counter-Terrorism Strategy
- Evaluate its Effectiveness in Curbing Cross-border Terrorism
- Conclude with a quote.

Introduction:

India's counter-terrorism strategy has evolved in response to the shifting dynamics of global and regional terrorism, particularly in the context of **cross-border terrorism sponsored by Pakistan**.

- A recent example of India's evolving strategy was **Operation Sindoor** launched in May 2025 in retaliation for the **Pahalgam terror attack**,

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Body:**Key Evolving Components of India's Current Counter-Terrorism Strategy:**

- **From Deterrence by Denial to Deterrence by Punishment:** India has evolved a more **kinetic, military response** to cross-border terrorism, as seen in **Operation Sindoor** and previous retaliatory measures like the **Surgical Strikes (2016)**.
 - ◆ This strategy signals that acts of terrorism will be treated as acts of war, leading to military escalation if necessary.
 - This approach aims to disrupt terrorist activities and signal that India will inflict disproportionate damage on adversaries sponsoring terrorism.
- **Enhanced Intelligence and Surveillance:** India has bolstered its intelligence infrastructure with agencies like **NIA, RAW, and IB**, focusing on cross-border terrorist activities.
 - ◆ **NatGrid** utilizes advanced analytics to detect and disrupt terror financing and other networks.
- **Evolving Legislative Framework: Amendments to laws** like the **UAPA** and **NSA** allow for preventive action, **asset freezing, and designation of terrorist organizations**. These laws provide the legal backbone for India's proactive measures against terrorism.
- **National-Level Counter-Terrorism Agencies:** The **National Investigation Agency (NIA)** and **National Security Guard (NSG)** are now at the forefront of counter-terrorism operations, managing high-risk threats and ensuring national security.
 - ◆ Their coordination with state and central agencies ensures a unified response to terrorism.
 - ◆ **The NIA has recently expanded its mandate to include international operations**, improving India's ability to address terrorism across borders.
- **Enhanced Border Security:** India is investing in **smart fencing, drones, and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)** along sensitive borders, **especially in Jammu and Kashmir, to combat cross-border infiltration by terror groups**.

- ◆ These measures reduce the risk of terrorist infiltration and enhance situational awareness.
- **Counter-Radicalization and Community Engagement:** India's counter-radicalization initiatives focus on addressing the root causes of terrorism, including ideological extremism and local grievances.
 - ◆ **Engagement with communities**, especially in conflict zones like Kashmir, plays a critical role in preventing youth from joining terror groups.
 - ◆ **Example:** The **Operation Sadbhavana in Jammu and Kashmir** aims to win the "hearts and minds" of the local population through various welfare activities and developmental projects
- **Diplomatic and Economic Leverage:** India's diplomatic measures, including **economic sanctions** and **revocation of agreements**, target countries that harbor terrorists, particularly Pakistan.
 - ◆ Recent actions, such as **keeping the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) with Pakistan in abeyance**, highlight India's strategic use of diplomatic leverage.

Evaluation of Effectiveness in Curbing Cross-Border Terrorism:● **Successes**

- ◆ India's **kinetic responses** like **Surgical Strikes** and **Balakot airstrikes** have sent a clear message of retaliation, thereby disrupting terror networks and deterring future attacks.
- ◆ **Intelligence-sharing** through agencies like **NIA** and **RAW** has led to the successful dismantling of several terror cells operating across India.
- ◆ India's defense capabilities have evolved from **basic ground forces to advanced air defense systems like the S-400**.
 - This has enhanced India's ability to counter aerial threats, including those posed by terror organizations using drones and missiles.

● **Challenges**

- ◆ Despite India's military responses, Pakistan continues to support terrorism indirectly through its military and intelligence agencies.

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- The lack of **consistent diplomatic pressure** has sometimes allowed Pakistan to evade substantial consequences.

- ◆ Terrorist attacks like the **Pulwama attack (2019)** show that despite punitive actions, cross-border terrorism remains a persistent threat.
- ◆ **Local radicalization** and **cyber terrorism** pose evolving threats, which are difficult to combat through traditional military measures alone.

Conclusion:

India's counter-terrorism strategy has evolved significantly, **balancing offensive defense and defensive offense, as encapsulated in the Doval Doctrine**. The future strategy should focus on a **whole-of-government approach and continued adaptability**, ensuring that terrorism, whether through conventional means or modern threats like cyber warfare, is consistently contained. As Indian Prime Minister Modi aptly put it, **"This is not the era of war, but neither of terrorism."**

26. "Indigenous defence technology plays a critical role in enhancing India's strategic autonomy and national security". Discuss its significance in the context of India's evolving security landscape. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by bringing about the significance of Indigenous defence technology citing a recent event.
- Give arguments to Indigenous Defence Technology- Role in Enhancing India's Strategic Autonomy and National Security and delve into the Issues Related to Indigenous Defence Technology
- Suggest Measures to Enhance Indigenous Defence Technology and National Security
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

The recent **"Operation Sindoor"**, a response to the Pahalgam terror attack, highlighted the importance of self-sufficiency in defence capabilities. The deployment of **indigenously developed platforms** like the **LCH Prachand** underscored how indigenous defence technology strengthens India's operational autonomy in critical moments.

Body:

Indigenous Defence Technology- Role in Enhancing India's Strategic Autonomy and National Security

- **Reduced Dependence on Foreign Suppliers:** Indigenous defence technology empowers India to minimize reliance on foreign countries for critical military hardware.
 - ◆ This is essential in an evolving security landscape where geopolitical tensions can disrupt supply chains, as seen during the **Russia-Ukraine war, affecting weapon systems supply**.
 - ◆ For example, **Tejas fighter jets** and **ATAGS artillery** ensure that India is not dependent on foreign nations for strategic assets during crises.
 - ◆ **'SPRINT' Scheme** aims to promote development of niche defence technologies by domestic companies.
- **Operational Continuity During Crises:** In high-stakes situations, such as the ongoing standoff with China in Eastern Ladakh, India's self-sufficiency in defence technology allows it to maintain military operations without waiting for imported supplies or facing delays due to international political uncertainties.
 - ◆ Indigenous platforms like the **INS Vikrant** (aircraft carrier) and **Akash missile systems** ensure India can act independently and swiftly, enhancing national security.
- **Enhanced Technological Capability and Innovation:** Indigenous defence innovation helps India develop cutting-edge technologies like AI, quantum computing, and unmanned systems.
 - ◆ India's **iDEX initiative** has fostered **619 start-ups contributing to R&D**, helping India move towards becoming a technological powerhouse rather than a consumer.
 - ◆ Also, **SRIJAN portal**, developed by the Department of Defence Production aims to promote **"Make in India"** in the defense sector.
- **Strengthening Global Defence Diplomacy:** By developing indigenous defence technologies, India is emerging as a **credible defence exporter** in the global arena.

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- ◆ Platforms like the **BrahMos missile** and **Tejas** enhance India's influence in defence diplomacy, strengthening its ties with countries like the **USA, France, and Southeast Asia**.
- ◆ This expansion of defence exports not only boosts India's economic position but also adds to its soft power, which is key in an increasingly multipolar world.
- **Boost to Economic Growth and Job Creation:** Indigenous defence production contributes significantly to **economic growth**, especially in underdeveloped regions.
 - ◆ India's **defence corridors** in **Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu** are helping create jobs and foster innovation in sectors like aerospace, metallurgy, and electronics.

Issues Related to Indigenous Defence Technology:

- **Technological Gaps:** Despite significant progress, India continues to face challenges in developing critical technologies like **aero-engines, semiconductors, and advanced radar systems**.
 - ◆ This hampers India's goal of complete self-reliance, with strategic platforms like **fighter jet engines** still being sourced from foreign suppliers.
- **Low Private Sector Participation:** Although the government has pushed for more private sector involvement, **private firms contribute only 21%** to total defence production, limiting innovation, competition, and scaling up of advanced technology manufacturing.
- **Inadequate Investment in Defence R&D:** Despite some progress, the **percentage of GDP spent on defence R&D remains lower than global standards**.
 - ◆ This underfunding limits India's ability to develop next-generation military technologies.
- **Export Market Penetration:** India's defence exports, while increasing, still face challenges in penetrating major international markets due to competition from established players like the **USA, Russia, and China**, limiting the growth potential of India's defence sector.

Measures to Enhance Indigenous Defence Technology and National Security:

- **Strengthen Defence R&D Investment:** India needs to **substantially increase its R&D spending** in defence, aiming for at least **3-5%** of the total defence budget.
 - ◆ A focus on **emerging technologies** like **AI, hypersonics, and directed energy weapons** should be prioritized, along with enhanced collaboration between DRDO, private industry, and academic institutions.
- **Increase Private Sector and MSME Participation:** To unlock the full potential of indigenous production, India should streamline **procurement processes** to allow faster entry of **private firms and MSMEs**.
 - ◆ Providing **faster clearances, incentives**, and easier access to **testing and certification** will help create a more competitive, innovative defence ecosystem.
- **Revamp Defence Procurement System:** The **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP)** should be reformed to ensure **faster procurement timelines and simplified approvals**.
 - ◆ A **single-window clearance system** can expedite the decision-making process, ensuring timely induction of critical technologies.
- **Expand Defence Export Strategy:** India must focus on diversifying its defence export markets by identifying **new regions** such as **Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America**.
 - ◆ Strengthening diplomatic ties and participating in **defence expos** will further facilitate access to global markets, helping India achieve its target of **₹50,000 crore in defence exports by 2029**.
- **Enhance Testing and Certification Infrastructure:** To accelerate indigenous production, India should **expand and modernize its testing facilities**, particularly for cutting-edge platforms like **UAVs, AI-driven systems, and missile technologies**.
 - ◆ **Public-private partnerships (PPP)** can be leveraged to create efficient **dual-use testing infrastructure** in Defence Corridors.

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Conclusion:

India's emphasis on **indigenous defence technology** is central to enhancing its **national security** and ensuring **strategic autonomy** in a volatile global environment. As we move forward, it is clear that **"True security lies not in dependence on others, but in the strength we cultivate within ourselves."** This self-reliance is the cornerstone for India's future in both defence and global influence.

Disaster Management

27. "With the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, India must urgently integrate climate change adaptation into its disaster risk management framework. Discuss in the context of recent events and policy responses." (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduced the answer by briefing about India's vulnerability to climate induced disasters.
- Highlight the Urgency of Integration of Climate Adaptation into DRM
- Delve into Recent Policy Responses and Gaps
- Suggest Measures for Integrating Climate Change Adaptation into its Disaster Risk Management Framework
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

India, one of the most disaster-prone countries globally, faces **over 300 extreme weather events annually** (IMD, 2023), driven by climate change. The increasing intensity of **cyclones, floods, droughts, and heatwaves** is stretching India's disaster management system.

- In this context, integrating **climate change adaptation (CCA)** into **disaster risk management (DRM)** is no longer optional but a strategic imperative for resilience and sustainable development.

Urgency of Integration of Climate Adaptation into DRM:

- **Climate-Induced Escalation of Disasters:** Cyclone Mocha (2023) and record rainfall in Himachal Pradesh (2023) caused massive human and economic losses.
 - ◆ India faced **extreme weather on 314 out of 365 days in 2023** (CSE Report), indicating climate risks are systemic and not episodic.

- **Urban Vulnerabilities:** Chennai floods (2021) and Bengaluru floods (2022) exposed poor planning, encroachment on wetlands, and outdated drainage.
- **Himalayan Fragility:** Events like Kedarnath floods (2013) and Chamoli disaster (2021) and recent Joshimath Land Subsidence illustrate glacier retreat and landslide risks due to warming and development.
- **Droughts and Water Stress:** Erratic monsoons and heatwaves have increased **agricultural distress**; **40% of Indians may lack drinking water by 2030** (NITI Aayog).
- **Increasing Forest Fires:** Based on the forest inventory records, **54.40% of forests in India are exposed to occasional fire**. Uttarakhand recorded **5,351 forest fires in 2022–23** (ISFR), affecting biodiversity and carbon sinks.

Recent Policy Responses and Gaps:

- **Positive Initiatives:**
 - ◆ **The National Disaster Management Plan (2019 update)** includes climate risk.
 - ◆ Programs like **PM Gati Shakti, Smart Cities Mission, and Namami Gange** integrate climate resilience.
 - Cities like **Surat and Pune** have implemented **flood forecasting** and integrated command centers for early disaster response.
 - ◆ **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), led by India** to promote the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks.
 - Helps mainstream climate adaptation in transport, energy, and communication infrastructure.
- **Gaps Persist:**
 - ◆ **Only 20% of NDRMF funds go to mitigation**, while 80% are response-focused.
 - ◆ Fragmented institutional coordination and limited climate adaptation budgeting.
 - ◆ Weak **early warning dissemination** and lack of **real-time climate-vulnerability mapping**.
 - ◆ Climate-sensitive zones like the Himalayas still lack **mandatory risk-sensitive land use planning**.

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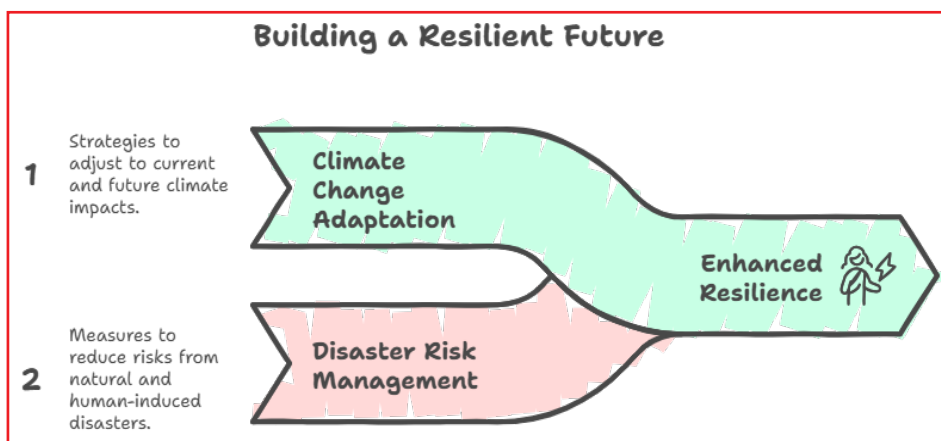


Integrating Climate Change Adaptation into its Disaster Risk Management Framework:

- **Build Climate-Resilient Infrastructure:** Focus on structural resilience by constructing cyclone- and flood-resistant infrastructure in vulnerable regions.
 - ◆ For example, Odisha's **multi-purpose cyclone shelters** and **elevated housing** have significantly reduced casualties during extreme events.
 - ◆ In urban areas, implement **climate-resilient drainage systems**, akin to Surat's real-time flood monitoring and early warning network.
- **Strengthen Early Warning Systems and Technology Use:** Expand and localize the **Common Alerting Protocol (CAP)** by integrating regional languages and community-specific warnings to ensure last-mile communication.
 - ◆ Leverage **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **Geographic Information Systems (GIS)** for micro-level **vulnerability mapping**, disaster forecasting, and evacuation planning.
 - ◆ Maximize the role of institutions like **ISRO** (for satellite-based monitoring) and **IMD** (for high-resolution weather forecasting) in disseminating real-time, actionable alerts.
- **Promote Nature-Based Solutions (NbS):** Restore and conserve **ecological buffers** such as mangroves, wetlands, and forests that mitigate the impact of floods, cyclones, and droughts. The **Sundarbans** offer a

model for mangrove-based protection against storm surges.

- ◆ Integrate urban flood resilience with ecosystem restoration by linking **Namami Gange**, **wetland rejuvenation**, and **river basin planning** in a unified approach.
- ◆ Encourage **green infrastructure** such as urban forests, bioswales, and permeable pavements to enhance natural drainage and reduce urban heat.
- **Institutional and Policy Reform:** Harmonize the disaster management framework by integrating **NDMA's mitigation strategies** with India's **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** under the Paris Agreement, creating synergy between disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation.
 - ◆ Encourage **climate-resilient budgeting** by mainstreaming climate risks into state and municipal planning frameworks.
- **Empower Communities through Risk Reduction Initiatives:** Scale up the **Aapda Mitra** programme to train a larger network of **community disaster volunteers**, especially in rural and tribal areas prone to climate hazards.
 - ◆ Mobilize **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** and **local panchayats** to co-create and maintain climate-resilient assets such as check dams, elevated roads, rainwater harvesting systems, and storm shelters under **MGNREGA**.



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Conclusion:

Effective disaster management in India must go **hand-in-hand with climate change adaptation**. The **National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC)** plays a crucial role in this integration by supporting state-level projects that build resilience in vulnerable sectors.

28. "Disasters in India are often a result of development choices rather than natural hazards alone." Examine how unplanned urbanization has contributed to increasing disaster risk. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about the rising urbanisation and disaster issues related to it
- Give key arguments to how Disaster Risk is increased due to Unplanned Urbanization
- Suggest Measures to Promote Sustainable Urbanization and Reduce Disaster Risk
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

In India, urbanization has grown rapidly over the last few decades, with more than **34% of the population now living in cities**. However, this **unplanned urbanization** has led to significant vulnerabilities, increasing disaster risks.

- Rather than being merely the result of natural hazards, many disasters in India are exacerbated by **poor urban planning, infrastructure deficits, and environmental degradation**, which make urban areas more susceptible to extreme weather events, floods, and other natural calamities.

Body:**Increased Disaster Risk Due to Unplanned Urbanization:**

- **Urban Heat Island Effect and Extreme Heatwaves:** **Unplanned urbanization** in cities like Delhi has significantly worsened the **Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect**, where built-up areas become significantly hotter than their rural surroundings.
 - ◆ For instance, in 2024, **Delhi recorded a scorching 49.9°C**, and the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) reported a rise in heatwave days from 2000–2020.

- **Flooding and Drainage System Collapse:** **Unplanned urban sprawl** leads to **impermeable surfaces** (paved roads, concrete buildings), preventing the natural absorption of rainwater.
 - ◆ The heavy **urbanization** of flood-prone areas, combined with **climate change-induced extreme rainfall**, has made urban areas like **Bengaluru** and **Chennai** highly susceptible to recurring flood events.

- **Coastal Vulnerability and Sea-Level Rise:** Cities along India's extensive coastline, such as **Mumbai** and **Kochi**, face rising risks from **sea-level rise, coastal erosion, and saltwater intrusion**.

- ◆ Unchecked urban expansion along these areas has led to the destruction of **mangroves**, which serve as natural barriers against **storm surges** and **erosion**.

- ◆ The **2019 Cyclone Vayu** and **Cyclone Biparjoy** in 2023 displaced thousands, causing significant infrastructure damage.

- The **coastal zone** is further threatened by **unsustainable port expansion** and **sand mining**, which weaken the natural defences against **storm surges**.

- **Water Scarcity and Droughts:** Unplanned urbanization exacerbates **water scarcity** in cities. **Over-extraction of groundwater**, coupled with **pollution** and **poor water management** systems, has led to **water stress** in cities like **Chennai** and **Bengaluru**.

- ◆ **Over-reliance on groundwater** has caused **declining water tables** (especially in Punjab) and put enormous stress on **water supply systems**, leading to shortages during the dry season.

- **Risk of Earthquakes in Seismic Zones:** Many urban areas, especially in **northeast India** and **Himalayan states**, are located in **seismic zones** prone to earthquakes.

- ◆ However, **unplanned and informal construction** in these areas, without adherence to **building codes**, increases the risk of large-scale devastation during seismic events.

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- ◆ For example, in **Sikkim**, where the **2023 glacial lake burst** resulted in massive flooding and loss of life, informal urbanization on fragile lands compounded the damage.

- **Environmental Stress and Resource Management Challenges:** Urban centers in India are also facing mounting **environmental stresses**, including **pollution**, **waste mismanagement**, and **inadequate waste disposal systems**, which have compounded the effects of climate change-induced disasters.

- ◆ Cities like **Delhi**, **Mumbai**, and **Kolkata** face chronic air and water pollution, which significantly affects public health during disasters like **heatwaves** and **flooding**.

- The absence of **green infrastructure** and **pollution control measures** exacerbates these challenges.

Measures to Promote Sustainable Urbanization and Reduce Disaster Risk:

- **Integrated Urban Planning and Zoning Regulations:**
 - ◆ **Sustainable land use** policies should prioritize **resilient urban infrastructure** and protect **ecologically sensitive zones**, such as floodplains, coastal areas, and steep slopes.
 - ◆ **Zoning regulations** should prevent construction in high-risk areas (e.g., flood-prone regions, earthquake zones).
- **Green Infrastructure and Urban Ecosystem Services:**
 - ◆ **Increasing green cover** by promoting **urban forests**, **parks**, and **green rooftops** can significantly mitigate the **Urban Heat Island (UHI)** effect and reduce temperatures in cities, thereby lowering the impact of **heatwaves**.
 - ◆ **Rainwater harvesting**, **wetland restoration**, and the creation of **urban water bodies** can enhance **stormwater management**, reducing the risk of urban flooding caused by poor drainage.

- ◆ Encourage the use of **permeable materials** for roads and pavements to allow better water absorption and reduce **waterlogging**.

- **Climate-Resilient Infrastructure and Building Design:**

- ◆ **Disaster-resistant construction** standards must be incorporated into building designs. Urban areas should adopt **climate-resilient materials** to withstand extreme weather events like **floods**, **heatwaves**, and **cyclones**.

- ◆ **Investing in resilient infrastructure** such as **elevated roads**, **flood barriers**, and **stormwater drains** designed to handle **intense rainfall** events can mitigate flood risk in urban areas.

- **Sustainable Mobility and Reducing Carbon Footprint:**

- ◆ Promoting **public transport** and **non-motorized transportation** (walking, cycling) can reduce the urban carbon footprint and **air pollution**, a critical factor during heatwaves.

- ◆ Encouraging **electric vehicles** and **car-free zones** can reduce **air pollution** and contribute to **cleaner, healthier cities**.

- ◆ **Smart traffic management** and **reduced vehicular congestion** also play a role in reducing urban stress and enhancing overall resilience.

- **Efficient Waste Management and Pollution Control:**

- ◆ **Waste segregation** and **composting** should be incentivized at the household and community level to reduce the burden on landfills, which are often a source of contamination and fire hazards.

- ◆ **Circular economy principles** must be adopted to ensure **waste minimization** and **resource efficiency**, reducing environmental degradation.

Conclusion:

As **John F. Kennedy** once said, *"The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining."* India must invest in **sustainable urban planning**, **disaster-resilient infrastructure**, and **environmental management** to mitigate the increasing risks and protect its growing urban populations from the looming threat of natural disasters.



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GENERAL STUDIES PAPER-4

Theoretical Question

29. "In the context of ethical governance, how can the virtue of temperance guide decision-making in addressing issues such as inequality and environmental sustainability? (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about temperance using a Ethical theory
- Give role of Temperance in Addressing Inequality and promote environmental sustainability
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

In tackling issues like **inequality and environmental sustainability**, the **ethical principle of temperance (the ability to exercise moderation, restraint, and balance)** vital guidance. Rooted in **Aristotle's Golden Mean**, temperance advocates for finding balance between extremes.

Body:

Temperance in Addressing Inequality:

- **Fair Wealth Distribution:** Temperance encourages equitable wealth distribution, helping to reduce wealth disparities.
 - ◆ For example, **Sweden's progressive taxation system** ensures that wealthier citizens pay higher taxes, which are then redistributed to fund public services like healthcare and education, promoting social equity.
- **Inclusive Economic Growth:** Temperance advocates for growth that benefits all segments of society, not just the affluent.
 - ◆ The **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)** in India exemplifies this by providing banking access to millions of unbanked people, reducing financial exclusion and fostering inclusive economic development.
- **Social Safety Nets:** Temperance leads to a balanced approach where social safety nets and welfare

programs are prioritized alongside economic development.

- ◆ For example, **Norway's universal healthcare** system provides equal access to medical services, ensuring that health disparities are reduced, and no one is left behind due to financial limitations.
- **Encouraging Fair Access to Opportunities:** By tempering the excesses of economic liberalism, temperance helps create opportunities for disadvantaged groups.
 - ◆ For instance, **affirmative action policies** in education and employment help uplift marginalized communities, ensuring a more equal footing for all.

Temperance in Promoting Environmental Sustainability

- **Sustainable Resource Use:** Temperance encourages the responsible use of natural resources, avoiding their depletion for short-term gains.
 - ◆ **The Netherlands' water management practices**, including the use of flood defenses and sustainable agriculture, highlight this approach to balancing development with ecological conservation.
- **Adoption of Green Technologies:** Moderating industrial expansion in favor of eco-friendly technologies reflects temperance.
 - ◆ **Copenhagen's commitment to carbon neutrality by 2025**, through renewable energy sources and cycling infrastructure, demonstrates how temperance can drive sustainable urban development.
- **Moderating Consumption:** Temperance promotes reducing unnecessary consumption, leading to waste reduction and resource conservation.
 - ◆ **Japan's recycling initiatives** and focus on a circular economy reflect this idea of temperance in promoting environmental responsibility.
- **Balanced Economic and Environmental Policies:** Temperance leads to policies that balance economic growth with environmental protection.

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- ◆ For example, **Germany's Energiewende**, which focuses on transitioning to renewable energy, exemplifies how temperance in policy formulation can promote both economic development and environmental sustainability.

- **Long-Term Ecological Balance:** Temperance encourages foresightedness in addressing environmental concerns to ensure long-term ecological balance.

- ◆ **India's Panchamrit Goals** sets ambitious goals for reducing emissions, balancing economic growth with environmental preservation.

Conclusion:

As Aristotle aptly stated, *"The virtue of justice consists in moderation, as regulated by wisdom."* This quote perfectly captures the **essence of temperance**. However, **temperance alone is not sufficient; it must be paired with other virtues such as justice, wisdom, and fairness** to create a truly ethical and sustainable approach to governance.

30. The rise of cryptocurrencies presents a paradox between financial freedom and the potential for harm in terms of market instability and misuse. In light of key ethical principles, critically assess the ethical challenges posed by cryptocurrencies in India. (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about the rise of crypto and ethical issues surrounding it.
- Highlight Ethical challenges posed by Cryptocurrencies in India
- Suggest Measures to Strengthen Cryptocurrency Regulation in India
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

The rise of cryptocurrencies in India presents a complex dilemma. While **offering financial autonomy and the potential for innovation**, they also pose risks like **market instability, security vulnerabilities, and misuse for illegal activities**.

- These challenges raise important ethical questions regarding **individual freedom, justice, and societal impact**.

Body:

Ethical challenges posed by Cryptocurrencies in India:

● Financial Freedom vs. Market Instability

- ◆ **Utilitarianism:** While they provide financial freedom for some, the **speculative nature of cryptocurrencies can lead to widespread harm and inequality**, contradicting the principle of the greatest good for the greatest number.
- ◆ **Virtue Ethics:** Encourages moderation in using cryptocurrencies to avoid excessive risk-taking that can harm individuals and society.

● Privacy vs. Misuse for Illicit Activities

- ◆ **Kantian Ethics:** Cryptocurrencies offer privacy, but their misuse for illicit activities (**money laundering, tax evasion**) violates universal moral duties, highlighting the need for responsible use.
- ◆ **Rousseau's Social Contract Theory:** The use of cryptocurrencies for illicit purposes undermines the social contract, as individuals must prioritize the collective good over personal gains, **calling for ethical regulation**.

● Access to Technology vs. Digital Divide

- ◆ **Rawls' Theory of Justice:** Cryptocurrencies could worsen inequality by **excluding those without digital literacy** (only 38% of the households are digitally literate in India) or access to technology, violating the principle of justice as fairness.
- ◆ **Capability Approach (Amartya Sen):** Ethical governance should ensure cryptocurrencies are **accessible to all**, enhancing individual capabilities and preventing exclusion.
- ◆ **Equality of Opportunity:** Ensuring that the benefits of cryptocurrencies extend to marginalized communities is essential for promoting fairness.

● Environmental Impact vs. Technological Progress

- ◆ **Sustainability Ethics:** The energy consumption of cryptocurrency mining raises concerns about **environmental sustainability**, posing an ethical dilemma between **technological progress and ecological impact**.

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- ◆ **Consequentialism:** The long-term environmental damage caused by cryptocurrency mining might outweigh the **short-term financial benefits**, calling for regulation to minimize ecological harm.

- **Regulatory Oversight vs. Innovation**

- ◆ **Libertarian Ethics:** Cryptocurrencies, by nature, promote **financial autonomy and freedom from government control**. However, a balance must be found where innovation isn't stifled but is still ethically regulated to prevent harm.

In light of the ethical challenges presented by cryptocurrencies, it is crucial to establish robust regulatory measures that ensure their positive contribution while minimizing potential harms.

Measures to Strengthen Cryptocurrency Regulation in India:

- **Promote Financial Literacy and Inclusivity:** Ensuring equitable access to cryptocurrency is essential for fairness, **as emphasized by Rawls' Theory of Justice**.
 - ◆ Improving digital literacy and infrastructure is key to empowering individuals and enabling them to participate in the cryptocurrency ecosystem.
- **Regulating to Prevent Illicit Activities:** Implementing **Know Your Customer (KYC)** regulations is crucial to prevent cryptocurrencies from being used for illegal activities, respecting the moral duty to protect society, **as called for by Kantian Ethics**.
 - ◆ Regulations should prioritize the collective good by ensuring cryptocurrencies are not misused for money laundering or tax evasion, **as suggested by Social Contract Theory**.
- **Promote Environmental Sustainability in Cryptocurrency Mining:** Regulating the environmental impact of cryptocurrency mining by encouraging the use of **green energy sources** is essential to ensure ecological responsibility, **as emphasized by Sustainability Ethics**.
- **Ensure Privacy While Protecting Public Safety:** A balance must be struck between privacy and transparency to prevent harm, ensuring that

cryptocurrency systems respect privacy while ensuring public safety, **as advocated by Deontological Ethics**.

- ◆ Regulations must create a balance that serves both individual freedom and the collective good, upholding moral responsibility in the use of technology, **as called for by Indian Mythology (Dharma)**.
- **Allow Innovation with Ethical Boundaries:** While encouraging innovation in the cryptocurrency space, it is essential to set ethical boundaries to prevent exploitation and ensure consumer protection, **as suggested by Libertarian Ethics**.
- **Enforce Regulations and Accountability:** Ethical behavior should be promoted through clear regulatory frameworks and codes of conduct, emphasizing responsibility and accountability among all cryptocurrency stakeholders, **as advocated by Virtue Ethics**.
 - ◆ A focus on **education** and **reparation** in cases of violations, rather than purely punitive measures, will foster ethical engagement within the cryptocurrency space, **as called for by Restorative Justice**.

Conclusion

The need for **moderation, justice, and responsible governance** is paramount to ensuring cryptocurrency's positive contribution to society. As, *"True innovation lies not in the freedom to create, but in the wisdom to regulate, ensuring that progress uplifts society without compromising its integrity."*

31. "In an era of institutional accountability and performance metrics, is there still space for altruism in public administration? Discuss. (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce with a relevant quote and brief about Altruism
- Delve into why Altruism is Losing Significance Today and Why it is still Relevant
- Suggest balancing measure with an example
- Conclude suitably.

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Introduction:

"Public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people and to the nation." - **Margaret Chase Smith**

- In today's public administration, institutional accountability and performance metrics have become indispensable tools to ensure **transparency, efficiency, and service delivery**.
- Yet, in this increasingly quantifiable ecosystem, **altruism—the selfless concern for the welfare of others**, remains significant though faces marginalization.

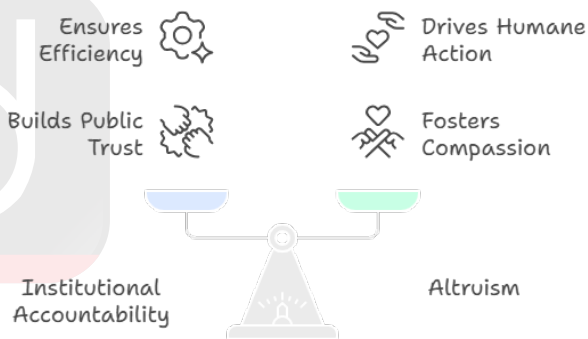
Body:**Why Altruism is Losing Significance Today:**

- **Overemphasis on Quantifiable Performance:** Strict focus on numbers and targets leaves little room for unmeasurable values like compassion, empathy, or intent.
 - ◆ *E.g., sanitation drive outcomes are tracked via toilet construction, but not usage or behavioural change—where altruism plays a role.*
- **Fear of Overstepping Boundaries:** Increased audit, RTI pressure, and media scrutiny make officers risk-averse, curbing altruistic spontaneity.
 - ◆ "Why take an initiative that might backfire or invite disciplinary action?" is a rising sentiment.
- **Bureaucratic Culture of Rule-Compliance:** A culture that rewards procedural correctness often discourages emotionally driven or compassionate responses.
- **Professional Burnout and Fatigue:** Overburdened and under-recognized civil servants may lose intrinsic motivation, including altruistic impulses.
 - ◆ *Maslow's hierarchy shows that altruism emerges only after basic psychological needs are met.*

Why Altruism is Still Relevant in Public Administration

- **Humanizing Governance:** Metrics may guide delivery, but **only altruism ensures empathy and dignity in interaction** with citizens—especially the vulnerable.
 - ◆ *Example: During the COVID-19 crisis, public servants like IAS Rajendra Bhatt provided personal support to isolated elderly citizens—beyond their formal duties.*

- **Bridging Systemic Gaps:** No system or metric can cover every eventuality. Altruistic civil servants act when the system falters.
 - ◆ A district collector arranging last-mile delivery of medicines to remote areas despite no directive shows altruistic initiative.
- **Enhancing Trust in Government:** Citizens are more likely to trust and cooperate with the state when they perceive intent and care, not just procedural delivery.
 - ◆ *The Gandhian idea of "Sarvodaya" (welfare of all) emphasizes service without expectations.*
- **Moral Anchor in Ethical Dilemmas:** When rules conflict or priorities clash, altruism serves as the moral compass for ethical decision-making.
 - ◆ *In ethics, this resonates with Kant's duty-based ethics: do what is right, not what is rewarded.*
- **Altruism Fuels Innovation and Passion:** Altruistically motivated officers go beyond minimum requirements, often leading to innovative governance.



- ◆ *Mohd. Ali Shihab IAS, who grew up in an orphanage, works tirelessly in underdeveloped regions with deep empathy for the poor.*

Altruism Coexisting with Performance Metrics:

- Altruism should not be sacrificed for efficiency. Public servants can integrate both by serving with empathy while working within performance frameworks.
 - ◆ Performance metrics should include measures of ethical behavior, integrity, and public trust
- For instance, **Dr. Verghese Kurien (White Revolution)**, balanced altruistic ideals with performance-driven targets to revolutionize India's dairy industry.

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Conclusion:

Accountability mechanisms and metrics are vital for ensuring efficient public service, but they must not become the ceiling of our expectations. Altruism adds the human touch that metrics can never capture. The two—**accountability and altruism**—need not be adversaries; they can be **complementary forces in ethical governance**.

32. “Compassion is a necessity, not a luxury. Without it, humanity cannot survive.” How can public servants institutionalize compassion without compromising on rule-based governance? **(150 words)**

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by referring to a quote to justify the statement
- Give key arguments to the statement
- Give measures to Institutionalize Compassion Without Compromising Rule-based Governance
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

Indian philosophy teaches that all beings are interconnected (*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* – “The world is one family”). In this view, **compassion, that is the ethical impulse to empathize with others’ suffering and take action to relieve it, is not optional, but essential** to ethical human action.

- In the context of public administration, this principle implies that **governance must blend legality with humanity**.

**Body:****Compassion: A Necessity, Indispensable to Humanity:**

- **Compassion Humanizes Governance:** In a world increasingly driven by procedures and metrics, compassion ensures that administration remains **citizen-centric and humane**.
 - ◆ This aligns with **Virtue Ethics (Aristotle)**, where compassion is a moral virtue that enables ethical conduct through character development.
- **Compassion Fosters Social Cohesion and Trust:** When citizens experience empathy and care from public institutions, they develop **trust and cooperation**, which are essential for democratic legitimacy and societal stability.
 - ◆ **Utilitarian ethics** supports this by showing that compassionate governance leads to **greater happiness and societal harmony**—a key ethical outcome.
- **Compassion is Essential in Ethical Decision-Making:** Laws may not cover every moral dilemma; compassion enables **discretionary moral judgment**, especially in cases involving vulnerable or marginalized groups.
 - ◆ **Kantian ethics** holds that **treating individuals as ends in themselves (not means)** requires recognizing their dignity through compassionate actions.
- **Compassion Reflects Core Civilizational and Cultural Values:** In Indian philosophy, compassion is deeply embedded in traditions of **dharma** and **karuna**. It is not an emotional luxury but a **civilizational duty**.

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- ◆ This resonates with **Gandhian ethics** and **Buddhist moral thought**, which place compassion at the heart of ethical and spiritual living.

Institutionalizing Compassion Without Compromising Rule-based Governance:

- **Compassionate Interpretation of Rules:** Apply rules with a **justice-oriented mindset**, ensuring dignity and relief where rigid enforcement may cause harm.
 - ◆ **Example:** During lockdown, **several DM offices** arranged food and shelter for migrant workers beyond their immediate mandates.
- **Embedded Empathy in Policy and Program Design:** Design welfare programs with **citizen experience in mind**, especially for marginalized sections.
 - ◆ **Example:** Telangana's **KCR Kits for mothers**—responsive to health and emotional needs.
- **Ethical Training and Value Reinforcement:** Introduce **compassion-focused training** in administrative academies to strengthen emotional intelligence and moral reasoning.
 - ◆ Aligned with **Aristotle's concept of "phronesis" (practical wisdom)**.
- **Use Technology for Dignified Access:** Digital tools can help **deliver services efficiently yet compassionately**, reducing harassment and discretion.
 - ◆ **Example:** **"Digital Life Certificate" for pensioners reduces burden on elderly citizens.**
- **Grievance Redressal as Compassion in Action:** Empowering citizens to voice grievances creates responsive systems without legal compromise.
 - ◆ **Rajasthan Sampark Portal, Delhi's Mohalla Clinics** for real-time relief and care.

Conclusion:

"A rule-based system without compassion becomes tyranny; compassion without rules becomes chaos." To truly serve the people, **public administration must marry structure with soul**. Institutionalizing compassion doesn't mean abandoning rules—it means applying them with sensitivity.

33. "Integrity without compassion is rigidity, and compassion without integrity is weakness." Discuss the significance of balancing integrity and compassion in public service. Illustrate with suitable examples. (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about the need for balancing integrity and compassion.
- Give key arguments to Integrity without compassion is rigidity, and compassion without integrity is weakness
- Delve into arguments to Balancing Integrity and Compassion in Public Service.
- Conclude suitably

Introduction:

Mahatma Gandhi once said, **"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."** This reflects the ethical necessity of balancing integrity—**adherence to moral and legal principles—with compassion—empathetic concern for others.**

- In public service, these two virtues must go hand in hand: integrity ensures fairness and accountability, while compassion humanizes governance.

Body:

Integrity without Compassion is Rigidity

This implies that strict adherence to rules without human sensitivity can lead to inhumane or unjust outcomes.

- **Welfare Delivery Becomes Mechanical:** Officials focusing only on documentation may deny benefits to genuine beneficiaries.
 - ◆ **Example:** A pension was denied to a **70-year-old tribal woman in Jharkhand due to lack of Aadhaar biometric match**—highlighting rigid integrity devoid of compassion.
- **Public Perception of Bureaucracy as Uncaring:** Rule-bound decisions without empathy alienate citizens from governance.
 - ◆ **Example:** During Covid lockdowns, strict enforcement of curfews without provision for migrant workers led to human tragedy—**rules enforced, but compassion ignored in initial stages.**
- **Harms the Spirit of Justice:** Justice isn't just about applying rules but ensuring fairness.
 - ◆ **Example:** Denying **scholarships to orphans over minor form errors** reflects **rigid system compliance**, but fails ethical scrutiny.

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Compassion without Integrity is Weakness

This means that emotions without ethical boundaries can lead to bias, favoritism, or undermining institutions.

- **Risk of Misuse of Authority:** Over-empathy may lead to overlooking rules or encouraging indiscipline.
 - ◆ **Example:** A school principal waiving fees selectively for students based on **personal pleas, breeds unfairness.**
- **Favors over Fairness:** Compassion can slide into nepotism or selective treatment.
 - ◆ **Example:** A local official diverting flood relief to friends or vocal groups due to emotional pressure, ignoring real victims.
- **Erosion of Institutional Trust:** Bending rules under emotion makes the system unpredictable and unreliable.
 - ◆ **Example:** Granting arms licenses on compassionate grounds to undeserving individuals can threaten security and violate norms.
- **Short-Term Sympathy, Long-Term Harm:** Actions taken emotionally without ethical judgment can worsen the situation.
 - ◆ **Example:** Pardoning repeated violators of traffic rules because they “**pleaded emotionally**” weakens rule of law and public discipline.

Balancing Integrity and Compassion in Public Service:

- **Prevents Bureaucratic Insensitivity and Ensures Responsive Governance:** Mere rule-following can alienate vulnerable citizens, especially in welfare delivery.
 - ◆ **Example:** A District Magistrate allowing offline ration distribution in tribal belts during a biometric failure, safeguarding integrity of PDS while being sensitive to hunger-related distress.
- **Enhances Ethical Decision-Making in Complex Situations:** Integrity offers moral clarity; compassion brings context. Together, they help resolve ethical dilemmas without compromising fairness.
 - ◆ **Example:** A police officer choosing not to arrest a minor for a petty theft but instead arranging for counseling and educational support reflects principled compassion, not leniency.

- **Strengthens Public Morale and Motivation Within the System:** Officers who lead with both heart and conscience inspire ethical conduct within the service.

◆ **Example:** A senior railway officer mentoring and sponsoring education for track-side children while enforcing rules strictly reflects a balance that builds ethical organizational culture.

Conclusion:

In public service, **integrity gives structure, but compassion gives soul.** As Confucius aptly stated, “**To see what is right and not do it is the want of courage.**” Only by combining uncompromising ethics with human sensitivity can public servants rise from being mere rule enforcers to agents of transformative justice.

34. “Sustained ethical behaviour in public service demands not just conviction, but also psychological resilience.” Discuss the phenomenon of ‘ethical fatigue’ and how to address it in the civil services. (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about the statement of the question and linking it with ethical fatigue
- Give in brief about Ethical Fatigue
- Delve into the Causes of Ethical Fatigue in Civil Services and Consequences
- Highlight Measures to Address Ethical Fatigue in Civil Services
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

Aristotle asserted that “**Moral excellence is a result of habit.**” However, in public service, this habit must often survive in an ecosystem riddled with **ethical contradictions, political interference, and institutional inertia.**

- While **ethical conviction** provides the moral compass, **psychological resilience** is the inner strength that sustains this compass in turbulent conditions.
 - ◆ In its absence, civil servants may experience what is termed as ‘**ethical fatigue.**’

Phenomena of Ethical Fatigue:

Ethical fatigue is the mental, emotional, and moral exhaustion experienced by individuals repeatedly exposed

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to ethically conflicting situations, with little institutional or social reinforcement for doing the right thing.

Causes of Ethical Fatigue in Civil Services:

- **Systemic Corruption and Normalization of Wrongdoing:** Constant exposure to corrupt practices normalizes compromise.
 - ◆ **Example:** A junior officer pressured to approve inflated project files may initially resist but eventually yield due to systemic rot.
- **Lack of Reward or Recognition for Ethical Conduct:** Ethical decisions are often invisible, unrewarded, or even penalized.
 - ◆ **Example:** Honest officers sidelined for refusing to bend rules—resulting in demoralization.
- **Moral Isolation and Peer Pressure:** Ethical officers may feel alienated from colleagues following the “chalta hai” attitude.
 - ◆ Peer conformity subtly discourages dissent from unethical norms.
- **Emotional Burnout Due to Continuous Resistance:** Repeated confrontation with unethical orders or environments leads to stress, cynicism, and withdrawal.

Consequences of Ethical Fatigue



Addressing Ethical Fatigue in Civil Services:

- **Integrate Ethics into Performance Appraisals:** Performance evaluations should go beyond efficiency and include ethical behavior under challenging circumstances.
 - ◆ Adding **moral courage, transparency, and rule-adherence** as ACR indicators will motivate ethical consistency. It will also normalize ethics as part of professional success.

- **Provide Psychological and Emotional Support:** Civil services must offer access to counselors, peer-support groups, and emotional wellness programs.
 - ◆ **Ethical decisions often come with mental strain**, especially when officers stand against powerful interests. Support systems can help prevent burnout and ethical disengagement.
- **Make Ethics Training Continuous and Practical:** Ethics training should move beyond theory and focus on real-life case studies, dilemmas, and peer discussions.
 - ◆ Regular modules on **moral reasoning, decision-making under pressure, and value conflicts** will build long-term ethical stamina. Repetition builds reflexive ethical responses.
- **Strengthen Whistleblower Protection Mechanisms:** Ethical officers must feel safe when exposing wrongdoing.
 - ◆ **Robust implementation of the Whistleblower Protection Act** and creation of anonymous reporting platforms are crucial. It reassures officers that the system stands behind them when they act rightly.
- **Foster Ethical Leadership at the Top:** Senior bureaucrats must lead by example, showing that it is possible to deliver outcomes without compromising values.
 - ◆ Leaders like **E. Sreedharan (Metro Man)** and **Kiran Bedi** led by example, showing that integrity and outcomes can co-exist.

Conclusion:

The **Bhagavad Gita** emphasizes “*Yogah karmasu kaushalam*” — excellence in action is a form of yoga. Ethical excellence, in civil service, is not a one-time act but a sustained practice under pressure. Conviction must be coupled with **resilience** to withstand systemic opposition.

35. “Procedural integrity is a cornerstone of good governance, yet there are situations where strict compliance with rules may result in outcomes that violate the spirit of justice. In such circumstances, should a civil servant uphold substantive justice even if it means deviating from procedural norms?” Discuss with relevant examples from public administration. (150 words)

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Approach:

- Introduce the answer by giving a reference quote to justify the statement of the question
- Delve into the ethical dilemma between Procedural Integrity vs. Spirit of Justice
- Give Arguments for Upholding Procedural Integrity and Upholding Substantive Justice
- Give a balanced approach in the end and conclude with a quote.

Introduction:

Plato argued that “Justice is giving everyone his due.”

In governance, this raises a conflict between **procedural justice (adherence to rules and due process)** and **substantive justice (the ethical and fair outcome of an action)**. While procedural integrity ensures transparency and accountability, blind adherence may sometimes contradict the moral essence of justice.

Body:**Procedural Integrity vs. Spirit of Justice: An Ethical Dilemma in Public Service**

Civil servants function within a **framework of laws and rules**, yet real-world situations often challenge the **sufficiency of procedural compliance**. Strict adherence may:

- Deny the needy access to welfare, e.g., **due to lack of documents**.
- Delay life-saving interventions during disasters.
- **Systemic exclusion** for marginalized communities due to land acquisition issues.

This leads to a core ethical dilemma: **Should a civil servant uphold the “letter of the law” or act in favor of the “spirit of justice”?**

Arguments for Upholding Procedural Integrity

Merit	Explanation
Rule of Law	Prevents arbitrariness and ensures equal treatment under the law.
Predictability	Builds trust in institutions through standardised procedures.
Accountability	Legal adherence protects officers from personal liability.

Checks Abuse of Power

Prevents misuse of discretion for personal or political gains.

- **Example:** Cancellation of exam results by UPSC due to malpractices, even if it affects some innocent candidates — ensures **systemic integrity**.

Arguments for Upholding Substantive Justice (Even if Deviating from Procedure)

Concern	Rationale
Ethical Imperative	When rules become unjust in outcome , civil servants must act morally.
Social Justice	Helps include the voiceless and excluded who may not meet rigid criteria.
Situational Necessity	Emergencies demand quick moral judgment , not red tape.
Constitutional Morality	Upholding dignity, equality, and compassion often requires going beyond rules.

- **Example:** Jitendra Kumar Soni, IAS, launched the “Charan Paduka Abhiyan” to provide footwear to poor children. His initiative upheld substantive justice by prioritizing dignity over rigid rule-following.
- **Example:** In **Olga Tellis v. BMC (1985)**, SC held that eviction of pavement dwellers without rehabilitation violated **Right to Livelihood**, even though the eviction was legally valid- an example of **substantive justice trumping procedural correctness**.

While both values are essential, neither can be pursued in absolutism. Civil servants should:

- **Use Discretion with Justification:** Any deviation must be recorded with **reasons and outcomes**, to ensure **auditability**.
- **Follow Proportionality Principle:** Minor procedural deviations may be justified to avoid **greater injustice**.
- **Apply Ethical Reasoning Tools:**
 - ◆ **Rawlsian Justice** (focus on the most disadvantaged)
 - ◆ **Code of Conduct & Integrity**

Conclusion:

Governance must rest on the twin pillars of **procedural integrity and moral reasoning**. Rules are essential scaffolding,

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but justice is their ultimate aim. **As Aristotle said, the law is reason free from passion**, but justice often requires compassion. A civil servant must therefore become a **moral agent** within a legal system, ensuring that **no one is denied justice merely because the process wasn't designed for their reality**.

36. "While a strong moral compass is essential for public servants, rigid moral absolutism may sometimes conflict with the practical demands of governance". Discuss the role of ethical pragmatism in helping civil servants strike a balance between idealism and effective decision-making in complex administrative situations. **(150 words)**

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by giving a reference to justify the quote of the question and brief about Ethical pragmatism
- Delve into the Importance of a Strong Moral Compass and Limitations of Moral Absolutism in Governance
- Highlight the Role of Ethical Pragmatism in Administrative Decision-Making
- Conclude with a quote.

Introduction:

In the ***Mahabharata***, Yudhishtira, despite his deep commitment to truth, declares "**Ashwathama is dead**" with deliberate ambiguity to defeat Dronacharya, prioritizing the greater good over rigid **moral absolutism**.

- This episode reflects the essence of **ethical pragmatism—where civil servants, too, must balance idealism with practical judgment** in complex administrative situations.

Body:

Importance of a Strong Moral Compass

- A **moral compass** refers to the internal guiding principles that help public servants distinguish right from wrong. It ensures:
 - ◆ **Integrity and honesty** in decision-making
 - ◆ **Accountability** and public trust
 - ◆ Resistance to corruption and unethical influences

- ◆ Alignment with **constitutional values** such as justice, equality, and empathy

- **Example:** A morally grounded officer will refuse bribes even under pressure or temptation, upholding probity in public life.

Limitations of Moral Absolutism in Governance

- **Moral absolutism** is the unwavering application of moral principles, regardless of context or consequences. While well-intentioned, it may **clash with real-world complexities**, such as:

- ◆ **Conflicting values:** Law vs compassion, transparency vs national security
- ◆ **Administrative constraints:** Limited resources, political realities, or public sentiment
- ◆ **Diverse socio-cultural contexts:** What is ethical in one setting may be harmful in another

- **Example:** A strict enforcement of eviction laws during a humanitarian crisis (e.g., floods) may displace vulnerable people without offering alternatives—morally 'right' by law but ethically questionable.

Thus, **ethical pragmatism becomes essential to balance rule-based integrity with context-sensitive compassion**, enabling decisions that are both morally grounded and practically viable.

Role of Ethical Pragmatism in Administrative Decision-Making:

- **Context-Based Flexibility:** Enables officials to adjust procedures based on unique circumstances rather than rigidly following rules.
 - ◆ **Example:** Anshul Gupta, while serving as a Commissioner of Ujjain Municipal Corporation, undertook the restoration of the ancient Yam Talaiya pond with the help of volunteers.
- **Timely and Effective Decision-Making:** Supports rapid response to emergencies or urgent needs, bypassing red tape to prevent harm.
 - ◆ **Example:** Athar Aamir Khan, as SDM Bhilwara, **proactively intervened in child marriages** by acting on community leads and using immediate measures—rather than insisting on formal complaints—to protect children's rights.

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- **Promoting Innovative Solutions:** Inspires civil servants to design new programs or methods that address real needs beyond the letter of existing regulations.
 - ◆ **Example:** Sikkim IAS officer Raj Yadav launched the transformative project '**Aapno Gaav, Aap Banao**' ("**You build your village**"), under which **5 villages** were adopted by him and developed through community participation, impacting over 7,500 lives.
- **Balancing Competing Values:** Allows administrators to weigh conflicting interests—such as justice versus efficiency, or law versus compassion—to reach a fair and workable solution.
 - ◆ **Example:** Vinod Rai (Former CAG of India) while auditing government expenditures, he faced immense political pressure, but **carefully balanced transparency (justice) and institutional responsibility (efficiency)**.
- **Inclusivity and Social Justice:** Encourages the creation of ad-hoc solutions for the marginalized who are often excluded by technicalities.
 - ◆ **Example:** Rema Rajeshwari (IPS, Telangana) launched a myth-busting campaign in rural areas to **stop mob lynching triggered by WhatsApp rumors**.

Conclusion:

While a strong moral compass anchors public servants to **integrity**, governance demands the **wisdom to adapt values to real-world complexities**. Ethical pragmatism ensures that decisions remain **humane, lawful, and context-sensitive**—striking the right balance between **idealism and effectiveness**. As Nelson Mandela said, "**A good head and a good heart are always a formidable combination.**"

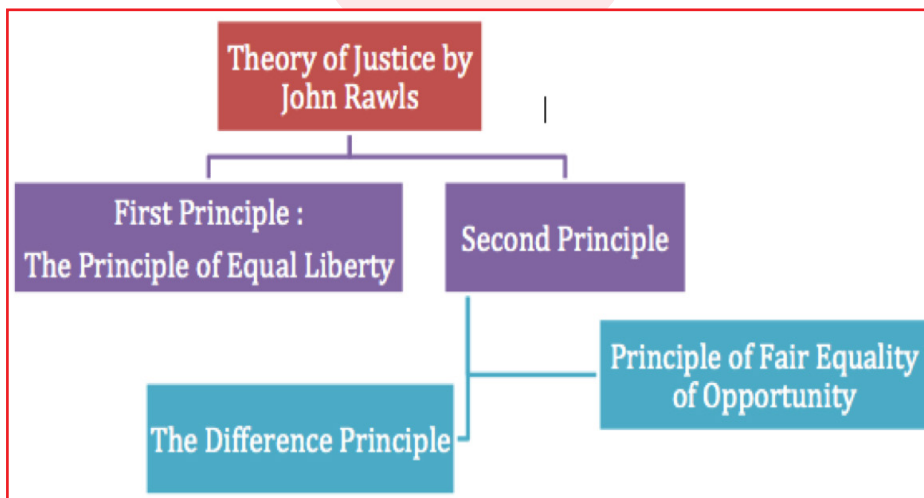
37. John Rawls emphasized "justice as fairness." Analyze how this principle can be used by government functionaries while allocating scarce resources to competing public interests. (150 words)

Approach :

- Briefly introduce John Rawls' theory of "justice as fairness."
- Analyze how this principle can be used by government functionaries in public resource allocation.
- Conclude by reinforcing its relevance in governance.

Introduction:

John Rawls' theory of "**justice as fairness**" envisions a society where resources and opportunities are distributed in a way that is both **equitable and morally justified**. His two key principles—**equal basic liberties for all**, and the **difference principle** (inequalities must benefit the least advantaged)—offer a powerful ethical framework for government functionaries managing scarce resources.



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Body :**Application in Public Resource Allocation**

- **Veil of Ignorance:**
 - ◆ Rawls suggested that just decisions emerge from a hypothetical “**original position**” where decision-makers operate behind a **veil of ignorance**, unaware of their social status. This principle promotes **neutrality and fairness**.
 - ◆ **Example:** While allocating funds for urban vs rural infrastructure, an IAS officer must avoid biases linked to electoral pressure or elite influence and instead prioritize objectively assessed needs.
- **The Difference Principle:**
 - ◆ The difference principle mandates that **inequalities are justifiable only if they benefit the worst-off**. Public servants must prioritize vulnerable groups in policymaking.
 - ◆ **Example:** In allocating health resources during the COVID-19 pandemic, district officials deploying mobile healthcare units to tribal hamlets exemplified Rawlsian fairness—helping those with the least access.
- **Fair Equality of Opportunity:**
 - ◆ The government must ensure that all citizens, regardless of background, have **equal access to public goods and services**.
 - ◆ **Example:** In education, allocating resources to establish Navodaya Vidyalayas in backward regions ensures that children from rural or disadvantaged areas have comparable academic opportunities as urban students.
- **Balancing Efficiency with Equity:**
 - ◆ Functionaries must balance **development goals** with **social equity**—avoiding resource concentration in already prosperous regions.
 - ◆ **Example:** Under the Smart Cities Mission, the government also launched the AMRUT scheme to

ensure smaller towns are not neglected—a Rawlsian attempt to harmonize urban development with inclusivity.

- **Ethical Implications for Civil Servants:**

- ◆ Civil servants must act not merely as implementers, but as **ethical guardians** of fairness—using data, stakeholder consultation, and need-based planning to make decisions.
- ◆ **Example:** Participatory budgeting in Kerala allows communities to help decide local expenditure—mirroring Rawls’ ideals of justice, consent, and inclusivity.

Conclusion:

Rawls’ idea of *justice as fairness* offers an **ethical blueprint** for **public servants** to allocate **resources** with **impartiality, equity, and moral legitimacy**. By **prioritizing the least advantaged**, it transforms **governance** into a **just and inclusive** exercise, aligned with **constitutional ideals**.

38. “Emotionally intelligent leadership is critical to crisis management.” Discuss how emotional intelligence can enhance administrative effectiveness in times of public emergencies and disasters. (250 words)

Approach :

- Briefly introduce the concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI).
- Discuss how emotional intelligence can enhance administrative effectiveness in crisis management.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

Introduction:

Emotional Intelligence (EI), as conceptualized by **Daniel Goleman**, refers to the ability to **recognize, understand, and manage one’s own emotions** as well as those of others. In **public administration**, especially during **crises** such as pandemics, natural disasters, or civil unrest, **emotionally intelligent leadership** becomes essential for navigating **uncertainty**, maintaining **trust**, and ensuring **efficient yet compassionate responses**.

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Goleman's EI Framework

Body :

Challenges in Crisis Management

- **Heightened public anxiety** often leads to panic, rumor-mongering, and distrust in authorities.
- **Scarcity of resources** like food, water, medicines, or shelter requires difficult prioritization.
- **Rapid decision-making** is essential under uncertainty, often with limited or evolving data.
- **Multi-agency coordination** (e.g., police, health, disaster relief) increases complexity and risks duplication or conflict.
- **Emotional trauma** among citizens and frontline responders hampers morale and productivity.
- **Social tensions and inequities** may intensify during crises, requiring sensitive handling.

How Emotional Intelligence Enhances Administrative Effectiveness

- **Self-Awareness and Self-Regulation:**
 - ◆ Administrators with **self-awareness** reflect on emotions and avoid reactive decisions. **Self-regulation** ensures calm and decisive action.
 - ◆ **Example:** During the **2021 Chamoli glacier disaster**, the **District Magistrate** managed operations calmly despite public panic and media scrutiny.

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- **Empathy and Compassionate Governance:**
 - ◆ **Empathy** enables understanding of people's trauma and promotes **trust-building**.
 - ◆ **Example:** During the **COVID-19 lockdown**, IAS officers ensured food and shelter for **migrant workers**, reflecting **empathetic governance**.
- **Motivation and Resilience:**
 - ◆ **Motivated leaders** inspire teams and sustain long-term relief operations through **resilience**.
 - ◆ **Example:** In **Kerala floods (2018)**, IAS officer **Krishna Teja** boosted volunteer morale, ensuring faster recovery.
- **Effective Communication and Conflict Resolution:**
 - ◆ Emotionally intelligent leaders practice **transparent communication** and resolve tensions peacefully.
 - ◆ **Example:** During **Cyclone Phailin (2013)**, **Odisha's administration** evacuated nearly 1 million people using **proactive communication**, minimizing panic and casualties.
- **Post-Crisis Recovery and Healing:**
 - ◆ **Emotional intelligence** is vital in the **recovery phase** to rebuild trust, address trauma, and ensure that **rehabilitation is humane and inclusive**.
 - ◆ **Example:** After the **2015 Nepal earthquake**, Indian civil and military teams under **Operation Maitri** not only provided emergency aid but also coordinated with local authorities to rebuild schools, health centres, and basic infrastructure.

Conclusion :

Emotional intelligence is vital for **ethical and compassionate leadership** during crises. **Mission Karmayogi** offers a forward-looking approach by integrating **emotional, behavioral, and ethical competencies** into civil service training. As a **way ahead**, continuous **field-based learning** and **feedback mechanisms** should reinforce **emotionally intelligent governance**.

Case Study

39. Anjali Verma, a young and highly motivated Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer, has been assigned to the

Enforcement Directorate (ED) for over a year. She is a diligent and conscientious officer, known for her hard work and commitment to upholding the law. Recently, Anjali was tasked with overseeing an operation involving the raid of a well-known business conglomerate in the city. The company, owned by an influential businessman, is suspected of large-scale tax evasion, money laundering, and illegal financial transactions.

As the raid unfolds, Anjali's team discovers significant evidence of financial irregularities, including hidden assets and unreported foreign bank accounts. However, just as the raid is about to conclude, Anjali receives an anonymous phone call suggesting that a close relative of hers, who works at a senior position in the same conglomerate, might be involved in the illicit activities. The caller, however, provides no concrete proof, only a vague assertion.

Anjali is now at a moral and professional crossroads. She has always been fiercely dedicated to her role, ensuring that justice is done, regardless of the social or political consequences. However, this new revelation about her relative raises concerns for her personal life. Anjali fears that pursuing the investigation against her relative could cause her family immense distress and create a personal conflict, potentially affecting her career and her relationship with her relatives.

The business empire is well-connected in both business and political circles, and there are pressures from influential figures suggesting that the raid should be concluded swiftly with minimal fallout. Despite this, Anjali feels compelled to continue the investigation, as she believes that the evidence uncovered so far indicates serious financial crimes.

Her immediate superior has asked her to provide a report on the raid and suggested that the case be handled carefully, without any unnecessary escalation. Anjali is under intense pressure to balance the integrity of the investigation with the personal and professional repercussions she might face if she pursues her relative's involvement in the case.

Questions:

- (a) What are the key ethical dilemmas involved in the situation?

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(b) What would be the most appropriate course of action for Anjali, also discuss what ethical framework should guide her to resolve ethical dilemmas.

(c) What long-term strategies can be implemented to support investigation officers in maintaining professional integrity and impartiality in high-profile investigations?

Introduction:

Anjali Verma, an IRS officer, is leading a high-profile raid against a powerful business conglomerate. During the operation, she receives an anonymous tip alleging the involvement of her close relative in the financial crimes. She is torn between her professional duty and personal loyalty, under significant social and political pressure.

- This case presents a classic **ethical dilemma involving conflict of interest, integrity, and impartiality.**

Body:

(a) What are the key ethical dilemmas involved in the situation?

- **Professional Duty vs Personal Loyalty:** Anjali is expected to carry out her duties as an honest and impartial IRS officer leading a sensitive investigation.
 - ◆ However, the potential involvement of a close relative puts her in a position where her personal loyalty is tested.
 - ◆ She must choose between upholding the law and protecting family relationships.
- **Integrity vs Familial Pressure:** Her role demands absolute integrity and the courage to follow evidence wherever it leads, regardless of who is implicated.
 - ◆ At the same time, her family may expect her to shield their member from scrutiny or legal action.
 - ◆ This creates **emotional strain** and challenges her moral consistency.
- **Rule of Law vs Political and Social Pressure:** The evidence suggests serious financial crimes, and as a public servant, she is bound to act according to the law.
 - ◆ Yet, she is facing indirect pressure from influential political and business figures to downplay or halt the probe.

- ◆ This puts her in a position where she must **defend institutional integrity** over **societal pressure.**

- **Public Interest vs Private Interest:** The outcome of the investigation could serve justice and deter future **white-collar crimes**, benefiting the nation.

- ◆ But digging deeper may cause personal loss, public controversy, and damage her family's social standing.
- ◆ She must weigh the **greater good against personal and familial consequences.**

- **Due Process vs Expediency:** The anonymous tip about her relative calls for verification through legal means and careful examination.

- ◆ However, there is pressure to conclude the raid swiftly, which could lead to negligence or oversight.
- ◆ She must ensure that proper procedure is followed without rushing to meet political expectations.

(b) What would be the most appropriate course of action for Anjali, also discuss what ethical framework should guide her to resolve ethical dilemmas.

- **Transparency in Reporting the Allegation:** Anjali should **immediately inform her superior about the anonymous allegation concerning her relative**, without making premature judgments or hiding the information.
 - ◆ Transparency here reflects the **Platonic ideal of an ideal person**—one who does not let personal attachments cloud public responsibility.
 - ◆ It also aligns with **Kautilya's Rajadharma**, which emphasizes truthful reporting and loyalty to the institution over personal bonds.
- **Recusal to Avoid Conflict of Interest:** To uphold fairness, Anjali should **recuse herself from any part of the investigation that involves her relative**, ensuring that another officer handles that aspect.
 - ◆ This reflects the **Cardinal Virtue of Justice**, which demands impartiality in decision-making. By distancing herself, she upholds **conflict-of-interest ethics**, while preserving the moral integrity of the investigation.

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- **Balanced Continuation of the Main Investigation:** She should continue leading the larger investigation based on solid evidence already gathered, without being distracted by the unverified tip.
 - ◆ Here, **Aristotle's Doctrine of the Golden Mean** comes into play—avoiding both extremes of passivity (ignoring serious crimes) and overreaction (pursuing family without proof).
 - ◆ Her balanced approach promotes both professional responsibility and emotional restraint.
 - **Documentation and Procedural Integrity:** Anjali must document every step of the investigation carefully, maintain transparency, and follow due process.
 - ◆ This practice not only guards her against future allegations but also reflects the wisdom of **Gandhian truthfulness**, which sees openness and record-keeping as foundations of public accountability.
 - ◆ It also echoes **Kant's deontological ethics**, where duty and procedure take precedence over outcomes.
 - **Resisting External Pressure Responsibly:** While influential figures may pressure her to conclude the case quietly, **she must stand firm and resist such interference**, provided she remains within the boundaries of law and civility.
 - ◆ Here, **Utilitarianism** becomes relevant—by upholding law against elite misconduct, she secures public trust, which is a greater long-term good.
 - **Emotional Intelligence in Handling Family Dynamics:** She should communicate with her family, making it clear that her actions are guided by law, not personal bias.
 - ◆ By showing sensitivity, she embodies the **Gandhian ideal of moral courage combined with compassion**.
 - **Self-Reflection and Moral Anchoring:** Finally, Anjali should engage in regular self-reflection to ensure that her decisions are rooted in conscience and not clouded by fear or pressure.
 - ◆ This inward ethical clarity aligns with the Upanishadic idea of '**Atma-nirikshan**' (self-examination).
- (c) What long-term strategies can be implemented to support investigation officers in maintaining professional integrity and impartiality in high-profile investigations?
- **Mandatory Conflict of Interest Declarations:** Officers involved in investigations must be legally required to disclose any personal, familial, or financial connections with subjects.
 - ◆ An institutional recusal mechanism should automatically trigger when such disclosures are made.
 - ◆ This ensures impartiality and safeguards the investigation's integrity from internal compromise.
 - **Statutory Protection Against Political Interference:** A robust legal framework must be put in place to protect officers from arbitrary transfers or coercion during sensitive probes.
 - ◆ Legal immunity and protection from executive overreach help preserve institutional autonomy.
 - ◆ This empowers officers to act based on law and evidence rather than fear or influence.
 - **Guaranteed Fixed Tenure in Key Investigative Roles:** Investigating officers should be guaranteed a fixed tenure, especially in agencies like ED, CBI, or Income Tax.
 - ◆ It prevents disruptions and shields them from politically motivated transfers mid-investigation.
 - ◆ Stable tenure builds confidence and allows for thorough, time-bound investigations.
 - **Strengthened Whistleblower Protection for Officials:** The Whistleblower Protection Act should be revised to cover internal officers reporting undue interference.
 - ◆ Anonymity, legal backing, and career security must be guaranteed to such whistleblowers.
 - ◆ This encourages internal checks and deters unethical practices within agencies.

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● Institutionalized Ethics Training and Simulation

Exercises: Officers should undergo periodic training on ethical decision-making using real-world case studies and role-play scenarios.

- ◆ Exposure to frameworks like deontology, virtue ethics, and Indian philosophy sharpens moral reasoning.
- ◆ Ethics then becomes an **operational skill, not just theoretical knowledge**.

● Creation of Independent Oversight Panels for Sensitive Cases:

Autonomous committees comprising retired judges, civil servants, and legal experts should review politically sensitive cases.

- ◆ Their presence adds transparency and credibility, and insulates officers from targeted backlash.
- ◆ Such **panels act as buffers between investigative agencies and political pressure**.

● Media Protocols and Controlled Communication Frameworks:

Strict SOPs should govern public communication during ongoing investigations, restricting leaks and unauthorized briefings.

- ◆ Officers should be protected from media trials that affect their objectivity and morale.
- ◆ This keeps focus on **evidence, not narrative, and supports fair process**.

● Technology-Enabled Audit Trails and Transparency

Tools: All investigation-related actions should be digitally recorded, time-stamped, and stored with access logs.

- ◆ Use of tamper-proof systems ensures accountability and deters manipulation of records.
- ◆ **Technology thus becomes a silent ethical enforcer**, maintaining procedural integrity.

Conclusion:

As the **Bhagavad Gita** rightly says: *“Always perform your duty without attachment, for by doing so, one attains the highest.”* This timeless wisdom reminds civil servants that **detached, duty-bound action**, grounded in righteousness, not outcome — is the highest path of service to the nation. Upholding professional integrity in high-profile investigations demands more than individual virtue — **it requires systemic support, legal protection, emotional resilience, and ethical clarity**.

40. As the District Collector of a Suratwada district, you are overseeing a government-funded rural development project aimed at improving infrastructure. However, you soon discover that several contractors awarded the contracts for building roads, sanitation systems, and affordable housing have strong political ties to local and state-level politicians. These contractors, despite a history of substandard work and financial mismanagement in previous projects, continue to be awarded lucrative tenders due to their political leverage.

Upon reviewing the project, you uncover that funds are being misused, with inflated costs and substandard materials being used in construction. Corrupt local officials are found to be complicit in manipulating the approval process. Despite knowing this, you face immense pressure from both your political superiors and influential local figures to allow the project to continue without intervention. Exposing the corruption could stall the project, affecting the district's development and potentially harming your career, as the political backlash could lead to your transfer or disciplinary action.

You are caught in a dilemma: Should you expose the corruption and risk your career and the completion of the project, or turn a blind eye, knowing that doing so would compromise your ethical duty to the public? The decision is further complicated by the knowledge that your actions could affect both the future of the project and your ability to carry out governance in the district.

Questions:

- (a) What options are available to you to ensure that the corruption in the project is thoroughly investigated, while minimizing disruption to public services?
- (b) What course of action would you take to maintain your integrity and balance the investigation with the need for continued public service delivery?
- (c) What long-term reforms would you consider implementing in your district to prevent similar situations of corruption in future government projects, and how would you ensure that such reforms gain traction in the face of political and administrative resistance?

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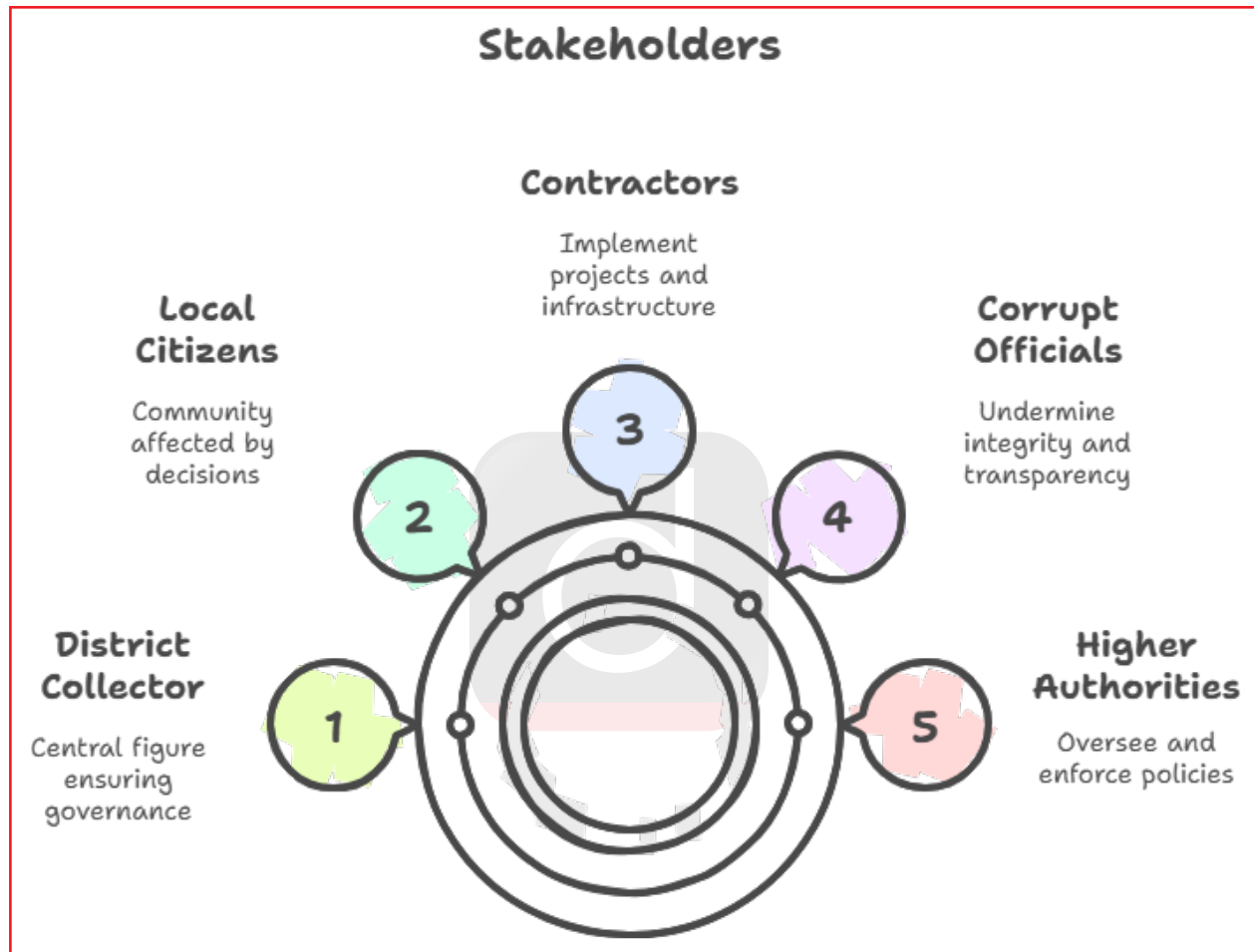


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Introduction:

The District Collector is confronted with a complex ethical dilemma involving **deep-rooted corruption in a government-funded rural development project**. The situation demands a careful balance between exposing malpractice by politically connected contractors and ensuring uninterrupted delivery of essential public services, all while upholding administrative integrity and professional duty.

**Body:**

- (a) What options are available to you to ensure that the corruption in the project is thoroughly investigated, while minimizing disruption to public services?

Option 1: Strict Legal Action and Full Disclosure

- **Action:** Immediately report the corruption to higher authorities and anti-corruption agencies. Suspend ongoing work, blacklist contractors, and initiate disciplinary proceedings against involved officials.

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● **Likely Result:**

- ◆ **Positive:** Strong message against corruption; personal integrity upheld; systemic accountability initiated.
- ◆ **Negative:** Project halts, delaying essential infrastructure; political backlash likely; personal career may face repercussions (transfer or sidelining).

Option 2: Corrective Supervision Without Public Disclosure

- **Action:** Keep the project running but bring in third-party auditors and technical experts to strictly monitor quality and expenditures. Warn contractors informally, demand course correction, and quietly replace the most non-compliant ones.
- **Likely Result:**
 - ◆ **Positive:** Services continue with improved oversight; public disruption minimized.
 - ◆ **Negative:** Root corruption remains partially unaddressed; ethical compromise in not taking punitive action against the corrupt.

Option 3: Strategic Escalation Through Institutional Channels

- **Action:** Gather evidence discreetly and escalate the issue confidentially to higher bureaucratic and vigilance authorities. Wait for formal orders while continuing minimal critical work under close monitoring.
- **Likely Result:**
 - ◆ **Positive:** Corruption addressed through formal institutions; less personal risk; lawful process followed.
 - ◆ **Negative:** Delay in concrete action; public may perceive inaction; political pressure may continue.

Option 4: Community and Media Engagement for Transparency

- **Action:** Involve local civil society and media to expose irregularities transparently. Conduct social audits and bring public pressure to ensure fair inquiry and contractor accountability.
- **Likely Result:**
 - ◆ **Positive:** Public mobilization builds trust; corruption gets wide attention; long-term institutional reform possible.

- ◆ **Negative:** Political backlash escalates rapidly; career at risk; work may halt amid controversy.

(b) What course of action would you take to maintain your integrity and balance the investigation with the need for continued public service delivery?

The course of action would be a synthesis of Option 2 and 3:

- **Initiate Corrective Measures without Halting the Project:** Allow the project to continue, but immediately bring in a **third-party technical audit team** (e.g., government engineering college or PWD experts) to inspect the quality of ongoing work. **(Option 2)**
 - ◆ Ensures continuity of public services (roads, sanitation, housing) while identifying and correcting substandard work.
- **Escalate the Issue Institutionally:** Document the corruption evidence and submit a **confidential report** to the **Chief Secretary, State Vigilance Commission, and Accountant General**, requesting their formal intervention. **(Option 3)**
 - ◆ Allows to act within the system, follow due process, and avoid politicizing the issue while protecting yourself legally.
- **Tighten Monitoring and Transparency:** Set up **real-time monitoring tools** (e.g., geo-tagged progress photos, contractor performance dashboards), and introduce **local-level social audits** involving credible NGOs or retired officials. **(Option 2)**
 - ◆ Strengthens transparency, creates checks on ongoing work, and deters further misuse of funds.
- **Penalize and Replace Worst Offenders:** For contractors with the most serious violations, initiate **penalties or partial blacklisting** as per procurement rules and begin **re-tendering** their portion without stopping the full project.
 - ◆ Sends a message of accountability while allowing other compliant portions of the project to continue.
- **Maintain Ethical and Legal Documentation:** Keep detailed records of all decisions, evidence, and communications. **(Option 3)**

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- ◆ If political backlash arises, documented actions can help defend your position and justify your balanced approach.

This approach ensures:

- **Integrity is upheld** through lawful and documented actions. (Aligns with **deontological ethics**, which emphasizes duty, rule-based conduct, and acting out of moral obligation, as per Kantian principles.)
- **Corruption is addressed** without abrupt disruption.
- **Public services continue**, fulfilling your duty as District Collector. (Reflects **role-based ethics or professional dharma**, where the moral responsibility lies in performing one's official duties with accountability and impartiality.)
- **Personal risk is managed**, as you act within rules and involve institutions rather than taking isolated or confrontational steps. (Aligns with **virtue ethics**, especially the virtues of prudence, courage, and practical wisdom; also in line with Gandhian ethics of institutional non-violence and ethical resistance.)

(c) **What long-term reforms would you consider implementing in your district to prevent similar situations of corruption in future government projects, and how would you ensure that such reforms gain traction in the face of political and administrative resistance?**

- **E-Procurement and End-to-End Digital Transparency:** Make tendering, bidding, contractor selection, work orders, and fund disbursement **fully digital and publicly accessible** through an e-Governance platform.
 - ◆ Reduces human discretion and political manipulation; builds audit trails.
 - ◆ Integrate with state-level e-procurement portals and publish dashboards online.
- **Contractor Performance Rating System:** Introduce a **district-level performance rating system** for contractors based on quality, timeliness, and compliance.
 - ◆ Encourages merit-based selection over political patronage.

- **Institutionalize Social Audits and Citizen Oversight:** Make **social audits mandatory** for all major infrastructure projects over a certain budget.
 - ◆ Public oversight adds pressure for honest delivery and uncovers ground-level deviations.
- **Independent Third-Party Monitoring Units (TPMU):** Set up a **District Project Monitoring Cell** under the DM's office with retired officials, engineers, and academics as members.
 - ◆ Technical scrutiny independent of departmental influence.
- **Capacity Building and Ethics Training for Officials:** Conduct regular training programs on **ethical governance**, vigilance rules, and project management for junior engineers, BDOs, and clerical staff.
 - ◆ Increases awareness of rules, reduces collusion, and builds administrative professionalism.
- **Procurement Reforms and Pre-Bid Screening:** Enforce stricter **eligibility norms** (e.g., financial history, quality record) and make pre-bid scrutiny mandatory.
 - ◆ Prevents repeat offenders from entering the system.

Ensuring Implementation Amid Political & Administrative Resistance:

- **Anchor Reforms in State and Central Guidelines:** Align reforms with **Central schemes' mandates** (e.g., PMGSY, AMRUT) and **CVC/CPWD guidelines** to make them difficult to oppose locally.
- **Frame Reforms as Efficiency and Cost-Saving Measures:** Present transparency reforms not just as anti-corruption tools but as **tools for faster execution, cost-efficiency**, and improved public satisfaction — making them more palatable to political actors.
- **Build Stakeholder Ownership:** Involve local MLAs, MPs, and Panchayat heads early in the reform dialogue. Highlight how clean projects enhance their public image and electoral capital.
- **Use Pilot Models and Showcase Success:** Pilot these reforms in **one or two blocks**, document successes (e.g., cost savings, public praise), and use them to expand reforms district-wide.

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- **Regular Public Reporting and Recognition:** Publish **monthly performance reports**, highlight clean projects in media, and **reward honest officials** publicly — building a culture of accountability.
- **Institutional Memory Through SOPs:** Draft and implement **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** for project oversight, so processes become system-driven, not person-dependent.

Conclusion:

In line with Indian philosophy, **Dharma demands righteous action without attachment to personal gain or fear of loss.** Upholding truth (Satya) and duty (Kartavya) ensures long-term justice and public good. As a public servant, one must act with **Nishkama Karma**—selfless service guided by ethical conviction.

41. Vikram is an environmental officer working with a state government's department responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with environmental regulations in the construction and industrial sectors. Recently, a large real estate company has proposed a new residential complex on the outskirts of the city, and Vikram's department is tasked with evaluating the environmental impact of the project. The company has submitted the required Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report, which states that the construction will have minimal impact on the local environment.

While reviewing the report, Vikram notices several discrepancies and omissions. Key details about the impact on local wildlife, soil quality, and water sources have either been underrepresented or completely ignored in the report. Vikram's initial analysis suggests that the construction could have significant adverse effects on the local ecosystem, but the developers have provided a large donation to a local charity that Vikram's department is associated with. The charity has funded several environmental initiatives in the past, and Vikram is aware that this donation will enhance the department's reputation and attract further funding.

Furthermore, Vikram's superior, the head of the department, has publicly praised the development as a much-needed project for the city's growth and has hinted

that the real estate company might receive expedited approval if the environmental report is favorable.

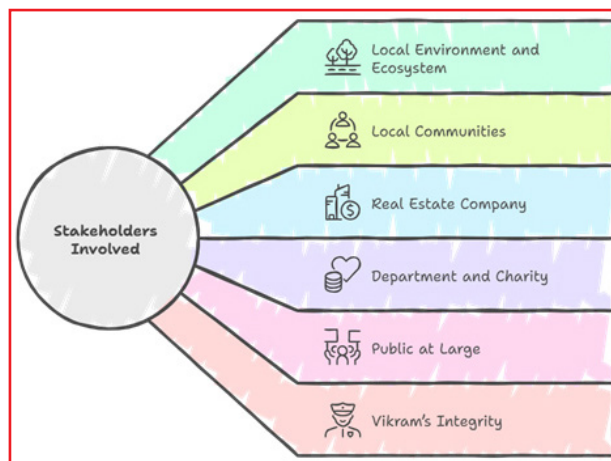
Vikram feels torn between his duty to uphold environmental regulations, his concern about the long-term ecological consequences, and the pressure to support the development in exchange for future funding opportunities for his department.

Questions:

- What should Vikram's course of action be in this situation to ensure the integrity of the environmental review process?
- How can Vikram justify his decision if the real estate company pressures him to approve the report despite the discrepancies?
- How do personal interests and external pressures compromise environmental ethics in this case, and what measures can be taken to prevent such conflicts in future projects?

Introduction:

Vikram, as an environmental officer, faces a classic ethical dilemma involving a conflict between **professional duty** and **external pressures**—both institutional and personal. His decisions must balance **ecological sustainability**, **administrative integrity**, and **public interest** while maintaining **ethical standards** of governance.



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a) What should Vikram's course of action be in this situation to ensure the integrity of the environmental review process?

- **Detailed Re-evaluation of EIA Report:** Vikram should prepare a **factual and evidence-based assessment** pointing out the discrepancies.
 - ◆ Use **scientific data, satellite imagery**, or expert consultation to substantiate environmental concerns.
- **Document Everything Objectively:** Maintain a detailed **record of observations and communications** to avoid personal liability.
 - ◆ This ensures accountability and protects against arbitrary decisions.
- **Raise Concerns Internally and Professionally:** Communicate findings to the **department head** through an internal report.
 - ◆ Present the case as a matter of **public interest and long-term ecological damage**, not personal opinion.
 - ◆ Avoid emotional or accusatory language; stay within **official and ethical decorum**.
- **Suggest Mitigation Measures and Alternatives:** Recommend that the project be approved **only with stringent environmental safeguards**.
 - ◆ Propose a **revised EIA**, additional environmental audits, or **site-specific mitigation plans** (like buffer zones, water conservation strategies).
 - ◆ This aligns with **sustainable development** rather than outright obstruction or blind approval.
- **Leverage Legal and Institutional Frameworks:** Use provisions under the **Environmental Protection Act, EIA Notification (2006)**, or **Biodiversity Act** to justify scrutiny.
 - ◆ If internal redressal fails, consider involving an **independent appraisal committee** or regulatory authority (e.g., State Environment Impact Assessment Authority).
- **Maintain Ethical Conduct Regarding the Donation:** Recommend **clear separation** of the donation from regulatory evaluation.

◆ Donations to a charity, while beneficial, **must not influence statutory duties**. Transparency in funding is essential to avoid conflicts of interest.

- **Escalate Responsibly, if Needed:** If pressure becomes unethical or the process compromised, consider **whistleblower channels**, but only after exhausting internal mechanisms.

(b) How can Vikram justify his decision if the real estate company pressures him to approve the report despite the discrepancies?

When facing pressure from vested interests like the real estate company, Vikram must justify his stand using a blend of **legal reasoning, ethical duty**, and **public interest**. His justification must be professional, fact-based, and rooted in the principles of **good governance** and **sustainable development**.

● Legal and Regulatory Justification

- ◆ **Statutory Duty:** Vikram can cite his **mandate under the Environmental Protection Act, 1986** and the **EIA Notification, 2006**, which require accurate and comprehensive environmental assessment.
 - ◆ **Due Process:** The presence of discrepancies makes the EIA report non-compliant. Any approval under such conditions would be legally questionable.
 - ◆ **Public Accountability:** Government officers are liable for decisions taken in disregard of rules; approval without due diligence may attract **legal or disciplinary action**.
- #### ● Ethical and Professional Justification
- ◆ **Integrity and Impartiality:** Vikram must explain that his role is to be an impartial evaluator, not an enabler of flawed assessments.
 - ◆ **Public Trust:** Justifying his stand as one that upholds the **citizens' right to a clean and safe environment**, as enshrined in **Article 21** of the Constitution.
 - ◆ **Conflict of Interest:** Any decision influenced by donations or pressure would compromise **ethical standards** and **public trust** in governance.

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● Evidence-Based Explanation

- ◆ Present **documented discrepancies** (e.g., missing data on water sources, wildlife impact) to the company.
- ◆ Offer a **clear, technical rationale** on why the report cannot be approved in its current form.
- ◆ Emphasize that correction and resubmission are possible and welcome.

● Constructive Alternative

- ◆ Reassure the company that this is **not a rejection of the project**, but a call for a **more responsible and law-compliant approach**.
- ◆ Suggest steps like commissioning a **revised EIA** or incorporating **environmental safeguards**.
- ◆ Highlight that proper compliance will speed up later approvals and reduce litigation risks.

(c) **How do personal interests and external pressures compromise environmental ethics in this case, and what measures can be taken to prevent such conflicts in future projects?**

Personal Interests and External Pressures Compromising Environmental Ethics:

- **Violation of Stewardship Responsibility:** According to **Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic**, humans are "members of the land community, not its conquerors."
 - ◆ Vikram's potential complicity in overlooking environmental harm contradicts this ethical responsibility of **stewardship** over nature.
- **Subversion of the Precautionary Principle:** Despite clear risks to **biodiversity and water sources**, pressure to expedite approvals ignores the **precautionary principle**, which urges action even in the absence of full scientific certainty to prevent irreversible harm.
- **Conflict of Interest and Loss of Objectivity:** Personal gain through charity funding or departmental image enhancement may bias decision-making, violating **utilitarian ethics** by prioritizing short-term gains over **long-term public welfare**.
- **Disregard for Intergenerational Equity:** Greed-driven development compromises the right of future generations to a safe and stable environment, violating

the principle of **intergenerational equity**, which stresses fairness across time.

- **Anthropocentric Thinking Over Ecocentric Ethics:** External pressures encourage **anthropocentrism** (human-centered development), ignoring **deep ecology** principles that advocate for the intrinsic value of all life forms, not just human utility.

Measures to Prevent Such Conflicts in Future Projects

- **Institutional Mechanisms for Accountability:** **Independent EIA Review Boards** with third-party experts can reduce conflict of interest.
 - ◆ Mandatory public disclosure of donations and affiliations to prevent undue corporate influence.
- **Ethical Capacity Building:** Incorporate **environmental ethics and moral reasoning** (e.g., **Leopold's Land Ethic**, **Peter Singer's Animal Rights**) in civil service training to foster values of **integrity, transparency, and ecological responsibility**.
- **Legal and Regulatory Reforms:** Strengthen penalties under the **Polluter Pays Principle** for willful data omissions.
 - ◆ Enforce strict compliance under the **Environmental Protection Act, 1986** and **EIA 2006 Guidelines**.
- **Public Participation and Transparency:** Public hearings and community involvement in project review ensure democratic oversight.
 - ◆ **Ecofeminist insights** remind us to consider how environmental degradation disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations (e.g., **water-scarce women-led communities**).
- **Promote Sustainable Development:** Encourage **need-based development** (e.g., **renewable energy, sustainable urbanization**) over greed-driven exploitation.
 - ◆ Implement **climate-sensitive urban planning**, balancing ecological conservation with developmental goals.

Conclusion:

Guided by the philosophy of **Deep Ecology**, Vikram must recognize that **nature is not merely a resource to be managed, but a living system with intrinsic value**,

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independent of human utility. Upholding **environmental ethics**, in this sense, is **not just a professional responsibility but a moral imperative**—to act in alignment with the ecological whole and preserve the balance between human development and nature's right to thrive.

42. You are the Managing Director of "XYZ Biotech", a rapidly growing pharmaceutical firm based in India, with operations in several developing countries. Your company has recently developed a breakthrough mRNA-based vaccine for a rapidly mutating tropical disease affecting large sections of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa and parts of South Asia.

The vaccine has demonstrated 94% efficacy in Phase III clinical trials and has the potential to save thousands of lives. However, the vaccine is expensive to manufacture, requiring specialized cold-chain storage, and proprietary biotechnology inputs licensed from international partners. The pricing strategy proposed by your Board is to recoup R&D investments and generate profit by pricing the vaccine at ₹3000 per dose, which makes it unaffordable for many low-income populations in target regions.

Meanwhile, several NGOs, global health organizations, and even a few governments are urging you to waive your patent rights, or adopt tiered pricing to allow cheaper versions or voluntary licensing for public-sector manufacture.

You are also under pressure from investors, who expect high returns due to the innovation. Some stakeholders suggest cutting costs by outsourcing trials to countries with weaker regulatory standards, while others propose delaying access in poorer countries to focus on wealthier clients first. Your own conscience is conflicted—you believe in public health as a right, but also have obligations to shareholders, employees, and long-term sustainability of the firm.

- (a) Identify and discuss the ethical issues involved in this case.
- (b) What would be your immediate response to the situation described above?

(c) If a global health coalition asks for voluntary licensing of your vaccine, how would you respond both ethically and strategically?

(d) As a conscientious public-spirited executive, suggest a balanced strategy that ensures innovation, affordability, and ethical integrity.

Introduction:

XYZ Biotech has developed a life-saving mRNA vaccine for a tropical disease affecting low-income regions. However, high production costs and proposed pricing raise concerns over affordability. The company faces ethical pressure from global health bodies and financial pressure from investors. As MD, it is my responsibility to balance innovation, access, and responsibility.

Body:

(a) Identify and discuss the ethical issues involved in this case.

- **Intellectual Property Rights vs. Social Responsibility:** The Board's reluctance to waive patent rights or adopt tiered pricing clashes with global appeals for affordable access.
 - ◆ Overprotecting IPR during a health emergency may violate the **common good** and **global solidarity**.
- **Means of Cost Reduction (e.g., outsourcing to weak regulatory zones):** Reducing costs by outsourcing clinical trials to regions with poor regulation raises **ethical and legal concerns**.
 - ◆ Violates **principles of non-maleficence** (do no harm) and **informed consent**.
- **Delay in Access for Poorer Nations:** Prioritizing richer markets leads to delay in vaccine availability in low-income countries.
 - ◆ This contravenes **distributive justice** and may lead to preventable deaths.
- **Long-term Ethical Business Sustainability:** Short-term profit maximization may damage the firm's ethical image and global trust.
 - ◆ Ethical behavior ensures long-term credibility and stakeholder trust, aligning with **Gandhian principle** of "Antyodaya" – uplifting the last person.

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- **Public Health vs. Profit Maximization:** The vaccine has life-saving potential but is priced beyond the reach of many in low-income countries.

◆ Denying access due to high pricing violates the **principle of justice and equity**.

(b) What would be your immediate response to the situation described above?

As the Managing Director of XYZ Biotech, my immediate response would be guided by a **balanced and ethically pragmatic approach**, aiming to:

- Save lives
- Ensure business sustainability
- Uphold global responsibility
- Maintain stakeholder trust

Immediate Response to the Situation:

- **Initiate a Tiered Pricing Strategy:** Introduce differential pricing based on countries' income levels:
 - ◆ High-income countries: ₹3000/dose (full price)
 - ◆ Middle-income: Moderate subsidy
 - ◆ Low-income (LDCs and LMICs): Heavily subsidized or near-cost pricing
 - ◆ **Rationale:** Ensures revenue from wealthier nations while allowing access to poorer populations.
- **Explore Public-Private Partnerships (PPP):** Collaborate with global health bodies like **GAVI, WHO, and UNICEF** to:
 - ◆ Fund bulk procurement
 - ◆ Share logistics and cold-chain infrastructure
 - ◆ Assist in distribution to remote areas
 - ◆ **Rationale:** Reduces company's logistical burden while ensuring wide reach.
- **Voluntary Licensing Under Conditions:** Offer **voluntary licenses** to trusted public-sector manufacturers in low-income regions.
 - ◆ Maintain quality and safety standards
 - ◆ Ensure affordability with negotiated royalties
 - ◆ **Rationale:** Balances IP rights with social responsibility. Supports **sustainable technology transfer**.

- **Ethical Clinical Trials Policy:** Issue a clear policy that:

◆ Trials will only be conducted in countries with **robust ethical review mechanisms**. Informed consent and post-trial care will be non-negotiable

◆ **Rationale:** Upholds **bioethics principles**: autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence.

- **Engage with Investors Transparently:** Hold stakeholder consultations to:

◆ Explain the long-term brand value of ethical leadership

◆ Show potential for future markets in developing countries

◆ Present tiered pricing as a sustainable, reputation-building move

◆ **Rationale:** Builds trust, reduces backlash, and aligns investor expectations with ethical goals.

- **Establish a Fund under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Allocate part of profits to support:

◆ Free vaccination drives

◆ Rural cold-chain infrastructure

◆ Health education and outreach

◆ **Rationale:** Reinforces the company's commitment to health equity.

(c) If a global health coalition asks for voluntary licensing of your vaccine, how would you respond both ethically and strategically?

I would **agree to voluntary licensing under a conditional, structured model** to balance the ethical imperative of public health with the strategic need for business sustainability and innovation continuity.

Ethical Justification

- **Humanitarian Responsibility:** As a leader in the biotech sector, I have a moral obligation to **uphold health as a fundamental right**, especially in the context of a life-threatening tropical disease.
 - ◆ Denying access due to cost would violate the ethical principles of **justice, equity, and beneficence**.
- **Principle of Global Solidarity:** Sharing life-saving innovation in times of crisis is aligned with the values

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of **compassion** and **utilitarianism** – maximizing good for the greatest number.

- ◆ It also upholds the ethical standard of “**interdependence of humanity**”, especially in global public health.

- **Moral Leadership:** As MD, I must act not only as a corporate executive but also as an ethical agent. Licensing under fair terms can set a **precedent of responsible innovation**, without fully relinquishing IP.

Strategic Business Justification:

- **Protecting Intellectual Property While Sharing Access:** I would not go for full waiver but allow **voluntary licensing with safeguards**:
 - ◆ Royalties at concessional rates
 - ◆ Manufacturing limited to public-sector units or WHO-approved partners
 - ◆ No export clause to protect commercial markets
- **Strengthening Brand Equity and Global Credibility:** Demonstrating ethical responsiveness enhances long-term **trust, reputation, and diplomatic goodwill**.
 - ◆ This can attract global partners (e.g. Gates Foundation, GAVI) and position XYZ Biotech as a preferred partner for future contracts.
- **De-risking Supply and Expanding Access Without Full Cost Burden:** Licensing allows us to **delegate production and distribution** in difficult geographies while focusing core resources on innovation and R&D.
 - ◆ Avoids infrastructure costs while ensuring market coverage.
- **Investor Alignment through Transparent Communication:** I would explain to shareholders that this strategy:
 - ◆ Preserves IP
 - ◆ Creates alternate revenue streams through royalties

- ◆ Opens new future markets
- ◆ Builds resilience against reputational or regulatory backlash

- (d) As a conscientious public-spirited executive, suggest a **balanced strategy that ensures innovation, affordability, and ethical integrity**.

Strategy: I would adopt a **tiered pricing model combined with voluntary licensing under safeguards**, engage in public-private partnerships for low-income distribution, and maintain IP rights with royalty-based licensing to balance innovation and access.

Justification:

- By allowing affordable access through tiered pricing or licensing, I aim to save the maximum number of lives (**Utilitarianism-Maximizing Welfare**) aligning with the principle of greatest good for the greatest number.
- As a public-spirited executive, I have a moral duty to protect human life and dignity, which follows **Deontological Ethics** and overrides exclusive profit considerations in a health emergency.
- Acting with compassion, responsibility, and integrity reflects the **virtues expected from ethical leadership**, especially in the life sciences sector.
- Prioritizing access for the least advantaged ensures distributive justice (**Rawlsian Ethics**), giving all individuals a fair chance to survive regardless of economic status.

Conclusion:

In navigating this dilemma, the goal must be to harmonize innovation with inclusivity — ensuring life-saving healthcare reaches those who need it most, without compromising long-term sustainability. Ethical leadership lies in choosing public good without losing sight of responsibility to all stakeholders. As **Albert Schweitzer** said, “**Ethics is nothing else than reverence for life.**”



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ESSAY

43. In a rapidly changing world, the battle between progress and preservation of values defines the future of humanity.

● Quotes to Enrich Your Essay:

- ◆ **Mahatma Gandhi:** "A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people."
- ◆ **John F. Kennedy:** "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."
- ◆ **Confucius:** "Study the past if you would define the future."

● Theoretical and Philosophical Dimensions:

- ◆ **The Paradox of Progress:** Technological, economic, and scientific advancement drive human development but often challenge cultural, ethical, and spiritual foundations.
 - True progress should enhance the human condition without eroding core human values like empathy, dignity, justice, and sustainability.
 - ◆ **Civilizational Continuity vs. Cultural Disruption:** Historically, societies that preserved values while adapting to change thrived longer.
 - Examples include **Japan's blend of tradition and modernity**, or India's resilience rooted in cultural pluralism.
 - ◆ **Indian Philosophy – Eternal vs. Ephemeral:** In Sanatana Dharma, values like **truth (satya)**, **non-violence (ahimsa)**, and **duty (dharma)** are considered timeless, while material achievements are transient.
 - The **Bhagavad Gita** urges action rooted in dharma, not fleeting success.
 - ◆ **Progressive Conservatism:** Change should be gradual and rooted in social continuity, not reckless destruction of existing institutions. Values act as stabilizers in times of transition.
- ### ● Policy and Historical Examples:
- ◆ **India's Constitution:** A progressive document rooted in ancient Indian values—balancing

modern democracy, equality, and liberty with traditions like justice and community life.

- ◆ **Industrial Revolution:** Brought immense material progress, but also deepened social inequalities, labor exploitation, and environmental degradation—showing the cost of value-less progress.
- ◆ **Green Revolution:** Boosted food security in India but led to ecological imbalances and debt crises, highlighting the need for sustainable practices rooted in ethical agriculture.
- ◆ **Post-War Reconstruction (Germany & Japan):** These nations modernized without abandoning cultural identity, proving that values can coexist with economic and technological growth.

● Contemporary Examples:

- ◆ **Climate Change Response:** Sustainability movements seek progress (green tech, innovation) while preserving the planet—a core human value of intergenerational responsibility.
- ◆ **Digital India & Ethical Governance:** India's push for digital transformation (e.g., **Aadhaar**, **UPI**) must align with data privacy, consent, and inclusivity—preserving citizens' rights in a tech-led future.
- ◆ **Education Reforms:** NEP 2020 promotes critical thinking and innovation, yet integrates values like respect for diversity, ethics, and environmental consciousness.
- ◆ **Cultural Identity in Globalization:** **Yoga**, **Ayurveda**, and **indigenous languages** show how global presence need not come at the cost of traditional roots.

44. The search for identity is not a quest for who we are, but for what we are not

● Quotes to Enrich Your Essay:

- ◆ Jean-Paul Sartre: "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself."
- ◆ Carl Jung: "The privilege of a lifetime is to become who you truly are."

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- ◆ B.R. Ambedkar: "I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved."

- ◆ Swami Vivekananda: "You cannot believe in God until you believe in yourself."

● Theoretical and Philosophical Dimensions:

- ◆ **Existential Philosophy – Identity Through Negation:** Sartre and Nietzsche argue identity is formed not by affirming a fixed self, but by rejecting imposed roles, labels, and societal expectations.

- "What we are not" becomes the boundary that defines "what we choose to be."

- ◆ **Jungian Psychology – The Shadow Self:** Understanding identity requires confronting parts of ourselves we deny or repress.

- Only by integrating what we're not (fears, biases, personas) can we become whole.

- ◆ **Indian Thought – Neti Neti (Not This, Not That):** In Vedantic philosophy, "Neti Neti" is a spiritual path where identity is discovered by peeling away illusions—one is not body, not mind, but pure consciousness.

- Self-knowledge arises from recognizing what the self is not.

- ◆ **Postcolonial Theory – Identity Against the 'Other':** Many national and personal identities (e.g., Dalit assertion, African decolonization) emerge through the rejection of imposed, inferiorizing labels by dominant systems.

● Policy and Historical Examples:

- ◆ **India's Freedom Struggle:** Indian identity was shaped by rejecting colonial definitions of inferiority and backwardness.

- Gandhi, Nehru, and Ambedkar redefined the Indian self through conscious rejection of Western-imposed narratives.

- ◆ **Civil Rights Movement (USA):** African-Americans forged identity by resisting systemic racism, discrimination, and cultural erasure—not just by claiming equality, but by rejecting imposed inferiority.

- ◆ **Feminist Movements:** Women's identity has evolved through challenging the idea that they are subordinate, passive, or confined to domestic roles.

- ◆ **LGBTQ+ Movements:** Queer identities gain recognition not merely by self-definition but by rejecting heteronormative assumptions of what is 'normal' or 'natural'.

● Contemporary Examples:

- ◆ **Youth and Social Media:** Online identity today is curated through choices—what one likes, follows, rejects.

- Identity is shaped as much by **exclusion (unfollow, block, opt-out)** as by self-expression.

- ◆ **Immigrant and Diaspora Communities:** People often discover their cultural identity more strongly in foreign lands, defined by what the host culture is not—leading to cultural preservation through contrast.

- ◆ **Minimalism and Consumer Identity:** Movements like **minimalism** define self not by what we own, but by what we consciously choose not to consume—rejecting material excess as a path to inner clarity.

- ◆ **Career Identity in the Gig Economy:** More young people are rejecting conventional 9–5 labels in **pursuit of freelance, multi-potentialite, or purpose-driven work.**

- They define themselves by shedding imposed roles, not simply by adopting new ones.

45. The future belongs to those who can adapt, not to those who resist change.

● Quotes to Enrich Your Essay:

- ◆ **Charles Darwin:** "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."

- ◆ **Alvin Toffler:** "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn."

- ◆ **Heraclitus:** "Change is the only constant in life."

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- **Theoretical and Philosophical Dimensions:**

- ◆ **Evolutionary Adaptation vs. Stagnation:** In biology, adaptation ensures survival. Similarly, in societal, technological, and political landscapes, flexibility is key to relevance and resilience.
- ◆ **Hegel's Dialectical Idealism:** It proposes that reality is fundamentally mental or spiritual and that it progresses through a **process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis**.
- ◆ **Philosophy of Impermanence (Anicca):** In **Buddhist thought**, clinging to the unchanging leads to suffering. Embracing change is essential for liberation.
- ◆ **Resilience and Plasticity:** Psychological studies show that those who adapt to adversity grow stronger. **Adaptability is not just survival, it is a higher-order skill linked to emotional intelligence and growth mindset.**
- ◆ **Indian Philosophy – Karma and Dynamic Duty (Svadharmā):** The Gita emphasizes action appropriate to time, context, and role—implying adaptability is dharma in a dynamic world.

- **Policy and Historical Examples:**

- ◆ **India's Economic Liberalization (1991):** A bold adaptive shift that revived India's economy, opened markets, and spurred growth—resistance could have led to financial collapse.
- ◆ **Japanese Post-War Reconstruction:** Japan rebuilt itself through adaptive innovation (**lean manufacturing, technology**) rather than clinging to militarism.
- ◆ **China's Reform and Opening-Up Policy (1978):** Deng Xiaoping's pragmatic shift from rigid communism to a hybrid economic model is a case of national adaptability.
- ◆ **COVID-19 Response:** Nations that adapted quickly with digital health systems, remote work infrastructure, and social support mechanisms fared better than those that resisted new models.

- **Contemporary Examples:**

- ◆ **Climate Adaptation:** From climate-resilient crops to green urban infrastructure, adaptation is key in combating climate change.

- ◆ **Workplace Evolution:** The gig economy, remote work, and AI-driven tasks demand continuous learning and career agility—those resisting this shift face obsolescence.
- ◆ **NEP 2020 and Education:** Emphasizes multidisciplinary learning and critical thinking, preparing students for an uncertain future rather than rote rigidity.
- ◆ **Start-up Ecosystems and Innovation:** India's rise as a **start-up hub reflects its youth's adaptability to global trends, digital platforms, and market disruptions.**

46. The more we divide the world into 'us' and 'them', the more we lose our connection to 'we'.

- **Quotes to Enrich Your Essay:**

- ◆ **Martin Luther King Jr.:** "We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now."
- ◆ **Barack Obama:** "The strongest democracies flourish from frequent and lively debate, but they endure when people of every background and belief find a way to set aside smaller differences."
- ◆ **Nelson Mandela:** "If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner."
- ◆ **Unknown:** "United we stand, divided we fall".

- **Theoretical and Philosophical Dimensions:**

- ◆ **Social Psychology – In-group vs. Out-group Bias:** Human tendency to favor one's own group leads to prejudice, fear, and fragmentation. This weakens societal trust and cohesion.
- ◆ **Ubuntu Philosophy (African Thought):** "I am because we are." True humanity is found in collective belonging, not division.
- ◆ **Indian Philosophy – Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam:** The world is one family. Artificial boundaries (caste, religion, race) weaken the spiritual and social unity that Indian philosophy promotes.
- ◆ **Political Theory – Identity Politics vs. Universalism:** While identity recognition is important, excessive polarization undermines the collective democratic spirit.

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- **Policy and Historical Examples:**

- ◆ **Revolt of 1857:** The Revolt of 1857 lacked a sense of national unity. There was no common ideology or all-India vision (not 'We'), making it more of a series of **localized uprisings ('us') than a unified national movement.**
- ◆ **Rwanda Genocide (1994):** Ethnic classification of Hutu and Tutsi, amplified by colonial legacies and propaganda, erased shared humanity, resulting in mass atrocities.
- ◆ **Civil Rights Movement:** Sought to restore the idea of 'we' in American democracy by dismantling legal and cultural segregation.
- ◆ **European Union:** A successful case where former rivals (**France, Germany, etc.**) built unity through shared economic and political institutions—choosing 'we' over nationalistic isolation.

- **Contemporary Examples:**

- ◆ **Language Based Conflicts:** The language row in India often reflects a **"we vs us" divide**, where regional linguistic identities feel threatened by perceived imposition of a dominant language (e.g., Hindi).
 - This creates **cultural alienation and regional resistance**, challenging the idea of a unified national identity.
- ◆ **Refugee Crises and Immigration Debates:** Rising xenophobia in the West divides 'natives' and 'outsiders', undermining humanitarianism and global cooperation.
- ◆ **Social Media Echo Chambers:** Algorithm-driven content personalization has created ideological silos—deepening political and cultural divides.
- ◆ **Solidarity on Pahagham Attack:** India saw a **dawn of solidarity among rival political parties despite ideological differences in the wake of a Pahagham attack**, keeping the national interest above the political endeavours (**All Party delegation led by MP Shashi Tharoor**).

47. The line between right and wrong is drawn with the ink of perspective.

- **Quotes to Enrich Your Essay:**

- ◆ **Mahatma Gandhi:** "There is no 'way to peace,' peace is the way."
- ◆ **Albert Einstein:** "Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding."
- ◆ **Søren Kierkegaard:** "Truth is a subjectivity."

- **Theoretical and Philosophical Dimensions:**

- ◆ **Moral Relativism vs. Absolutism:** The concept that **right and wrong are shaped by cultural, historical, and individual perspectives**, opposing the notion that there is a universal standard.
- ◆ **Ethics of Perspective:** From an ethical standpoint, what is deemed right in one culture or context may be viewed as wrong in another, underscoring the fluidity of moral judgment.
- ◆ **Constructivist Epistemology:** Knowledge is constructed through experiences and perceptions. From this lens, the **distinction between right and wrong is not fixed** but constructed through individual and collective experiences.
- ◆ **Buddhism and the Nature of Duality:** Buddhist philosophy holds that dualities like **right and wrong are mental constructs that contribute to suffering**; transcending these distinctions leads to a greater understanding of interconnectedness.
- ◆ **Ethical Subjectivism:** The idea that **moral opinions are expressions of individual feelings, not objective truths**, suggesting that right and wrong are subjective and relative.

- **Policy and Historical Examples:**

- ◆ **The Civil Rights Movement:** In the mid-20th century, the **"right" to equality was a perspective fought for by those who viewed segregation as an injustice**, while the "wrong" was seen by the proponents of racial segregation.
- ◆ **Colonialism:** European colonization was perceived as "right" by colonizers and a civilizing mission, while those colonized saw it as oppression, highlighting the **Ethical Dilemmas in Warfare**: The justifications for war **often differ across cultures and eras**.

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- For example, the justification of war in **World War II was seen as a necessary evil by the Allied forces**, but from the perspective of the Axis powers, it was a defensive action.

● Contemporary Examples:

- ◆ **Same-Sex Marriage:** What is considered “right” or “wrong” regarding same-sex marriage varies greatly across societies. In many countries, it is a right, but in others (like **India**), it remains controversial and forbidden.
- ◆ **Animal Rights:** The ethical debate around the treatment of animals in industries like **farming, entertainment, and research** shows how perspectives shape what is seen as moral or immoral behavior.
- ◆ **Climate Change Actions:** Some view aggressive climate change policies as “right” to **safeguard the planet, while others view them as “wrong” due to economic impacts**, demonstrating how different perspectives lead to varying moral judgments on the same issue.

48. Science can explain the stars, but only reason can guide our steps.

● Quotes to Enrich Your Essay:

- ◆ **Carl Sagan:** “Somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known.”
- ◆ **Immanuel Kant:** “Science is organized knowledge. Wisdom is an organized life.”
- ◆ **Aristotle:** “The more you know, the more you realize you don’t know.”

● Theoretical and Philosophical Dimensions:

- ◆ **Science and Rationality:** Science provides us with factual knowledge about the world around us, from understanding the cosmos to uncovering biological processes, but it is through reason that we **apply this knowledge to guide human behavior and decision-making**.
- ◆ **Practical Wisdom (Phronesis):** Aristotle’s concept of **practical wisdom** suggests that knowledge alone is insufficient without the ability to apply it

judiciously. Reason is necessary for determining the best course of action in various contexts.

- ◆ **Ethical Decision-Making and Reason:** While science can offer data on consequences, reason helps us weigh these facts and make decisions that align with our moral values, social goals, and emotional needs.
- ◆ **Postmodernism and the Limits of Science:** Postmodern thought critiques the **over-reliance on objective scientific knowledge** and emphasizes the importance of subjective reason in guiding human steps, suggesting that reason adds meaning to the cold facts science provides.
- ◆ **Human Agency and Free Will:** The role of reason in guiding human decisions highlights the active role humans play in shaping their own lives, distinguishing us from mere biological organisms subject to instinctual behavior.

● Policy and Historical Examples:

- ◆ **The Space Race (Cold War Era):** Science provided the knowledge to reach the stars, but it was the **strategic reasoning of nations**—focused on political **ideologies, national pride, and international competition**—that guided the direction of space exploration.
- ◆ **The Enlightenment:** The movement emphasized reason as a guide to human progress, which eventually led to scientific discoveries, but also emphasized ethical frameworks that could guide human society.
- ◆ **Environmental Policies and Reasoning:** The **application of scientific research on climate change is crucial**, but it is the reasoned application of this knowledge into sustainable policies and global cooperation that shapes the future of the planet.

● Contemporary Examples:

- ◆ **AI and Ethics:** The development of artificial intelligence is driven by scientific knowledge, but the ethical reasoning regarding its use (**privacy, employment, autonomy**) will guide how AI shapes the future.

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- ◆ **Gene Editing and CRISPR:** While the science of gene editing holds great potential, it is reason, informed by ethics, that must guide its application, especially in areas like **human genetic modification**.
- ◆ **Renewable Energy Transition:** The shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy is driven by **scientific advancements in energy technology**, but it is the reason—the **balance of economic, social, and environmental factors**—that will determine how quickly and effectively we transition to a sustainable future.

49. Convictions make history, conscience sustains it.

Quotes to Enrich Your Essay:

- **Mahatma Gandhi:** "You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty."
- **Martin Luther King Jr.:** "Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase."
- **Nelson Mandela:** "I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb."

Theoretical and Philosophical Dimensions:

- **Moral Philosophy:** Convictions stem from firm moral beliefs, while conscience ensures those beliefs remain aligned with ethical responsibility over time.
- **Existentialism (Kierkegaard, Sartre):** Human history is shaped by individuals who act out of conviction; sustaining that impact requires conscious reflection.
- **Neuroscience of Morality:** Research shows conscience evolves with empathy and socialization—key to sustaining ethical legacies.

Policy and Historical Examples:

- **Conscience as a Sustaining Force:** Conscience ensures that convictions are ethically applied and not misused.
 - ◆ **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's conscience** helped guide the creation of the Indian Constitution, focusing on social justice and equality, particularly for Dalits.

- ◆ **Nelson Mandela's commitment to forgiveness and unity,** despite his long imprisonment, sustained his convictions for a democratic South Africa post-apartheid.

- **Moral Leadership and Vision:** Moral leadership ensures that convictions are guided by a sense of ethical responsibility.

- ◆ **Jawaharlal Nehru's leadership in post-independence** India was based on a vision of secularism, democracy, and social justice, ensuring his actions were morally guided.

- ◆ **Winston Churchill's conviction during World War II,** coupled with his conscience, helped guide Britain through its darkest hours, with moral clarity in facing the Axis powers.

Contemporary Examples:

- **Whistleblowers (e.g., Satyendra Dubey, Shanmughan Manjunath):** Their actions stem from personal conviction; the public conscience debates and sustains their relevance.
- **Corporate Ethics:** Brands embracing purpose (e.g., Patagonia) thrive on conviction-led missions, but long-term relevance depends on consistent ethical practice.

50. Ideals without action are ornaments, actions without ideals are accidents.

Quotes to Enrich Your Essay:

- **John F. Kennedy:** "The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining."
- **Ralph Waldo Emerson:** "What you do speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say."
- **Mahatma Gandhi:** "An ounce of practice is worth more than tons of preaching."

Theoretical and Philosophical Dimensions:

- **Pragmatism (John Dewey, William James):** Ideas must **translate into action** to have value; action without guiding ideals lacks purpose.
- **Mahatma Gandhi's Philosophy of Karma:** Right action driven by pure intent bridges ideals and reality.
- **Leadership Theory: Visionary leadership (ideals)** must be paired with execution (action) to effect meaningful change.

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Policy and Historical Examples:

- **The Fall of the Soviet Union:** Ideals of communism were prevalent, but the lack of coherent action led to its collapse.
 - ◆ **Land reforms in post-independence India** were based on the ideal of equitable land distribution, but their partial and inconsistent implementation resulted in varied outcomes, leaving some regions less developed than others.
- **The Relationship Between Ideals and Actions:** Ideals are our highest aspirations, but without action, they remain unfulfilled.
 - ◆ **The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission)** was a powerful ideal of a cleaner nation, but it gained momentum through collective action across cities and rural areas.
- **Practical Idealism:** Successful idealism requires both belief and action. The **Green Revolution in India, spearheaded by leaders like M.S. Swaminathan**, took the ideal of food security and transformed it into tangible agricultural reforms that significantly boosted crop production.

- **Moral and Strategic Alignment:** Actions should align with ideals to prevent them from becoming random or unproductive.

- ◆ **The Right to Information Act (RTI)** was an ideal for transparency, which was implemented into action, leading to increased accountability in the Indian government.

Contemporary Examples:

- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Companies that promote ideals of sustainability need actions like reduced carbon footprints to back up their claims.
 - ◆ **The Tata Group's CSR initiatives**, such as their work in education and healthcare, have combined ideals with action, making a positive impact on communities.
- **Tech Innovations (AI, renewable energy):** Without ethical ideals, action in tech can lead to accidents (e.g., bias in algorithms, privacy breaches).
- **Social Media Movements:** Hashtags (#PinjraTod campaign) began as ideals; real change occurred only through legal reforms and protests.

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