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GENERAL STUDIES PAPER-1

History

1. "The two World Wars were less about ideology and more about geography and resources." Critically evaluate. (150 words)

Approach:

- Give brief intro about world wars
- Geopolitical and Strategic considerations
- Resource competition and Economic factors
- Ideology as mobilisation tool
- Conclude with scholar

Introduction:

The **First World War (1914–1918)** and **Second World War (1939–1945)** were global conflicts involving major powers, often seen as ideological struggles. However, they were largely driven by **geopolitical interests, strategic locations, and the control of resources**.

Body :

- **Geopolitical and Strategic Considerations:** Both World Wars were heavily influenced by **geography**.
 - ◆ In **World War I**, the proximity of Germany to France and Russia created a highly militarized zone, leading to trench warfare on the Western Front.
 - Also, the **Battles of the Marne and Aisne (1914)** halted Germany's rapid advance into France, forcing a retreat and leading to entrenched positions.
- These clashes, followed by the "**Race to the Sea**," marked the onset of prolonged trench warfare on the Western Front.
 - ◆ Similarly, in **World War II**, strategic control over regions like North Africa, the Mediterranean, and Southeast Asia was crucial for controlling supply routes and trade corridors.

- **Naval chokepoints** such as the **Suez Canal and Strait of Malacca** became decisive theaters, highlighting that geographic advantages often guided military campaigns more than ideology.
- **Resource Competition:** Access to **natural and industrial resources** was central. Coal, iron, oil, and rubber were critical for wartime economies.
 - ◆ **Japan's expansion into Southeast Asia during World War II** was primarily driven by the need for oil and raw materials.
 - ◆ Germany's aggression in Eastern Europe aimed at acquiring agricultural and mineral resources.
 - ◆ Even the Allied strategy, including the North African campaign, was guided by securing fuel, metals, and grain to sustain war efforts.
- **Economic and Industrial Factors:** Industrial capacity determined military outcomes more than ideological commitment.
 - ◆ Nations with **robust industrial bases**, such as the United States, Germany, and Britain, were able to sustain prolonged conflicts.
 - ◆ Control of industrial regions like the **Ruhr valley or coal-rich Silesia** became central war objectives.
- **Ideology as a Mobilizing Tool:** While ideology was used to justify wars and galvanize support, it was largely secondary.
 - ◆ For instance, the Allied fight against Nazism provided moral legitimacy, but **strategic considerations like the defense of oil fields in the Middle East** and securing Mediterranean access were decisive in military planning.

Conclusion:

Although ideology framed the narrative of both World Wars, **geography and resources were the primary determinants of conflict and strategy**. As **A.J.P. Taylor** argues, wars were not fought for abstract principles but for concrete power, territory, and survival.

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2. "The architectural and sculptural idiom of the Chandellas demonstrates both structural sophistication and narrative depth." Discuss. (150 words)

Approach :

- Briefly introduce the Chandella dynasty.
- Highlight the architectural and sculptural idiom of the Chandellas.
- Discuss their structural sophistication and narrative depth.
- Conclude with their continued legacy.

Introduction:

The **Chandella dynasty (9th–13th century CE)**, ruling over **Bundelkhand**, patronized some of the finest examples of **temple architecture** at **Khajuraho**, now a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. These temples not only represent the **zenith of Nagara style** but also embody the **cultural spirit of medieval India**, where **technical brilliance** was harmonized with a profound **narrative vision** carved in **stone**.

Body:

Structural Sophistication

- **Nagara Style Features:** Elevated plinths (*jagati*), axial plans, *sandhara* design with circumambulatory paths.
- **Complex Layouts:** Integration of *garbhagriha*, *antarala*, *mandapas*, and soaring *shikhara*.
- **Vertical Grandeur:** Multiple *shikharas* clustered to resemble a mountain range (e.g., Kandariya Mahadeva Temple).
- **Engineering Ingenuity:**
 - ◆ Precise stone-cutting and interlocking techniques, often without mortar.
 - ◆ Use of *corbelled domes* to distribute weight effectively.
- **Aesthetic Harmony:** Balanced composition between vertical thrust and horizontal spread, ensuring compactness without losing grandeur.

Narrative Depth in Sculpture

- **Religious Themes:** Rich depiction of deities, Puranic myths, and epic narratives.
- **Erotic Imagery (Mithuna Figures):**
 - ◆ Symbol of fertility, auspiciousness, and cosmic union.

- ◆ Embodiment of *kama* as one of the four *purusharthas*.

- ◆ Tantric symbolism of merging human and divine.

- **Social Realism:** Representation of dancers, warriors, musicians and domestic life depicting temples as records of medieval society.
- **Philosophical Integration:** Sculptures embody *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*, making the temple a microcosm of life.
- **Artistic Features:** Graceful postures, rhythmic movement, sensuous naturalism, and expressive detailing that transcend mere ornamentation.

Conclusion:

The **Chandella art form** represents a rare fusion of **structural ingenuity** and **narrative symbolism**. As **Devangana Desai** argues in *The Religious Imagery of Khajuraho*, the **erotic sculptures** were not mere **ornamentation** but **symbolic**, **auspicious motifs** imbued with **deeper religious meaning**, ensuring that the **Chandella contribution** endures as the **culmination of Nagara architecture** and a testament to **India's spiritual imagination**.

3. Breaking the silence of the oppressed, Jyotiba Phule gave voice to dignity and emancipation. Discuss how his ideas reshaped the discourse on equality and justice in 19th-century India. (150 words)

Approach :

- Briefly introduce Jyotiba Phule as a prominent social reformer in colonial India
- Discuss how his ideas reshaped the discourse on equality and justice in 19th-century India.
- Conclude with the contemporary relevance of Phule's ideas.

Introduction:

In 19th-century India, rigid caste hierarchies and patriarchal norms marginalised large sections of society, denying them dignity, education, and justice. Jyotiba Phule emerged as a pioneering social reformer who **challenged the entrenched social order** and sought to empower the oppressed through education, rational thinking, and social reform. By advocating equality and emancipation, Phule **reshaped the discourse on social justice** in colonial India.

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Body :**Key Contributions of Jyotiba Phule's Ideas:**

- **Social Reforms and Anti-Caste Movement:**
 - ◆ Criticised **Brahmanical orthodoxy** and caste-based discrimination.
 - ◆ Founded **Satyashodhak Samaj (Truth-Seeking Society)** in 1873 to promote equality.
 - ◆ Opposed **untouchability**, campaigned for **widow remarriage**, and challenged **child marriage**.
 - ◆ Empowered marginalised communities like **Shudras and Dalits**, laying the foundation for modern anti-caste movements.
- **Education as a Tool for Emancipation:**
 - ◆ Advocated **universal education**, especially for **girls and lower-caste children**.
 - Jyotirao Phule, along with his wife Savitribai Phule, established the **first girls' school in India** in Pune in 1848, pioneering women's education and challenging prevailing social norms.
 - ◆ Established schools with his wife, **Savitribai Phule**, breaking social taboos.
 - ◆ Believed that **knowledge empowers the oppressed** to claim social, economic, and political rights.
- **Women's Empowerment and Gender Justice:**
 - ◆ Promoted **women's education** and fought against oppressive practices like **Sati and child marriage**.
 - ◆ Integrated gender equality into the broader struggle for **social justice**.
- **Philosophical and Ideological Contributions**
 - ◆ Advocated **rationalism, humanism, and secularism**.
 - ◆ Criticised religion used as a tool of oppression.
 - ◆ Authored literary works such as **Gulamgiri**, which exposed caste-based exploitation.
 - ◆ Inspired later reformers such as **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** influenced Dalit emancipation movements.

Conclusion:

Jyotiba Phule's efforts gave voice to the marginalized, breaking the silence of the oppressed. Through his focus

on **education, social reform, and women's empowerment**, he redefined social justice in India. His legacy emphasises **egalitarianism, dignity, and human rights**, continuing to inspire contemporary movements for **equality and inclusion**.

Geography

4. Account for the shift in the location of the textile industry from the Ganga-Yamuna plain to the peninsular region of India. (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about the shift of textile industry from the Ganga-Yamuna plain to the peninsular region
- Give key arguments to the shift using geographical, economic and other dimensions
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

The **shift of the textile industry from the Ganga-Yamuna plain to the peninsular region** of India is a significant **historical and economic phenomenon** driven by a combination of historical, geographical, and economic factors.

- While the Ganga-Yamuna plain was a traditional hub for handloom textiles, the rise of the modern mill industry in the 19th and 20th centuries favored the **peninsular region, especially coastal areas**.

Body:**Shift in the Location of the Textile Industry from the Ganga-Yamuna plain to the Peninsular Region:****Geographical and Resource Factors:**

- **Cotton Production:** With the expansion of cotton cultivation in peninsular India (**Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu**), textile units naturally moved closer to raw material sources to reduce transportation costs.
- **Climate:** Peninsular India has a **more favourable climate for mechanized textile mills, particularly for spinning and weaving**, with less humidity and flooding compared to the Ganga-Yamuna plains.
 - ◆ **Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu)**, known as the "Manchester of South India," became a hub for cotton spinning and weaving industries.

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Industrial and Technological Factors:

- **Mechanization:** The peninsular region, especially **Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu**, saw early industrial development and adoption of mechanized textile mills during the post-independence period.
- **Electricity and Infrastructure:** Peninsular India developed better infrastructure, including **reliable electricity, ports (Mumbai, Chennai), and road-rail connectivity**, facilitating industrial growth.
- **Hydroelectricity:** The development of hydroelectricity in the early 20th century in states like **Tamil Nadu (e.g., Pykara Dam)** provided a crucial power source for the mills, further accelerating industrial growth in the south.

Economic and Market Factors:

- **Proximity to Ports and Export Markets:** Western and southern regions offered better access to ports (**Mumbai, Chennai, Tuticorin**), facilitating textile exports.
 - ◆ **Mumbai**, being a major port, became the “**Cottonopolis of India**” as it was the hub for importing machinery from England and exporting finished goods.
 - ◆ **Tirupur (Tamil Nadu)**, specialized in knitwear exports due to modern industrial estates and infrastructure.
- **Private Investment:** Peninsular India attracted private entrepreneurs, especially from **Gujarat and Maharashtra**, who invested in textile mills, boosting industrial concentration there.

Conclusion:

The shift of the textile industry to peninsular India reflects resource availability, industrialization, and market access. Initiatives like **PM MITRA, following the “5F” vision (Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign)**, are now further boosting integrated textile parks, exports, and employment, positioning India as a modern global textile hub.

5. “Landforms are not static, they are living records of earth’s processes.” Discuss with suitable examples from India. (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by defining landforms.
- Write different **Endogenic and Exogenic processes** with examples
- Write different **Exogenic processes** with examples
- Conclude suitably

Introduction:

Landforms are **natural features** of the Earth’s surface shaped by the interplay of endogenic forces such as **tectonic movements and volcanism**, and exogenic forces like **weathering, erosion, and deposition**. They are not static entities but dynamic features, constantly recording the Earth’s geological and climatic processes.

Body:● **Endogenic (Tectonic and Structural) Processes:**

- ◆ **Orogeny and Plate Collision (Himalayas):** The Indian plate’s ongoing collision with the Eurasian plate makes the Himalayas seismically active, prone to earthquakes, landslides, and slope instability.
 - This demonstrates that mountains are not static but continuously rising and reshaping, making the **Himalayas a “living mountain system.”**
- ◆ **Ancient Structural Legacy (Aravalli Hills):** The Aravallis, though among the world’s oldest fold mountains, **continue to influence regional drainage systems, soil profiles, and local microclimates**.
 - Their weathered ridges highlight how ancient tectonic forces still shape present-day landscapes.
- ◆ **Volcanic Landforms (Deccan Trap):** The Deccan Plateau, **formed by massive basaltic lava flows during the Cretaceous period**, preserves layered basalt traps.
 - These serve as geological archives of ancient volcanic activity while continuing to affect **soil fertility, groundwater storage, and agricultural patterns**.

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● Exogenic (Surface) Processes:

- ◆ **Fluvial Processes (Rivers and Floodplains):** Running water shapes landscapes through erosion, transportation, and deposition.

- The **Indo-Gangetic Plains** are continuously renewed by river sedimentation and flooding, while the Sundarbans delta evolves under the combined influence of rivers and tidal forces.

- ◆ **Erosional Landforms (Badlands and Ravines):** Intense soil erosion by streams forms ravines and gullies, such as the **Chambal badlands**.

- These are striking examples of how fluvial erosion alters landforms in semi-arid regions.

- ◆ **Aeolian Processes (Wind Action in Deserts):** In the **Thar Desert**, winds create barchans and longitudinal sand dunes, which constantly shift in shape and position, making desert landscapes highly dynamic.

- ◆ **Coastal Processes (Waves and Tides):** Shorelines along Odisha and the Konkan coast exhibit **wave-cut platforms, beach erosion, and accretion**, showcasing the continuous interaction of marine forces with the land.

- ◆ **Glacial Processes (Ice Dynamics in the Himalayas):** Retreating glaciers like **Gangotri and Siachen** actively reshape valleys, carve out moraines, and deposit glacial till.

- These features provide living evidence of climatic change and ongoing geomorphic transformation.

Conclusion:

Landforms are not fixed monuments but **living records** of **Earth's continuous and negotiated processes**. India's varied physiography: **mountains, plains, plateaus, deserts, and coasts** offers clear evidence of time-transgressive nature of landforms, underlining the Earth's ever-evolving nature.

6. Assess the impact of climate change on agriculture, migration, and resource utilization in the Indo-Gangetic Plains. (150 words)

Approach :

- Provide a brief introduction to the Indo-Gangetic Plains (IGP).
- Highlight the impact of climate change on agriculture, migration, and resource utilization in the IGP.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

Introduction :

The **Indo-Gangetic Plains (IGP)**, spanning Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal, form India's agricultural heartland, producing nearly **50% of the country's food grains**. Home to over **40% of India's population**, the region is highly vulnerable to **climate change impacts** such as rising temperatures, erratic monsoons, groundwater depletion, and frequent floods. These challenges threaten **agriculture, migration dynamics, and resource utilization**, posing risks to food and livelihood security.

Body:

Impact on Agriculture

- **Rising Temperatures:** According to ICAR, a **1°C rise in temperature reduces wheat yield by 4–5 million tonnes**, with Punjab and Haryana being the worst-hit.
- **Erratic Monsoons:** Bihar and Eastern UP witness recurrent floods, while Western UP suffers droughts, disrupting rice-wheat cycles.
- **Groundwater Crisis:** NITI Aayog (2023) notes that **Punjab and Haryana are extracting groundwater at twice the recharge rate**, worsening water stress.
- **Soil Degradation:** Floods and overuse of fertilizers degrade soil health, reducing long-term productivity.
- **Pest Outbreaks:** Warmer winters promote pests like **brown planthopper in rice**, affecting yields.

Impact on Migration

- **Seasonal Distress Migration:** Flood-prone districts of **North Bihar send lakhs of migrants** annually to Delhi, Punjab, and Gujarat for unskilled labor.
- **Urban Stress:** Migrants often end up in informal jobs, creating pressure on housing, sanitation, and infrastructure in cities.
- **Labor Market Shifts:** Ironically, Punjab's agriculture, hit by rural distress, depends heavily on migrant workers from UP and Bihar, creating a cycle of vulnerability.

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Impact on Resource Utilisation

- **Water Resources:** Overdependence on tube wells has pushed many districts of Punjab and Haryana into the “dark zone” of groundwater scarcity (CGWB, 2022).
- **Energy Demand:** Increased irrigation needs escalate electricity and diesel consumption, raising carbon emissions.
- **Biodiversity Loss:** Shrinking wetlands in Bihar and Bengal have reduced fisheries and migratory bird habitats.
- **Conflict Potential:** Increasing scarcity could spark interstate water disputes over Ganga, Yamuna, and Sutlej rivers.

Way Forward

- Promote **climate-resilient agriculture** through crop diversification (millets, pulses).
- Expand **micro-irrigation** and groundwater recharge structures.
- Provide **social security portability** and skill development for climate migrants.
- Enhance **data-driven policies** and integrate with **SDGs 2, 6, and 13**.

Conclusion:

The Indo-Gangetic Plains face a **triple crisis of agricultural decline, forced migration, and resource depletion** under climate change. Urgent adaptation through **sustainable farming, efficient resource use, and migration-sensitive policies** is essential to safeguard India’s food bowl and secure livelihoods for millions.

Indian Heritage and Culture

7. Classical dance forms are repositories of devotion, storytelling, and aesthetics. Explain with reference to the Natya Shastra. (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about Indian classical dance form and Natya Shastra
- Give arguments to Classical dance forms as repositories of devotion, storytelling, and aesthetics
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

Classical Indian dance is a profound synthesis of devotion, narrative, and aesthetic expression, transcending mere **entertainment**. The ***Natya Shastra***, attributed to **Sage Bharata**, provides a systematic codification of these elements, establishing dance as both a spiritual and cultural medium.

Body:

Classical Dance as:

● Repository of Devotion:

- ◆ *Natya* was considered the **fifth Veda**, created by Brahma to communicate spiritual truths universally, including to those outside scholarly circles.
- ◆ Classical dances like **Bharatanatyam, Odissi, and Kuchipudi** dramatize episodes from **epics, Puranas, and divine leelas**, cultivating *bhakti* in performers and audiences alike.
- ◆ Devotion is also embodied through **abhinaya**—facial expressions, eye movements, and **mudras** (symbolic hand gestures)—enabling spiritual immersion beyond verbal comprehension.

● Repository of Storytelling:

- ◆ Dance serves as a narrative medium through **nritta** (pure rhythmic movement), **nritya** (expressive dance), and **natya** (dramatic enactment).
- ◆ The **Rasa-Bhava** theory ensures effective emotional communication: **Bhava** (emotional states of performers) evoke **Rasa** (aesthetic flavor) in the audience.
- ◆ Complex stories from the **Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Krishna’s** life are enacted with precision using gestures, expressions, and synchronized musical accompaniment, making classical dance an enduring repository of India’s oral and performative traditions.

● Repository of Aesthetics:

- ◆ The ***Natya Shastra*** meticulously codifies **108 karanas** (dance units), body movements, facial expressions, and hand gestures to create nuanced aesthetic appeal.

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- ◆ Emotional architecture includes **sthayibhava** (permanent emotion), **vyabhichari bhava** (transient emotions), and **sattvik bhava** (psycho-physical states), culminating in the desired **rasa**.
- ◆ Music (**raga** and **tala**) and instruments like **mridangam** and **veena** enhance rhythmic and melodic harmony, elevating the overall aesthetic experience.
- ◆ Styles like **Tandava** (dynamic, masculine) and **Lasya** (graceful, feminine) exemplify the range and versatility of aesthetic expression in classical dance.

Conclusion:

Classical dance, guided by the Natya Shastra, serves as a medium for **cultural, spiritual, and emotional enrichment**. As one may reflect, *"Dance is the silent voice of devotion, the living story of our heritage, and the visible song of the soul."*

Indian Society

8. "Is the rise of protectionism and trade nationalism a reversal of globalization or merely a correction to its excesses?" Critically evaluate. (250 words)

Approach:

- Briefly define globalization.
- Note the recent rise of protectionism and trade nationalism.
- Provide arguments that it is a reversal of globalization.
- Provide arguments that it is a correction to excesses.
- Conclude with a balanced way forward.

Introduction :

Globalization, characterized by the **free flow of goods, services, capital, and technology**, has been a defining feature of the **global economy**. However, recent trends indicate a rise in **protectionism** and **trade nationalism**, raising questions about whether this signifies a **reversal of globalization** or a **correction of its excesses**.

Body:

Arguments for Reversal of Globalization

- **US-China Trade War:** Initiated in 2018, the trade war led to the imposition of tariffs and disrupted global supply chains, signaling a move towards protectionism.

- **Tariff Impositions:** In August 2025, the U.S. imposed a 50% tariff on Indian exports, citing India's continued purchase of Russian oil.
 - ◆ India condemned these measures as unfair and unjustified.
- **Brexit:** The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union in 2016 marked a significant retreat from regional economic integration.
- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** The pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in global supply chains, prompting countries to reconsider their dependence on global trade.
- **Russia-Ukraine Conflict:** The ongoing conflict has led to energy shortages and food security concerns, further encouraging nations to adopt protectionist policies.
- **Defunct WTO Dispute Settlement System :** The WTO's Appellate Body, responsible for resolving trade disputes, became non-functional in December 2019 due to the United States blocking the appointment of new judges.
 - ◆ This has rendered the dispute settlement system ineffective, leaving many cases unresolved.

Arguments for Correction of Globalization's Excesses

- **Hyper-globalization:** The rapid expansion of global trade has led to job losses in certain sectors and increased inequality, prompting calls for a more balanced approach.
- **Supply Chain Vulnerabilities:** Over-reliance on single sources for critical goods, such as semiconductors and pharmaceuticals, has highlighted the need for diversification.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** Countries are increasingly seeking to enhance their domestic capabilities to reduce dependence on external sources.
- **Digital and Green Trade:** The rise of digital trade and environmental concerns are reshaping global trade dynamics, focusing on sustainability and technological advancement.

Way Forward

- **Strengthening Multilateral Institutions:** Reinforcing organizations like the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**

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can help ensure a **rules-based trading system** (e.g., India pushing for revival of the WTO Appellate Body to resolve trade disputes).

- **Promoting Inclusive Globalization:** Ensuring that the benefits of globalization are **equitably distributed** can address concerns of inequality (e.g., G20 initiatives on **global minimum corporate tax** and debt relief for developing nations).
- **Enhancing Domestic Capabilities:** Investing in **domestic industries and technologies** can reduce dependence on external sources (e.g., India's **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme** for electronics, pharmaceuticals, and solar panels).
- **Fostering Regional Cooperation:** Strengthening **regional trade agreements** can provide stability and resilience to global trade systems (e.g., **RCEP, Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)** for trade diversification and supply chain security).

Conclusion:

The rise of **protectionism** and **trade nationalism** reflects a **recalibration of globalization** to address its **excesses** and **vulnerabilities**. As Dani Rodrik observes, **globalization** is not a **monolith** but a **dynamic process** that must adapt to **domestic priorities** and **global challenges**. This phase represents a transformation towards a more **balanced, resilient, and strategic globalization**, ensuring that nations like **India** and the **U.S.** can pursue **growth** while safeguarding **economic** and **strategic autonomy**.

9. "The right to choose a life partner is a facet of fundamental rights under Article 21." Discuss in light of honour killings and the challenges faced by inter-caste and inter-faith marriages in India. (250 words)

Approach :

- Provide a brief introduction to the Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.
- Discuss the challenges faced by inter-caste and inter-faith marriages in India, including honour killings.
- Suggest measures to tackle these challenges.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

Introduction:

The **right to life and personal liberty** under **Article 21** of the Indian Constitution has been interpreted by the Supreme Court to include the **right to choose a life partner**. Judicial precedents such as **Lata Singh v. State of UP (2006)** and **Shafin Jahan v. Asokan K.M. (2018)** reaffirm that **adult consent and personal choice** in marriage are fundamental, irrespective of caste or religion. Despite these constitutional protections, **inter-caste and inter-faith couples in India continue to face societal resistance, coercion, and violence**, including **honour killings**.

Body :

Challenges Faced by Inter-Caste and Inter-Faith Couples

- **Social and Cultural Resistance:**
 - ◆ Families and communities often oppose marriages across **caste or religion**.
 - ◆ Couples may face **coercion, threats, and forced marriages** to preserve family **"honour."**
 - ◆ Communities and informal bodies, like **Khap Panchayats**, often approve or tacitly support violence against those defying Caste endogamy norms.
- **Honour Killings**
 - ◆ Families or communities may resort to **murder or physical assault** to enforce societal norms.
 - ◆ Violates **Articles 21, 14, and 15 (personal liberty, equality, anti-discrimination)**.
 - ◆ Most victims of honour killings reported by NCRB fall under the youth category, generally below 30 years of age, consistent with social patterns where family or community violence targets young couples or individuals crossing social boundaries like caste or religion.
- **Legal and Administrative Hurdles :**
 - ◆ Legal remedies exist, including the **Indian Penal Code (Sections 302 and 304)** addressing murder, and the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005)**, which provides protection against familial harassment.
 - ◆ The **Special Marriage Act (1954)** enables inter-caste and inter-faith unions without religious ceremonies.

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- ◆ However, administrative and enforcement gaps—such as delayed police protection, lack of witness protection, and threats of social ostracism—often limit the effectiveness of these legal instruments.

Measures and Recommendations

- **Legal Interventions:**
 - ◆ Establish **fast-track courts** for honour killing cases.
 - ◆ Enforce IPC provisions (replaced by Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023) and the **Special Marriage Act** rigorously.
- **Protection Mechanisms:**
 - ◆ Provide **police protection**, safe shelters, and **witness protection programs**.
 - ◆ Example: NGOs like **Love Commandos** and **People Against Caste Violence (PACV)** assist couples in legal aid and relocation.
- **Social Awareness and Sensitization:**
 - ◆ Nationwide campaigns to **promote acceptance of inter-caste/inter-faith marriages**.
 - ◆ Integrate **marital rights and consent awareness** in school curricula.
 - ◆ Example: Awareness drives in Haryana and Rajasthan have shown a **10–15% increase in acceptance** in pilot districts.
- **Promote Digital Counter-Narratives:** Utilize social media for positive campaigns that champion individual freedom, equality, and love.

Conclusion:

As Prof. Upendra Baxi (Human Rights expert) observes, “The realisation of fundamental rights is incomplete unless social practices evolve to respect human dignity and personal autonomy.” Ensuring effective **legal enforcement, protective mechanisms, and social sensitization** is essential to safeguard this right. Upholding individual marital choice strengthens the **principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity**, fostering a more inclusive and just society.

10. Migration is both an opportunity for social mobility and a source of urban stress.

Analyse the socio-economic impacts of internal migration in India and suggest measures to address its challenges. (250 words)

Approach :

- Briefly introduce the phenomenon of migration.
- Analyse the socio-economic impacts of internal migration in India.
- Suggest measures to address its challenges.

Introduction:

The **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** defines a **migrant** as any person who is **moving** or has **moved** across an **international border** or **within a state** away from his/her **habitual place of residence**. Migration within India is a **complex phenomenon** that presents both **opportunities for social mobility** and significant **challenges**, particularly **urban stress**.

Body :

Magnitude of Migration:

- India had approximately **45.6 crore internal migrants** in 2011 (~38% of the population).
- Recent 2023 estimates suggest around **40 crore migrants**, with a **migration rate of 29%**.
- The majority (**88%**) is **intra-state migration**.
- **Source states:** Uttar Pradesh, Bihar;
- **Destination states/cities:** Delhi, Maharashtra, Karnataka.
- ◆ **Example:** Delhi's population increased by **2.5 crore** between 2001–2011, largely due to migration.

Socio-Economic Impacts of Internal Migration

- **Positive Impacts:**
 - ◆ **Economic Contribution:** Fuels **urban economic growth** by supplying labour to **industries and the informal sector**.
 - Migrants contribute **0.5-2.5% of GSDP** in net positive migration states like Delhi, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra.
 - Fill **essential labour shortages** in construction, manufacturing, and services.
 - Example:** Migrant labourers formed the backbone of Delhi Metro construction and Mumbai's real estate sector.

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- ◆ **Remittances & Rural Benefits:** Remittances improve rural household incomes, reduce poverty, and enhance access to health and education.

- **Example:** Kerala's high migrant remittances (approx ₹2,16,893 crores in 2023) helped uplift rural economies.

- ◆ **Upward Social Mobility:** Migration enables access to better education, healthcare, and employment, improving living standards.

- **Negative Impacts:**

- ◆ **Urban Stress:** Cities face overcrowding, housing shortages, inadequate sanitation, traffic congestion, and stretched infrastructure.

- Growth of slums, e.g., Dharavi in Mumbai, home to over 1 million people, illustrates urban congestion.

- ◆ **Social Exclusion:** Migrants often face discrimination, limited access to healthcare, education, and welfare services.

- Many work in precarious, informal jobs without social security, e.g., construction and domestic work.

- ◆ **Rural Brain Drain:** Migration depletes skilled labour in villages, affecting local agriculture and small industries.

- The outflow of men often leaves women to manage farms and households, leading to the feminisation of agriculture.

Measures to Address Challenges

- Invest in affordable housing, sanitation, public transport, and healthcare.

- ◆ **Example:** Delhi's Affordable Rental Housing Complex (ARHC) scheme for migrant workers.

- Provide portable social security, healthcare, and education benefits irrespective of residence.

- Strengthening robust migrant data collection and official recognition in urban governance.

- Create employment and livelihood opportunities to reduce distress migration.

- ◆ **Example:** MNRGA provides rural employment, reducing distress migration in states like Bihar and Odisha.

- Promote social inclusion through awareness campaigns and anti-discrimination efforts.

Conclusion:

Internal migration in India is a powerful engine of socio-economic mobility and urban growth, but also creates urban stress, slums, and social exclusion. Strategic urban planning, inclusive policies, and targeted rural development are essential to harness its benefits while ensuring sustainable and equitable development.

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GENERAL STUDIES PAPER-2

Polity and Governance

11. "Federalism in India is not a fixed arrangement but a continuous negotiation between Union and States." Examine this statement with reference to recent fiscal and political developments. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about the nature of federalism in India
- Delve into Fiscal Developments and the Negotiated Nature of Federalism
- Highlight Political Developments and the Negotiated Nature of Federalism
- Highlight positive developments of constant negotiation between Union and States
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

Indian federalism is a dynamic and evolving concept, described by **Granville Austin** as a "cooperative federalism." While the Constitution establishes a clear division of powers, the actual functioning of the federal system is a continuous process of bargaining and negotiation between the Union and the States.

Body:

Fiscal Developments and the Negotiated Nature of Federalism

- **Goods and Services Tax (GST) Implementation:** Introduced in 2017, GST marked cooperative federalism but reduced State autonomy by replacing VAT and increasing dependence on the GST Council.
 - ◆ **Delays in compensation**, especially during Covid-19, and the Centre's effective veto in the Council have exposed tensions and concerns over fiscal dominance..
- **Rising Use of Cesses and Surcharges:** There has been a rising trend of the Union government collecting revenue through cesses and surcharges.

- ◆ These are not part of the divisible pool of taxes and do not have to be shared with the States.
- ◆ This practice has reduced the quantum of revenue available for devolution to the States, shifting the fiscal balance towards the Centre.
- **Debates over Tax Devolution:** The 15th Finance Commission (2020-2025) recommended a reduction in states' share of central taxes from 42% to 41%, sparking debates over resource allocation.
- **Fiscal Deficit Limits and Borrowing Restrictions:** The central government's imposition of fiscal deficit limits under the **FRBM Act** restricts state borrowing powers, creating a tension between fiscal discipline and state autonomy (e.g., **West Bengal's** opposition to the borrowing cap).

Political Developments and the Negotiated Nature of Federalism

- **Governor as a Contested Federal Interface:** The Governor's discretionary powers, such as withholding assent to bills passed by the State legislatures, have often been perceived as a tool for the Centre to interfere in State affairs.
 - ◆ The recent stand-offs between **Governors and State governments in states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Delhi** exemplify the political negotiation that occurs outside the constitutional framework.
- **Abolition of Article 370-Unilateral Federal Restructuring:** The revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and its reorganization into two Union Territories was a major federal move criticized for bypassing State consultation.
 - ◆ The **Supreme Court upheld the abrogation but called for restoring statehood**, highlighting the judiciary's role in balancing Centre-State powers.
- **Use of Central Agencies- Autonomy under Scrutiny:** The increasing use of central agencies such as the **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** in some states raises

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concerns about central government overreach and its impact on state autonomy.

- **Centrally-Sponsored Schemes (CSS)- Conditional Cooperation:** The rise of centrally-sponsored schemes, while promoting national goals, limits States' financial and administrative autonomy, as they **must share funding and follow strict guidelines**, often forcing negotiations for flexibility or extra support.

Through constant negotiation, Indian federalism has also fostered constructive reforms and innovations:

- **Consensus-driven Policy Making:** GST itself may have reduced fiscal autonomy, but it created a **common national market and institutionalized federal dialogue through the GST Council**.
- **Social Sector Expansion through CSS:** Centrally Sponsored Schemes, despite constraints, have accelerated progress in **health (Ayushman Bharat), education and rural infrastructure (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana)** by pooling resources of both Centre and States.
- **Emergency Fiscal Support:** During Covid-19, the Centre and States coordinated relief through GST compensation loans, **expanded borrowing limits up to 5% of GSDP**, and targeted welfare schemes.
- **Strengthening of Intergovernmental Institutions:** The **Finance Commission, Inter-State Council and NITI Aayog** have all evolved as institutional spaces of negotiation, balancing competing demands.
- **Regional Aspirations Integrated into National Policy:** Federal contention has sometimes driven reform. For instance, **climate action plans, renewable energy targets, and digital service delivery have been shaped through state-level experimentation**, later adopted nationally.

Conclusion:

Indian federalism is a fluid and evolving framework, continuously shaped by fiscal and political interactions. Recognized as a **basic feature of the Constitution (SR Bommai Case 1994)**, it ensures that Centre-State relations remain flexible yet firmly anchored in constitutional principles.

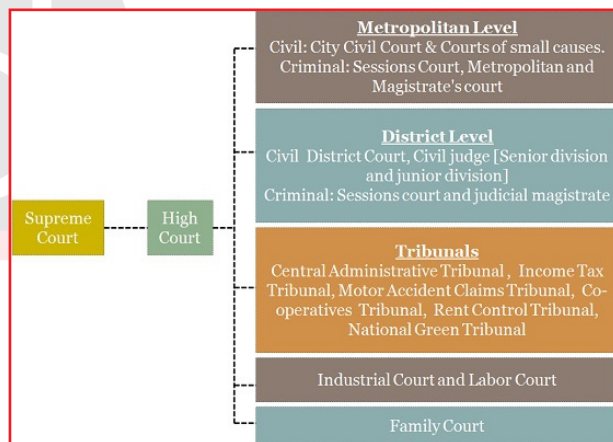
12. "Administrative tribunals are an essential adjunct to the justice delivery system in India." Examine the rationale of the recent tribunal reforms and their impact on speedy justice. (250 words)

Approach:

- Provide a brief introduction to the administrative tribunals.
- Examine the rationale of the recent tribunal reforms.
- Discuss their impact on speedy justice.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

Introduction:

Tribunals, introduced by the **42nd Constitutional Amendment (1976)** under **Articles 323A and 323B**, were established to provide **specialized, speedy justice** in areas like **public service, taxation, labour, elections, and regulation**. The **Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985** operationalized them as **quasi-judicial bodies** to act as an **adjunct to higher judiciary**, easing the **burden on regular courts**.



Body:

Rationale of Recent Tribunal Reforms

- **Streamlining and Rationalization:** The **Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021** dissolved several appellate tribunals such as the **Film Certification Appellate Tribunal** and transferred their appellate functions to existing judicial forums such as High Courts and Commercial Courts to reduce **duplication and inefficiency**.

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- **Uniform Appointments:** Creation of a **Search-cum-Selection Committee** was aimed at reducing arbitrariness in appointments.
- **Ensuring Independence:** Provided fixed tenure and safeguards on service conditions sought to protect **judicial autonomy**.
- **Financial Prudence:** Rationalization minimized **administrative expenditure** and duplication of infrastructure.

Impact on Speedy Justice

- **Positive Impact:** Specialized tribunals like the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** and **Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT)** have significantly reduced pendency in their domains.
- **Concerns:** The **abolition of certain tribunals** has shifted cases back to already burdened High Courts. For example, disputes on **intellectual property rights** now directly go to High Courts, potentially slowing resolution.
- **Judicial Oversight:** In *L. Chandra Kumar vs Union of India (1997)*, the Supreme Court emphasized that tribunals must remain subject to judicial review to balance **efficiency with accountability**.

Way Forward

- **Strengthen autonomy:** Set up a **National Tribunals Commission**, as recommended by the Supreme Court, to supervise the **appointment, functioning, and administration** of tribunals.
- **Adequate staffing:** Fill vacancies swiftly and increase sanctioned posts.
- **Digital integration:** Use **e-filing and virtual hearings** for faster disposal.
- **Capacity building:** Continuous training for tribunal members and staff.
- **Accessibility:** Establish regional benches to reduce travel and litigation costs.

Conclusion :

Administrative tribunals are crucial to the **justice delivery system**, but reforms must ensure **true autonomy, adequate staffing, and digital integration**. Strengthening

successful models like the **NGT** while preventing **executive dominance** will help achieve the twin goals of **specialized expertise and speedy justice**.

13. "Environmental pressure groups are often seen as catalysts of participatory democracy."

To what extent have they succeeded in reconciling development imperatives with ecological sustainability in India? (150 words)

Approach :

- Provide an introduction to the environmental pressure groups.
- Highlight their role in participatory democracy.
- Discuss their success and limitations in reconciling development imperatives with ecological sustainability in India.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

Introduction :

Environmental pressure groups are **citizen-led organizations** that advocate for **ecological protection, sustainable development, and conservation**. Acting as **catalysts of participatory democracy**, these groups **mobilize public opinion, influence policy, and hold governments and industries accountable**. While they have succeeded in **raising awareness and shaping policies, reconciling rapid economic development with ecological sustainability** remains a **complex challenge** in India.

Body :

Role in Participatory Democracy

- **Policy Influence:** Groups have shaped environmental policies like the **National Green Tribunal Act 2010**, the **Forest Rights Act 2006**, and reforms in **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA)**.
 - ◆ Their inputs ensure that policy frameworks incorporate citizen perspectives and ecological concerns.
- **Legal Interventions:** Groups have utilized **Public Interest Litigations (PILs)** have been an effective tool to enforce environmental laws.

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- ◆ Landmark cases such as the **MC Mehta Ganga pollution case** and the **Taj Trapezium case** helped reduce industrial pollution and compelled stricter monitoring.

- **Public Awareness and Advocacy:** Campaigns against deforestation, wildlife poaching, industrial pollution, and air pollution have mobilized citizens and created a broader environmental consciousness.

- ◆ Movements like the **Chipko Movement** and the **Appiko Movement** highlight grassroots activism fostering democratic engagement.

Successes in Balancing Development and Sustainability

- **Eco-sensitive Zoning:** Advocacy for buffer zones and environmental clearances around urban and industrial projects has mitigated ecological damage.
- **Community-led Conservation:** Movements such as the **Niyamgiri Hills protests** protected indigenous land rights while preventing mining-related ecological degradation.
- **Corporate Accountability:** Pressure groups ensure compliance with environmental regulations, such as river basin management, **Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ)** enforcement, and renewable energy adoption.
- **Policy Reform Advocacy:** Their sustained campaigns have influenced climate action plans and promoted renewable energy initiatives, integrating sustainability into national development agendas.

Challenges and Limitations

- **Conflict with Economic Imperatives:** Large infrastructure projects, dams, and highways often clash with conservation goals.
- **Political and Bureaucratic Resistance:** Delays, regulatory dilution, and limited enforcement weaken the impact of advocacy efforts.
- **Limited Reach:** Many groups operate regionally, leaving marginalized or rural communities underrepresented.
- **Judicial and Implementation Gaps:** Even landmark PILs sometimes suffer from weak enforcement, reducing their long-term effectiveness.

Way Forward

- **Strengthening Legal Frameworks:** Enforce environmental laws rigorously and ensure faster judicial redress.
- **Promoting Sustainable Development Models:** Integrate robust EIAs and social impact assessments in project approvals.
- **Expanding Public Participation:** Encourage citizen science, stakeholder consultations, and local governance participation.
- **Corporate Responsibility:** Strengthen ESG norms and incentives for environmentally sustainable industrial practices.

Conclusion:

Environmental pressure groups have significantly enhanced **participatory democracy** and **ecological awareness** in India. While they have achieved **partial success** in **reconciling development** and **sustainability**, ongoing **challenges** require **integrated governance**, **active public participation**, and **innovative policy interventions**. As **Amartya Sen** aptly stated, “**Sustainable development** requires **balancing economic progress** with **environmental conservation**,” underscoring the necessity of **harmonizing development goals** with **ecological stewardship**.

14. Ladakh's demand for Sixth Schedule inclusion tests the balance between national integration and regional autonomy. Critically examine the need and challenges in granting Sixth Schedule protections to this strategically sensitive Union Territory. (250 words)

Approach :

- Briefly introduce the context of Ladakh's demand for the Sixth Schedule.
- Critically examine the need and challenges in granting Sixth Schedule protections to Ladakh.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

Introduction:

Ladakh, carved out as a **separate Union Territory** in **2019** after the **bifurcation of Jammu & Kashmir**, has been demanding **Sixth Schedule protections** to safeguard its **tribal and cultural identity**. The region, **strategically located** along the **borders with China and Pakistan**, is home to largely **tribal**

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communities. The demand highlights the delicate balance between **national integration** and **regional autonomy**, raising concerns about **governance, development, and security** in a **geopolitically sensitive area**.

Body :

Need for Sixth Schedule Protections

- **Political Autonomy:** Ladakh, a UT without a legislature since 2019, lacks elected representatives and legislative powers.
- **Tribal Identity & Culture:** Over 97% of the population belongs to Scheduled Tribes; the Sixth Schedule safeguards **customs, land rights, and cultural heritage**.
- **Preservation of Land & Resources:** Fragile ecosystems with glaciers, alpine meadows, and endangered species require protection against overpopulation and industrial pressures.
- **Local Economic Development:** Sixth Schedule status ensures **targeted infrastructure, education, employment, and healthcare**, addressing **high graduate unemployment (26.5%)**.
- **Security & Strategic Autonomy:** Governance must balance **regional autonomy** with **national security** on disputed borders.

Challenges in Granting Sixth Schedule Protections

- **Legal Hurdles:** The Sixth Schedule is intended for the Northeast tribal areas; applying it to Ladakh requires a **constitutional amendment**.
- **Administrative Complexity:** Additional bureaucratic layers may **slow decision-making** in a remote, strategic region.
- **Existing Development Support:** UT already receives **substantial funds and enhanced reservations** (ST reservation at 80% as of 2025).
- **Economic Growth Concerns:** Restrictions on **land use and resources** may deter investments and infrastructure projects.
- **Precedent Risk:** Granting the Sixth Schedule could encourage similar demands from other tribal regions, complicating **federal governance**.

Way Forward

- **Expand LAHDC powers** for local governance, resource management, and cultural preservation.

- Grant **special legislative status** under Article 240 with local law-making powers.
- Explore a **tailored Sixth Schedule framework** for autonomy with accountability.
- Increase **financial devolution and development grants** for sustainable infrastructure and jobs.
- Establish a **Ladakh Public Service Commission (LPSC)** for domicile-based recruitment.
- Institutionalise **dialogue and conflict resolution platforms** with local and central bodies.
- Implement **legal safeguards** to protect cultural heritage and fragile ecosystems

Conclusion:

Ladakh's demands for **statehood, Sixth Schedule status, and greater autonomy** reflect the need for **inclusive governance, cultural preservation, and sustainable development** while safeguarding **national security**. A **phased, consultative approach**—strengthening LAHDCs, ensuring **local employment**, and promoting **ecological balance**—offers the best way forward, echoing Gandhi's words: *"The world has enough for everyone's needs, but not enough for everyone's greed."*

International Relations

15. "Trade tariffs have evolved from economic shields into geopolitical weapons, reshaping alliances and rivalries in the 21st century." Examine in the Indian context. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by justifying the statement using a current event
- Delve into the Evolution of Tariffs: From Economic Shields to Geopolitical Weapons
- Highlight its implications in Indian context
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

In 2025, the U.S. imposed **tariffs on Indian imports**, citing India's continued purchases of Russian oil despite Western sanctions. This move marked a significant escalation in the use of tariffs as **geopolitical tools** rather than mere economic instruments.

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Body:**Evolution of Tariffs: From Economic Shields to Geopolitical Weapons**● **Economic Shields:**

- ◆ **Protection of Domestic Industries:** Historically, tariffs protect domestic industries, controlled imports, and generated government revenue.
- ◆ **Revenue Generation for Governments:** Tariffs have traditionally served as a key source of fiscal revenue, especially for developing economies with limited taxation infrastructure.
- ◆ **Balancing Trade Deficits:** Tariffs help reduce trade imbalances by making imports more expensive, encouraging domestic consumption of local goods.

● **Geopolitical Weapons:**

- ◆ **Political Leverage:** Tariffs now serve as tools to coerce countries into aligning with broader foreign policy goals, e.g., **U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum** to safeguard national security while pressuring allies.
- ◆ **Influence on Supply Chains:** Tariffs can disrupt global supply chains, creating dependency or leverage over key sectors.
 - For instance, **China's rare-earth export restrictions on Japan in 2010** influenced Japan's trade and technological policies.
- ◆ **Instrument of Sanctions:** Tariffs often replace or supplement economic sanctions. The U.S. targeting India's exports amid geopolitical disputes is a contemporary example of such weaponization.

Economic and Strategic Implication: Indian Context● **Economic Implications:**

- ◆ **Potential Decline in Exports:** The U.S. tariff will directly affect around 10% of India's total exports to the U.S., impacting approximately **\$87 billion worth of goods annually**, with pharmaceuticals,

textiles, and engineering sectors facing the greatest strain.

- ◆ **Inflationary Pressures:** Tariffs increase costs for Indian exporters and importers, potentially leading to domestic price hikes in sectors reliant on U.S. markets.
- ◆ **Diversification of Markets:** The pressure has pushed India to explore alternative markets, like **Africa, Latin America, and ASEAN**.
- ◆ **Impact on Startups & MSMEs**—Small and medium enterprises, which rely heavily on exports, may face liquidity crunches and job losses. For instance, **Indian textile MSMEs exporting to the U.S. might downsize due to tariff shocks**.
- ◆ **Encouragement of Self-Reliance:** Tariffs incentivize **'Make in India' and Atma Nirbhar Bharat initiatives** and domestic value addition, reducing dependency on imports while enhancing industrial capacity.

● **Strategic Implications:**

- ◆ **Closer India-Russia-China Engagement:** The tariff issue has accelerated India's engagement with Russia and China, as **seen during the 2025 SCO summit**, reshaping regional alliances and signaling a multipolar strategic alignment.
- ◆ **Preservation of Strategic Autonomy:** India's stance on energy imports and foreign policy demonstrates a commitment to independent decision-making, signaling that **external economic coercion will not dictate national choices**.

Conclusion:

Tariffs today are more than tools of commerce—they have become instruments that influence international relationships and strategic choices. **"A tariff is never just a tax on trade, it is a signal of power, a test of alliances, and a lever in the contest of nations."** For India, such measures present both challenges and opportunities, pushing the country to diversify markets and strengthen its global partnerships.

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16. How far has BRICS succeeded as a collective voice of the Global South? Suggest ways in which India can strengthen its engagement with the grouping without undermining its core interests. (250 words)

Approach :

- Write a brief intro of BRICS
- Successes of BRICS as collective voice of south
- Limitations of BRICS as collective voice of south
- Strengthening India's BRICS engagement
- Write suitable conclusion

Introduction:

BRICS has evolved into a prominent yet complex coalition of emerging economies, projecting itself as a collective voice of the Global South against the Western-dominated global order.

- The 17th BRICS Summit, held under the theme "Strengthening Global South Cooperation and Promoting a More Inclusive and Sustainable Global Governance", reflected this vision.

Body :

- BRICS as a collective voice for the Global South has emerged as an influential platform for developing economies, yet its unity and effectiveness are mixed.

◆ Successes:

- **Alternative Finance:** The **New Development Bank (NDB)** and **Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA)** offer alternatives to **Western-dominated institutions like the IMF and World Bank**, financing sustainable development and providing liquidity.
 - Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, have discussed creating **BRICS Reserve Currency** as part of a broader de-dollarization effort.
- **Agenda-setting Power:** BRICS members have successfully amplified the **Global South's demands for reforming global governance institutions**, including the UNSC, and increasing representation for emerging economies.

- **Recent Expansion:** The addition of new members like **Egypt, Iran, and the UAE** enhances the **bloc's demographic and economic weight**, strengthening its claim to represent the wider Global South.

◆ Limitations:

- **Internal Divisions:** Geopolitical rivalries, notably the **India-China border dispute**, create deep trust deficits and hinder cohesive action.
- **China's Dominance:** China's overwhelming economic size raises concerns about **asymmetric power dynamics and agenda-setting**, complicating equitable decision-making.
- **Conflicting Interests:** Member states have **divergent foreign policy stances**, with India's multi-aligned approach contrasting with the more confrontational posture of China and Russia.

- **Strengthening India's BRICS engagement:** India can bolster its role in BRICS by adopting a pragmatic strategy that **prioritizes economic cooperation and multilateral reform** while preserving its strategic autonomy.

◆ Expand issue-based economic cooperation:

- **Trade Diversification:** Leverage the **expanded BRICS platform to correct trade imbalances, especially with China**, by deepening ties with commodity-rich members like Brazil and energy producers like UAE.
- **Technological leadership:** Champion cooperation in technology, particularly **digital public infrastructure (DPI)**, where India holds a comparative advantage.
 - Promoting the **UPI model across BRICS** can boost intra-bloc digital trade.
- **Local Currency Trade:** Actively support initiatives for trade in local currencies to **reduce reliance on the US dollar**, enhancing financial resilience for India and its partners for example **Rupee-Ruble agreement**.

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◆ **Strengthen institutional mechanisms:**

- **Institutional Reforms:** Advocate for **robust institutional reforms**, such as setting clear membership criteria and **strengthening the NDB**, to ensure equitable decision-making and prevent domination by any single member.
- **People-to-people Ties:** Promote academic exchanges, tourism, and cultural initiatives to build long-term goodwill and mutual understanding among member states.

Conclusion:

While **BRICS has partially succeeded in representing the Global South**, internal differences limit its full potential. India can play a **decisive role by leveraging diplomacy, promoting cohesion, driving innovation, and advocating shared interests**, thereby strengthening the grouping without compromising its own strategic priorities.

17. "Energy security is not just an economic necessity but also a geopolitical lever." How should India recalibrate its energy diplomacy in the era of great power rivalry? (150 words)

Approach :

- Discuss the significance of energy security.
- Highlight the key challenges to India's energy security.
- Suggest measures to recalibrate India's energy diplomacy in the era of great power rivalry.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

Introduction:

Energy security refers to the uninterrupted availability of energy at an affordable price. For India, it is not merely an **economic necessity** but also a **geopolitical lever**, shaping its external relations and strategic autonomy. With India importing **over 85% of its crude oil** and nearly **50% of its gas demand**, the issue acquires heightened urgency amid **great-power rivalry** and shifting global energy markets.

Body :

Challenges to India's Energy Security

- **High Import Dependence:** India remains vulnerable to global price shocks, e.g., Brent crude volatility during the **Russia-Ukraine conflict (2022)**.

- **Geopolitical Tensions:** Unrest in **West Asia** or blockades at chokepoints like the **Strait of Hormuz** threaten supplies.
- **Great-Power Competition:** China's aggressive energy diplomacy in Africa and the Middle East constrains India's access.
- **Clean Energy Transition:** Balancing fossil fuel dependence with climate goals under the **Paris Agreement**.
- **Critical Mineral Shortage:** Lithium, cobalt, and rare earths, crucial for green technologies, are dominated by a few powers.

Recalibrating India's Energy Diplomacy

● **Diversification of Sources:**

- ◆ Expanding oil/LNG imports from **US, Russia, Latin America, and Africa** to reduce West Asia dependence.
- ◆ Example: India increased discounted crude imports from **Russia** despite Western sanctions.

● **Long-term Contracts & Equity Stakes:**

- ◆ Securing supply through **Qatar LNG deal** and **ONGC Videsh investments** in oil blocks in Vietnam, Mozambique, and Russia.

● **Strengthening Strategic Reserves & Infrastructure:**

- ◆ Current **39 MMT Strategic Petroleum Reserves** cover only about 9.5 days; expansion to 87 days is underway.

● **Clean Energy Diplomacy:**

- ◆ Leadership in the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** with 120+ members.
- ◆ Ambition to become a global hub for **green hydrogen** production.

● **Critical Minerals Partnership:**

- ◆ Engagement with **Australia, Chile, and African nations** for lithium and cobalt supply chains.

● **Regional & Multilateral Cooperation:**

- ◆ Participation in **Quad's clean energy initiatives** and **G20 energy platforms** to hedge against great-power pressures.

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Conclusion:

In the era of **great power rivalry**, India's energy diplomacy must integrate **diversification, infrastructure resilience, renewable adoption, and regional cooperation**. As energy scholar **Daniel Yergin** notes, "**Energy security is inseparable from national security**,"—a reminder that India's energy choices today will shape its global power status tomorrow.

18. The Saudi–Pakistan Mutual Defence Pact marks a potential reconfiguration of regional security dynamics. Critically analyse its implications for India's strategic calculus. (250 words)

Approach :

- Briefly introduce the Saudi–Pakistan Mutual Defence Pact.
- Discuss the key terms of the agreement.
- Analyse its implications for India's strategic calculus and regional security dynamics.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

Introduction:

The recent signing of a **Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA)** between **Saudi Arabia** and **Pakistan** in **September 2025** marked a **watershed event** in **Middle Eastern** and **South Asian geopolitics**. This **diplomatic upgrade** not only recalibrates **regional security calculations** but also reverberates across the **global order**, confronting **India** with new **strategic challenges**.

Body:**Key Terms of the Agreement :**

- The **Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA)** formalizes collective defence between **Saudi Arabia** and **Pakistan**, stating that "**any aggression against either country shall be considered an aggression against both**."
- The agreement establishes mechanisms for permanent **coordination**, including a **joint military committee**, **intelligence-sharing arrangements**, and **expanded training programmes**.

- It formalizes Pakistan's long-standing **military presence in Saudi Arabia** and reflects Saudi intent to enhance Pakistan's strategic role in **Persian Gulf security**.

Implications on India & Regional Security Dynamics:

- **Recalibration of Gulf and West Asian Security Architecture:** The **SMDA** institutionalizes **Pakistan's formal security role in West Asia**, a region traditionally dependent on **US security guarantees**.
 - ◆ The **pact** commits both nations to treat **aggression against one as aggression against both**, signaling a **collective defense model** akin to **NATO's Article 5**.
 - **Nuclear Proliferation Concerns and Strategic Stability Risks:** The **pact** reportedly includes provisions for **Pakistan's nuclear umbrella** to extend to **Saudi Arabia**, raising **proliferation anxieties** in an already tense region.
 - **Enhanced Strategic Confidence for Pakistan vis-à-vis India:** The **pact** emboldens **Pakistan's geopolitical posture**, potentially strengthening its **deterrence calculus against India**.
 - ◆ With **Saudi Arabia's backing**, **Islamabad** may adopt a more **assertive stance on Kashmir** and **cross-border terrorism**, raising **security risks for New Delhi**.
 - ◆ **Pakistan's Defense Minister**, affirming **Saudi support** in a hypothetical **India-Pakistan war**, underlines the altered **security parameter**.
 - **Impact on India-Saudi Arabia Relations and Diplomatic Balancing:** Despite the **pact**, **Saudi Arabia** remains one of **India's largest energy suppliers** and **economic partners**.
 - ◆ **Riyadh's reassurances to New Delhi** emphasize continuing **strategic partnership** while managing its evolving alliance with **Islamabad**.
- Policy Measures that India Can Adopt to Uphold Its Strategic Interests**
- **Deepen Strategic and Defence Cooperation with Saudi Arabia and Gulf States:** India must intensify its

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defence and strategic partnership with Saudi Arabia by expanding joint military exercises, intelligence sharing, and defence technology collaboration.

- **Enhance Diplomatic Engagement and Multilateral Outreach:** India should leverage multilateral platforms such as the United Nations, G20, and I2U2 to raise awareness about regional security threats, including nuclear proliferation risks posed by the pact.
- **Accelerate Military Modernization and Intelligence Capabilities:** Given the enhanced strategic confidence Pakistan gains through the pact and Saudi backing, India must expedite the modernization of its armed forces, particularly in countering conventional threats and cross-border terrorism.
- **Diversify Energy and Economic Partnerships in the Gulf and Beyond:** Saudi Arabia is a vital energy supplier and economic partner for India.
 - ◆ While safeguarding these ties, India must diversify energy sources by strengthening relationships with other Gulf countries and investing in renewable energy projects linked to Gulf economies.
 - ◆ To balance its interests in West Asia, India can strategically strengthen ties with Iran by revitalising the Chabahar project, which is currently under strain due to the US sanction waiver, while ensuring that its approach does not undermine its relationship with Israel.

Conclusion:

As External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar often remarked, *"The India way would be to be more of a decider or a shaper rather than an abstainer... not a disruptionist but a stabilising power that uses its capacities for global good."* The Saudi-Pakistan defence pact reinforces this imperative, urging India to move beyond a reactive posture towards a proactive, strategically autonomous, and diplomatically agile role.

Social Justice

19. "Social justice demands not charity, but accessibility and dignity." Evaluate India's efforts to empower persons with disabilities in light of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016. (150 words)

Approach :

- Briefly explain the quotation
- Achievements of the RPwD Act, 2016
- Persistent implementation gaps and challenges, also suggest suitable measures to tackle them.
- Write suitable conclusion

Introduction:

Empowerment of persons with disabilities (PwDs) is a core dimension of social justice, emphasizing equal rights, accessibility, and dignity over mere charity.

- The SC in *Amar Jain v. Union of India & Ors (2025)* affirmed that inclusive digital access for PwDs is part of the fundamental right to life and liberty (A-21) and directed making the digital KYC process accessible, recognizing PwDs as rights-holders.
- India's framework, anchored in the RPwD Act, 2016, seeks to translate these principles into actionable measures.

Body :

- **Achievements of the RPwD Act, 2016:**
 - ◆ **Expanded Definition and Legal Capacity:** The Act increased the number of specified disabilities from 7 to 21, ensuring more individuals are covered.
 - It also introduced "limited guardianship," promoting joint decision-making and respecting the autonomy of PwDs.
 - ◆ **Affirmative Action:** It mandates a 4% reservation in government jobs and 5% in higher education for persons with benchmark disabilities, providing institutional mechanisms for empowerment.
 - ◆ **Protection against discrimination:** The Act explicitly prohibits discrimination based on disability and mandates "reasonable accommodation" in public and private establishments, legally obligating entities to ensure inclusivity.
 - ◆ **Dedicated funds and grievance redressal:** The creation of National and State Funds

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institutionalizes financial assistance, moving beyond a charity model. Special courts are designated in each district to address violations of the Act, improving access to justice.

- The **National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDFDC)** has been created to finance and promote the economic empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).

● **Persistent implementation Gaps and Challenges:**

- ◆ **Uneven Accessibility:** Despite initiatives like the Accessible India Campaign, implementation is slow and inconsistent, with many public buildings and transport systems still lacking basic accessibility features.
 - According to a 2018 government report, **only 3% of buildings were fully accessible.**
- ◆ **Ineffective Enforcement of RPwD, Act 2016:** Weak monitoring and enforcement mechanisms mean compliance is low.
 - **Many government websites remain inaccessible, particularly** affecting acid attack survivors and visually impaired individuals.
- ◆ **Economic Marginalization:** Job reservation quotas often remain unfilled, and many private companies evade compliance.
 - Pervasive social stigma, especially for women with disabilities, also limits employment prospects.
 - Government data indicates that **only 36% of 26 million PwDs are employed.**
- ◆ **Bureaucratic hurdles:** The process of obtaining **Unique Disability ID (UDID)** cards is often slow and inefficient, hindering access to entitlements.
 - Less than **40% of disabled persons in India have UDID.**

"ENABLE" Framework for PwDs

● **E – Enforcement of Laws:**

- ◆ Strict monitoring of the RPwD Act, 2016 with penalties for non-compliance.
- ◆ Regular accessibility audits of public buildings, websites, and transport systems.

● **N – Navigation-friendly Infrastructure:**

- ◆ Universal design in urban planning (ramps, tactile flooring, accessible toilets, signboards).
- ◆ Expansion of Accessible India Campaign with time-bound targets.

● **A – Awareness & Social Inclusion:**

- ◆ Mass campaigns to fight stigma, especially around women with disabilities.
- ◆ Training media, schools, and workplaces for disability sensitivity.

● **B – Building Economic Empowerment:**

- ◆ Fill backlog in job reservations; incentivize private firms for inclusive hiring.
- ◆ Skill training in new-age sectors (IT, green economy, digital services).

● **L – Leveraging Technology:**

- ◆ Accessible government portals, AI-driven assistive devices, and e-learning platforms.
- ◆ Subsidies for screen readers, mobility aids, and customized tools.

● **E – Efficient Governance & Delivery:**

- ◆ Streamline UDID process with digital tracking, grievance redressal, and doorstep services.
- ◆ Strengthen institutional mechanisms like State Commissioners for PwDs.

Conclusion:

Inspired by **Ambedkar's vision of social democracy**, India must move beyond charity to **ensure dignity and accessible opportunities for PwDs**. The Supreme Court's **2024 Nipun Malhotra judgment** further highlights that true inclusion demands both legal enforcement and cultural change.

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20. Inclusion of transgender persons tests the resilience of India's equality framework. Discuss the obstacles and policy interventions required to ensure their full participation in society. (150 words)

Approach :

- Briefly introduce the need for the inclusion of transgender persons in India's equality framework.
- Discuss the obstacles and policy interventions required to ensure their full participation in society.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

Introduction:

India's **Constitutional framework** enshrines **equality, non-discrimination, and dignity** under **Articles 14, 15, and 21**. In **NALSA v. Union of India (2014)**, the **Supreme Court** recognised transgender persons as a '**third gender**', affirming their rights to **self-identification and social inclusion**. Yet, despite progressive judgments and laws, the **full participation of transgender persons** in society is curtailed by **stigma, exclusion, and institutional gaps**.

Body :

Key Obstacles Faced by Transgender Persons

- **Social Exclusion and Discrimination:**
 - ◆ Widespread **family rejection, bullying, and stigma**.
 - ◆ **31% of transgender persons die by suicide; 50% attempt suicide before 20**, reflecting deep social distress.
- **Barriers in Education:**
 - ◆ **Literacy rate is 56.1%**, far below the **national average of 74%** (2011 Census).
 - ◆ Lack of **gender-sensitive curricula** and **safe learning spaces**.
 - ◆ Lack of **gender-neutral toilets**.
- **Economic Exclusion and Unemployment:**
 - ◆ **92% face economic exclusion** (NHRC, 2018); **48% unemployed** (ILO, 2022).
 - ◆ **Inheritance laws** under the **Hindu, Muslim, and Indian Succession Acts** exclude transgender heirs.
- **Healthcare Challenges:**
 - ◆ **27% denied medical care** (NALSA survey).

◆ **42.7% of trans women** in Delhi NCR suffer moderate to severe **depression**; **48% face anxiety/PTSD**.

● Political Under-Inclusion:

- ◆ Almost **absent** from legislatures and decision-making bodies.
- ◆ Only **25% voter turnout** among transgender voters in the **2019 elections**.

● Legal and Bureaucratic Barriers:

- ◆ Under the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019**, only **65% of ID applications** were processed by 2023, often delayed beyond the legal timeframe.

Policy Interventions Required

- Enforce the **2019 Act** with **simplified self-ID** and **training for officials**.
 - ◆ Example: **Delhi's 2025 Rules** for identity recognition and redressal.
- Expand the **SMILE scheme**, **priority sector lending** by the RBI, and **corporate diversity hiring** (e.g., Tata Steel).
 - ◆ **World Bank (2021): GDP can grow by 1.7%** with transgender workforce inclusion.
- Scale **AIIMS CoE for Transgender persons**, **Ayushman Bharat TG Plus**, and **telemedicine outreach**.
- Implement **inclusive education** through **Gender-neutral toilets**, **anti-bullying policies**, and **counselling** in schools.
- Expand **Garima Greh shelters** into **empowerment hubs** linked with **SHG frameworks**.
- Ensure regular **socio-economic surveys** to inform policies, as seen in the **US BRFS model**.
- Support **trans-led NGOs** like **Born2Win Trust**.

Conclusion

As **B.R. Ambedkar** emphasised, "**Political democracy cannot last unless social democracy lies at its base.**" The **true resilience** of India's **equality framework** will be tested by its ability to ensure **dignity, rights, and opportunities** for transgender persons. Aligning with **SDG 5 (Gender Equality)** and **SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities)**, empowering transgender persons is essential to building a **just, inclusive, and sustainable democracy**.



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GENERAL STUDIES PAPER-3

Economy

21. Technological sovereignty is emerging as the cornerstone of national power in the 21st century. Examine how India can achieve self-reliance in semiconductors, space technology, and critical minerals while staying embedded in global value chains. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by validating how technological sovereignty is emerging as the cornerstone of national power in the 21st century
- Delve into the Imperative of Balancing Autonomy with Global Linkages
- Highlight the Sectoral Pathways including their status and steps for self-reliance
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

In the 21st century, **technological sovereignty has become synonymous with strategic autonomy**. From semiconductors powering AI to satellites enabling secure communication and critical minerals driving green transitions, **national power increasingly rests on technology control**. For India, achieving **self-reliance in these domains**, while leveraging global value chains (GVCs), is vital for economic growth and national security.

Body:

Imperative of Balancing Autonomy with Global Linkages

- **Strategic Autonomy through Self-Reliance:** Building domestic capabilities reduces exposure to supply chain disruptions, sanctions, and weaponization of trade.
 - ◆ **Example:** The **U.S. ban on advanced chip exports to China** highlights vulnerabilities of overdependence on external suppliers.
- **Innovation and Scale through Global Value Chains:** Participation in GVCs provides access to cutting-edge technologies, investment, and export markets, which accelerates diffusion of know-how and competitiveness.

- ◆ **Example:** India's IT services and pharmaceuticals became global leaders by embedding deeply in international supply chains.

- **Synergistic Approach:** Instead of isolationist self-sufficiency, **India needs "selective self-reliance"**—developing critical domestic capabilities while leveraging international partnerships for complementary strengths.

- ◆ **Example:** **Semiconductor ATMP plants (Micron in Gujarat)** combine foreign investment with domestic ecosystem building.

Sectoral Pathways

● Semiconductors

- ◆ **Current Status:** Import dependence, India mostly limited to **chip design and assembly**.

◆ Steps for Self-Reliance:

- Promote **chip design ecosystem** (Chip to Startup programme, leverage ISRO's indigenous 32-bit 'Vikram' microprocessor as proof of capability).
- Scale **ATMP (Assembly, Testing, Marking, and Packaging)** facilities (Micron's \$2.75 bn plant in Gujarat).
- Incentivise **fabs for mature nodes** under **India Semiconductor Mission** (First commercial SiC fab in Odisha).
- Create **semiconductor clusters** with **clean power, water, and talent pipelines**.

- ◆ **Staying in GVCs:** Strategic joint ventures (Tata–Powerchip, Micron–Gujarat) for technology transfer.

- Encourage export-oriented fabless design houses to integrate into global supply chains.

● Space Technology

- ◆ **Current Status:** ISRO's success (**Chandrayaan-3, Aditya-L1**) and private entry (**Skyroot, Agnikul**).
- India ranks among the top 5 spacefaring nations but **contributes only ~2% of the global space economy**.

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◆ **Steps for Self-Reliance:**

- Advance **Gaganyaan (2025)** and build towards **Bharatiya Antariksh Station (2035)**
- Develop **indigenous launch systems and satellite subsystems (cryogenic engines, avionics).**
- Encourage the private sector via **IN-SPACE, NSIL** for manufacturing and smallsat constellations as per **New Space Policy (2023).**
- Strengthen **INSAT-3DS** for **weather forecasting**, expand NavIC constellation for independent navigation and geospatial intelligence.

◆ **Staying in GVCs:** Export launch services (**India offers cost advantage**), international collaborations (**NASA-ISRO NISAR mission, Artemis Accords**).

● **Critical Minerals**

◆ **Current Status:** India has reserves of **lithium (Reasi, J&K, ~5.9 MT), cobalt, rare earths, thorium**, but remains **import dependent** for most critical minerals.

- Over **80% of lithium and cobalt imports come from China**, creating a strategic vulnerability.

◆ **Steps for Self-Reliance:**

- Secure overseas assets via **KABIL JV** with Australia, Argentina, Africa.
- Streamline auctions with single-window clearances, flexible exploration-cum-mining licenses; incentivize private and FDI participation (e.g., **Vedanta, Ola Electric bids**).
- Establish integrated mineral processing parks with PPPs to move from **raw ore export → domestic refining → value-added manufacturing**.
- Adopt robust ESG frameworks to balance mining with ecological and tribal rights, necessary for project legitimacy and speed.

◆ **Staying in GVCs:** Deepen ties with Australia, Argentina, Chile, and Africa for assured supplies along with the **Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)**, while pursuing processing partnerships with Japan/EU.

Conclusion

India's path to technological sovereignty lies not in isolation but in **strategic integration**—building **domestic ecosystems in semiconductors, space, and critical minerals** while remaining embedded in global networks. This dual approach will secure autonomy, attract investment, and position India as a **technology power in the multipolar 21st century**.

22. Analyze how data has emerged as the 'new factor of production' in India's economy. What challenges arise in terms of regulation, ownership, and privacy? (250 words)

Approach :

- Introduce briefly about Data adding report/index
- Data as the new factor of production
- Challenges in terms of regulation, ownership, and privacy.
- Building a Trustworthy Data Economy
- Conclude suitably

Introduction:

The **classical factors of production land, labour, and capital** shaped the industrial economy. In the **digital era**, **data** has emerged as the "**new factor of production**", akin to oil in its economic value. Also, India's data center market is expected to exceed **USD 15 billion by 2030**.

Body:

Data as the 'New Factor of Production':

- **Enabling Financial Inclusion and New Markets:** Data creates new ways to assess risk and offer services to populations previously outside the formal economy. It acts as a form of "digital capital" for those without traditional assets.
 - ◆ The **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** generates vast amounts of transactional data.

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- ◆ Fintech companies like **Paytm** and **Bajaj Finserv** analyze this data to create a detailed financial footprint of individuals, even those without a formal credit history.
- **Hyper-Personalization in E-Commerce:** Online retailers use customer data browsing history, past purchases, and search queries to create highly personalized shopping experiences, which drives sales and customer loyalty.
 - ◆ **Flipkart** and **Myntra** use sophisticated AI and machine learning models to analyze user data.
 - ◆ This allows them to power their recommendation engines ("**Customers also bought...**"), customize the user's homepage with relevant products, and send targeted promotional offers.
- **Informing Public Policy and Governance:** Governments can now use large-scale data to design more effective policies, deliver services efficiently, and optimize the use of public funds.
 - ◆ The **Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN)** is one of the world's largest repositories of business transaction data.
 - ◆ The Indian government analyzes this data to understand economic trends in real-time, forecast tax revenues with greater accuracy, and detect tax evasion.
- **Fueling the Platform Economy:** For many modern digital businesses, data isn't just a supporting asset, it is the core asset.
 - ◆ These platforms create value by connecting different user groups and leveraging the data generated from their interactions.
 - ◆ Logistics companies like **Delhivery** and food delivery platforms like **Zomato** and **Swiggy** have their entire business model built on data.
- **Ambiguity over Data Ownership:** Does it lie with individuals, platforms, or the state? is often confusing. This raises the risk of data colonisation by foreign corporations.
- **Privacy concerns:** Privacy concerns remain, with issues such as **consent fatigue**- **Consent fatigue** is the exhaustion and apathy users feel from constant, repetitive requests to provide consent for data collection and use, leading them to agree to terms without fully understanding them.
 - ◆ **Profiling**, and **state surveillance**. Furthermore, concentration of data among big technology firms risks deepening the digital divide
 - ◆ AI algorithms according to several studies cause addictive behavior and **mental health challenges** like **ADHD**.

Building a Trustworthy Data Economy:

- **Reinforce Regulation:** Enforce strict competition laws to check the **dominance of Big Tech**.
 - ◆ **Localise critical and sensitive data** to protect national security and sovereignty.
- **Citizen-Centric Data Ownership:** Treat individuals as the rightful owners of personal data, **with platforms acting as fiduciaries**.
 - ◆ Expand frameworks like the **Account Aggregator to enable consent-based**, portable, and secure data sharing.
- **Robust Privacy and Regulatory Safeguards:** Ensure strict enforcement of the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023** with an independent regulator.
 - ◆ Building upon the **Supreme Court's Puttaswamy (2017) principle** that privacy is a core of dignity and liberty.

Conclusion:

As the **World Bank's World Development Report 2021: Data for Better Lives** observes, data is not just a by-product of activity, but a new form of capital. India's task is to convert this capital into a public good, **while upholding dignity, ensuring equity, and safeguarding sovereignty**. Only then can the data revolution (**Data as a new soil**) truly serve as the foundation for **inclusive and sustainable growth**.

Challenges of Regulation, Ownership, and Privacy

- **Regulatory Overlap and Compliance Issues:** Regulatory overlap across the IT Act, RBI norms, and the new **Digital Personal Data Protection Act (2023)** complicates compliance.

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23. The Human Development Index (HDI) shows potential, while the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) reveals performance. Discuss with reference to India. (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about HDI and IHDI
- Delve into HDI as an Indicator of Potential
- Highlight IHDI as Reflection of Real Performance
- Suggest measures to move towards Inclusive growth.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

The **Human Development Index (HDI)**, introduced by **UNDP**, measures a country's potential in terms of health, education, and standard of living. However, when **adjusted for inequality**, the **Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI)** reflects the actual performance experienced by people.

Body:

HDI: Indicator of Potential

- **Improving Rank and Value:** India's HDI rank improved from **133 (2022)** to **130 (2023)**, with the value rising from **0.676 to 0.685**, inching closer to the "high human development" threshold.
- **Long-Term Progress:** Since 1990, India's HDI value has risen by over **53%**, faster than global and South Asian averages, highlighting potential for inclusive growth.
- **Policy Successes:** Initiatives such as **Ayushman Bharat, PM Poshan, Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, and Skill India** have improved health, education, and livelihood outcomes.

IHDI: Reflection of Real Performance

- **High Inequality Losses:** India suffers a **30.7% loss in HDI due to inequality**, highlighting the gap between potential and lived experience.
- **Income Disparities:** The poorest **40% hold just 20.2% of national income**, while the richest **10% hold 25.5%**, reflecting a skewed distribution.
- **Gender Inequality:** Persistent **gaps in female labour force participation**, wage disparity, and educational access reduce the effective gains in human development.

- **Regional Imbalances:** Southern and western states often outperform northern and eastern ones, creating uneven development landscapes.

Towards Inclusive Human Development

- **Inclusive Growth Policies:** Strengthen redistributive measures like targeted subsidies and progressive taxation.
 - **Focus on Education & Skills:** Improve quality education and vocational training to bridge opportunity gaps.
 - **Gender Mainstreaming:** Promote women's workforce participation through childcare support, flexible employment, and safety measures.
 - **Regional Balancing:** Prioritize lagging states through differential allocation of central funds and infrastructural push.
- Data-driven Governance:** Use real-time disaggregated data to track inequality and fine-tune policies.

Conclusion:

India's rising HDI highlights the potential of its human capital, but the significant loss in IHDI underscores the gap in performance due to inequalities. Bridging this gap **requires sustained efforts towards inclusive growth, equitable opportunities, and targeted social policies**, ensuring that the benefits of human development reach all sections of society.

24. "India faces significant food wastage due to inefficiencies in the movement of produce from farms to consumers." Examine the role of a farm-to-fork supply chain in ensuring food security and minimising post-harvest losses in India. (150 words)

Approach :

- Briefly introduce the issues of food wastage in India.
- Examine the role of a farm-to-fork supply chain in ensuring food security and minimising post-harvest losses in India.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

Introduction:

India paradoxically suffers from both **food surplus and food insecurity**. The Ministry of Food Processing Industries estimates **annual post-harvest losses at ₹92,000 crore**, with nearly **40% of fruits and vegetables wasted** due to supply

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chain inefficiencies. In this context, the *farm-to-fork supply chain*—ensuring seamless connectivity from production to consumption—becomes crucial for addressing food wastage and strengthening food security.

Body :

Causes of Food Wastage in India

- **Cold Chain Deficit:**
 - ◆ **Less than 10%** of **perishable produce** in India benefits from **temperature-controlled storage or transport** — a critical gap leading to **substantial spoilage**.
 - ◆ **Poor cold chain coverage** particularly affects **fruits, vegetables, dairy, and fish**, resulting in **rapid deterioration** from **harvest to market**.
- **Transport Bottlenecks:**
 - ◆ **FAO and NABCONS studies** indicate **annual post-harvest losses** for major crops:
 - **Fruits:** up to **15%** (**guava worst affected**), typical range **6–15%**
 - **Pulses:** up to **6.74%**
 - **Cereals:** up to **5.92%**
 - ◆ **Inadequate refrigerated transport** and **long-haul delays** expose highly perishable items to **spoilage** during transit.
- **Fragmented Supply Chains:**
 - ◆ **Multiple intermediaries** and **poor supply chain integration** result in **price markups, inefficiency, and wastage** — **household and retail food waste** in India is estimated at **78 million tonnes per year**.
 - ◆ **Perishable commodities** lose **quality and value** as **delays mount** across **fragmented supply and distribution steps**.
- **Price Volatility and Distress Sales:**
 - ◆ **Perishables**, notably **tomatoes and onions**, suffer from **seasonal price swings** and **supply gluts**.
 - ◆ **Farmers** are often forced into **distress sales** due to a lack of **cold storage** or **affordable holding options**.
- **Market volatility** means farmers may earn **far below retail market price**, discouraging investments in

improved post-harvest management and further **exacerbating losses**.

Role of Farm-to-Fork Supply Chain in Minimising Wastage

- **Efficient Logistics & Cold Chain** – Investments in refrigerated vans, warehouses, and cold storage reduce spoilage. Example: *Amul's dairy cooperative network*.
- **Direct Farmer–Consumer Linkages** – *Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)* and *e-NAM* ensure better prices and reduce intermediaries.
- **Digital Platforms** – Agri-tech startups like *Ninjacart* connect farmers with retailers using AI-driven logistics, reducing transit losses.
- **Food Processing & Value Addition** – *Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana* and *Mega Food Parks* promote agro-processing to extend shelf life.
- **Policy Initiatives** – Reforms in APMC Acts, Operation Greens (“TOP to Total”) stabilising perishable crop prices.
- **Contribution to Food Security :**
 - ◆ **Increased food availability** by reducing wastage without expanding cultivation.
 - ◆ **Nutritional security** through better retention of perishables.
 - ◆ **Enhanced farmer incomes** via direct market access, reducing poverty-driven food insecurity.
 - ◆ **Alignment with SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption)**.

Challenges Ahead

- **High capital costs** of cold chain infrastructure.
- **Small landholdings** limiting farmers’ bargaining power.
- **Policy contradictions** between APMC regulations and direct marketing models.

Digital divide restricting farmer access to e-platforms.

Conclusion :

A robust *farm-to-fork supply chain* is indispensable for bridging India’s paradox of hunger amidst abundance. Strengthening FPOs, scaling up cold chain infrastructure under the **Agri Infra Fund (₹1 lakh crore)**, and adopting global best practices like **Japan’s Just-in-Time delivery model** or **Israel’s agri-logistics innovations** are critical. As **Norman Borlaug**

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aptly stated, *“You can’t build a peaceful world on empty stomachs.”* India must leverage supply chain reforms to secure both farmers’ livelihoods and citizens’ nutrition.

Biodiversity and Environment

25. Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS) is often described as a “bridge technology” in the global transition to net-zero. Examine its potential and challenges in the Indian context. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about the CCUS Technology
- Delve into CCUS as a “Bridge Technology”
- Highlight the Potential of CCUS and associated challenges for India
- Suggest Measures to move towards Effective Utilization of CCUS Technology
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS) refers to a suite of technologies that **trap carbon dioxide from large emission sources or directly from the air**, followed by its long-term underground storage (CCS) or conversion into value-added products (CCU).

- As the world transitions towards net zero, and with **India’s own target set for 2070**, CCUS is seen as a vital pillar of a diversified decarbonisation strategy, especially for sectors where emissions are hard to eliminate.

Body:

CCUS as a “Bridge Technology”

Role	Description
Time-Bridge	It provides a pathway for gradual phase-down of fossil fuels, rather than an immediate and disruptive phase-out, giving time for renewables and other clean energy technologies (like Green Hydrogen) to scale up and stabilize the grid.

Sector-Bridge

It is the only commercially viable solution for **“hard-to-abate” sectors** (e.g., **Cement, Steel, Fertilizers**), whose emissions are inherent to the chemical process and cannot be eliminated by simply switching to renewable electricity.

Potential of CCUS:

- **Decarbonising hard-to-abate sectors:** Industries such as **cement, steel, refining, chemicals, fertilisers and certain process industries** emit concentrated CO₂ streams that are difficult to eliminate through electrification alone.
 - ◆ **India is the world’s second-largest producer of steel and cement.** CCUS allows deep cuts in these sectors while alternative processes scale up.
- **Power-sector flexibility and transitions:** Coal dominates India’s energy mix, and energy security is paramount.
 - ◆ Where unabated fossil generation persists for grid stability or as transitional capacity, **CCUS on thermal plants can reduce emissions and buy time while renewables, storage and grid upgrades scale.**
- **Enabling low-carbon fuels and chemicals:** Captured CO₂ can be used (with low-carbon hydrogen) to produce **synthetic fuels, methanol, urea or polymers**, helping decarbonise transport and chemicals where direct electrification is hard.
- **Negative emissions pathways:** When paired with **bioenergy (BECCS) or Direct Air Capture (DAC) powered by renewables**, CCUS can deliver **net negative emissions**, useful for offsetting residual emissions and meeting long-term carbon budgets.
- **Industrial clusters & job creation:** Clustered **CCUS hubs (capture sites + shared transport/storage)** can create **skilled green jobs in India**, stimulate manufacturing of capture equipment and support a domestic supply chain.

Key Challenges & Constraints for India:

- **High cost & energy penalty:** Capture technologies are **capital-intensive** and raise operating costs, they also impose an energy penalty (lower net plant efficiency).

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Without strong carbon pricing or subsidies, economics are weak.

- **Infrastructure needs:** CCUS requires networks for **CO₂ transport (pipelines) and secure storage sites**. Building a safe, integrated transport and storage network involves high upfront costs and long lead times.
- **Geological storage assessment & liability:** India needs comprehensive, publicly available **geological appraisals** to identify suitable reservoirs, and clear laws on long-term liability, ownership and monitoring of stored CO₂.
- **Opportunity cost & technology choice:** Investment in CCUS could divert scarce public and private capital away from cheaper options like renewables, grid storage and energy efficiency if not carefully prioritised.
- **Limited domestic industry & R&D:** Indigenous capability for large-scale capture systems, compressors, and CO₂-tolerant materials is nascent, requiring R&D and manufacturing scale-up.

Towards Effective Utilization of CCUS Technology:

- **Create a clear national CCUS strategy:** Map point sources, potential storage sites, and identify priority industrial clusters for early hubs. Publish a roadmap with timelines and responsibilities.
- **Introduce credible carbon pricing / fiscal incentives:** Combine **carbon pricing, tax credits, capital subsidies, viability gap funding** and production incentives for low-carbon products to correct market failures.
- **Develop CCUS hubs & shared infrastructure:** Promote public-private regional hubs where several industries share capture, transport and storage to reduce cost and risk.
- **Regulatory & legal framework:** Enact **laws for site permitting, CO₂ property rights, long-term liability and monitoring & verification standards**. Define liability transfer timelines and a stewardship regime.
- **Investment in R&D and domestic manufacturing:** Support research into lower-cost capture solvents, solid sorbents, membrane technologies, DAC, and scale-up of compressors and pipeline fabrication.
- **Integration with hydrogen & industrial decarbonisation:** Align CCUS policy with green/blue

hydrogen strategies and industrial decarbonisation plans to create synergies (e.g., **blue hydrogen with CCS as transitional option**).

Conclusion:

CCUS is not a silver bullet but a practical bridge, particularly for India's hard-to-abate industries and for delivering negative emissions where required. Its potential is significant but conditional: success depends on **lowering costs through scale, creating enabling policy and fiscal frameworks, building infrastructure and domestic capability**, and ensuring transparent regulation and community consent.

Internal Security

26. Analyse the factors contributing to insurgency in India's North-Eastern states and assess the effectiveness of government interventions and peace accords in the past decade. (250 words)

Approach :

- Provide a brief introduction to the issue of insurgency in India's North-Eastern states.
- Analyse the factors contributing to insurgency in India's North-Eastern states.
- Assess the effectiveness of government interventions and peace accords in the past decade.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

Introduction:

India's North-East, comprising eight states and sharing over **5,400 km of international borders** with China, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Bhutan, has historically been a hotspot of insurgency. Ethnic diversity, political alienation, and socio-economic neglect have fueled unrest. While the Ministry of Home Affairs reports an **80% decline in insurgency incidents between 2014 and 2023**, underlying causes remain unresolved, making the issue a critical concern for internal security and national integration.

Body:

Factors Contributing to Insurgency :

- **Historical-Political Alienation:**
 - ◆ Colonial-era policies of "excluded areas" created mistrust toward mainstream governance.

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- ◆ Post-independence, delayed political integration and arbitrary state boundaries fueled separatist aspirations (e.g., Naga independence demand, ULFA's Assam sovereignty).

- **Ethnic Identity and Demographic Concerns:**

- ◆ Over **200 ethnic groups** with distinct languages and traditions.
- ◆ Fear of demographic dilution from migration, particularly from Bangladesh into Assam and Tripura, driving movements like the **Assam Agitation (1979–85)** and current NRC-CAA protests.

- **Socio-Economic Marginalisation:**

- ◆ North-East contributes only around **3% to India's GDP** despite its strategic location.
- ◆ High unemployment among the youth population.
- ◆ Perceptions of resource exploitation: crude oil in Assam and hydroelectric projects in Arunachal, with limited local benefits.

- **Geographical and External Factors:**

- ◆ Porous borders facilitate arms, narcotics, and insurgent movement.
- ◆ Myanmar's Sagaing region long served as a safe haven for Naga and Manipuri insurgents.
- ◆ Chinese alleged support in the 1960s–70s to Naga groups still influences perceptions.

- **Governance Deficit and Security Concerns:**

- ◆ Excessive use of **AFSPA (1958)** created mistrust; allegations of human rights violations persist.
- ◆ Weak institutions and corruption hinder grievance redressal.
- ◆ Inter-ethnic tensions, like the **2023 Manipur conflict**, highlight fragile governance mechanisms.

Government Interventions and Peace Accords (2014–2024)

- **Peace Agreements:**

- ◆ **Bodo Accord (2020):** Created Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR), greater autonomy, development funds.
- ◆ **Naga Framework Agreement (2015):** Recognized Naga distinct identity; negotiations on flag/constitution unresolved.

- ◆ **Karbi Anglong Agreement (2021):** Over 1,000 cadres laid down arms, with enhanced autonomy provisions.

- **Security Measures:**

- ◆ AFSPA was revoked from large parts of Assam, Nagaland, and Manipur (**2022–23**).
- ◆ Intensified counter-insurgency operations, border fencing, and better coordination with Myanmar and Bangladesh.

- **Development and Connectivity Push:**

- ◆ **Act East Policy** linked the North-East to ASEAN markets.
- ◆ **North-East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS)** and PM-DevINE targeted roads, healthcare, renewable energy.
- ◆ Bogibeel Bridge, Dhola-Sadiya Bridge, and Kaladan Multi-Modal Project improved connectivity.

- **Institutional Mechanisms:**

- ◆ Strengthened North Eastern Council (NEC).
- ◆ Enhanced devolution through Finance Commissions and Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) allocations.

Effectiveness:

- **Achievements:**

- ◆ Insurgency incidents reduced by 80%, civilian deaths fell by **90% between 2014–2023**.
- ◆ Over **9,000 militants surrendered** in the last decade.
- ◆ AFSPA rollback to many areas improved trust.

- **Limitations:**

- ◆ Naga issue unresolved; peace talks stalled on core demands.
- ◆ **Ethnic violence in Manipur (2023)** revealed deep-rooted identity conflicts.
- ◆ Overemphasis on security; development often uneven or delayed.
- ◆ Border management remains weak; Golden Triangle drug trade rising.

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Conclusion:

While accords and developmental pushes have shown results, sustainable peace requires addressing identity, governance, and livelihood concerns. A **multi-pronged approach, political dialogue, economic empowerment, cultural recognition, and robust security cooperation**, remains the only viable path to lasting peace in the North-East.

Disaster Management

27. Do structural interventions such as embankments and dams provide long-term solutions to floods, or do they create new vulnerabilities? Critically evaluate. (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about the vulnerability of floods in India
- Delve into the Merits of Structural Interventions and Vulnerabilities and Challenges Created
- Highlight what measures can be adopted to move towards Sustainable Flood Management
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

Floods are one of India's most frequent and destructive disasters, as evident from the recent Punjab floods. Over 40 Mha ha of land in India is prone to flooding (NDMA).

- Structural interventions like embankments and dams have been central to India's flood management strategy. While they provide immediate relief and co-benefits, **their long-term sustainability is contested**.

Body:**Merits of Structural Interventions:**

- **Flood Moderation and Protection:** Dams like Hirakud (Mahanadi) and Bhakra-Nangal (Sutlej-Beas) have reduced peak flood discharges downstream.
- **Multi-purpose benefits:** Hydropower, irrigation, and water supply ensure year-round benefits.
 - ◆ Aid in drought mitigation and stabilize agriculture.
- **Critical buffers for dense settlements:** Urban/town embankments and ring bunds protect assets where retreat is infeasible.

- **Psychological assurance and economic growth:** Perceived safety encourages infrastructure investment in flood-prone areas.

Vulnerabilities and Challenges Created:

- **Levee Effect & Catastrophic Risk:** Embankments encourage **encroachment in protected floodplains**, when they **breach**, losses are extreme.
 - ◆ **Kosi breach (2008) near Kusaha (Nepal)** inundated vast areas of north Bihar despite >3,000 km of embankments in the state.
- **Siltation & Bed Aggradation:** Confining rivers accelerates **sediment deposition**, raising riverbeds (**Brahmaputra**), demanding ever-higher levees and causing **drainage congestion** behind embankments.
- **Operational Risks:** Structural interventions, though designed for safety, often face operational challenges and cascading risks.
 - ◆ Poor coordination, **inadequate dam rule curves, and unexpected upstream events (like GLOFs or cloudbursts)** can aggravate floods instead of mitigating them.
 - Example, in 2023, a Glacial Lake Outburst Flood from South Lhonak lake triggered a flash flood that **overtopped/damaged the Chungthang dam**, devastating downstream reaches, illustrating **cascading risks** in high Himalayas.
- **Sediment Starvation Downstream of Dams:** Trapping sediment **erodes deltas and riverbanks (e.g., Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Godavari deltas)**, heightening surge/flood vulnerability.
- **Social-ecological Costs:** Large-scale structural interventions often create long-term social and environmental externalities that weaken resilience instead of strengthening it.
 - ◆ Dams submerge villages, uproot tribal and marginalized groups, leading to livelihood loss and social discontent.
 - **Example: Sardar Sarovar Dam** displaced ~40,000 families despite rehabilitation efforts.

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Towards Sustainable Flood Management:

- **Hybrid Flood Management:** Combine **structural measures** (dams, embankments) with **non-structural approaches** (floodplain zoning, insurance, early warning). This ensures both **short-term protection** and **long-term resilience**.
- **Climate-Resilient Design:** Update **design flood standards**, reservoir operation protocols, and rule curves in line with **intensifying extremes** due to climate change.
 - ◆ **Dam Safety Act, 2021** provides a **legal framework for audits**, but proactive climate integration is needed.
- **Nature-Based Solutions:** Restore **wetlands, mangroves, and natural floodplains** as buffers to absorb excess water and recharge aquifers.
 - ◆ Adopt **setback embankments** instead of continuous levees to give rivers space.
 - ◆ India can learn from Netherland's **"Room for River"** programme.
- **Sediment-Smart Management:** Adopt **sluicing, sediment bypass, and periodic desiltation** to reduce siltation in reservoirs and riverbeds. Designs must align with **river morphology** to avoid raising beds behind embankments
- **Use of Technology and Early Warning Systems:** Deploy **AI-based flood forecasting, satellite monitoring, and mobile-based alerts** for timely evacuation and risk reduction.
- **Community-Based Governance:** Involve local communities in **embankment monitoring, maintenance, and evacuation planning**, ensuring last-mile preparedness.
 - ◆ Build **capacity** through Panchayats, SHGs, and disaster volunteers.

Conclusion

Structural interventions are **necessary but not sufficient**. The way ahead lies in **integrated flood management**—where **well-maintained dams and embankments** are

complemented by ecological restoration, risk zoning, and resilient communities.

28. "The Himalayan region is simultaneously India's water tower and disaster epicenter." Critically examine in light of glacier retreat and hydropower expansion. (250 words)

Approach :

- Introduce with brief information about Himalayas
- Water Tower: Lifeline of the Subcontinent
- Development versus Disaster in the Himalayas
- Balancing Development and Sustainability
- Conclude suitably

Introduction:

The **Himalayas**, often termed the **"Third Pole"**, contain the largest reserves of ice outside the Arctic and Antarctic. They feed major rivers such as the **Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Indus, making them India's water tower**. At the same time, the region is ecologically fragile, geologically young, and seismically active, rendering it a **disaster hotspot**.

Body :**Himalayas as India's Water Tower:**

- **Glacial Melt and Rivers:** The Himalayas sustain perennial river systems critical for food, water, and energy security for over **600 million people in India**.
- **Hydropower Potential:** Government estimates show that the **Himalayas have a potential to generate 115,550 MW of electricity**. It makes the region a cornerstone for India's renewable energy ambitions.
- **Agricultural Dependence:** Irrigation from Himalayan-fed rivers sustains the Indo-Gangetic plains, one of the world's most fertile regions.

Himalayas as Disaster Epicenter:

- **Glacier Retreat:** There is significant decline in glacier mass due to anthropogenic activities, raising risks of **Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs)**
- **Seismic Vulnerability:** The Himalayas lie in **Seismic Zones IV and V**, prone to earthquakes and landslides.

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There has been an increasing trend of disasters in the Himalayan regions.

- **Hydropower Risks:** Projects such as in **Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh** exacerbate slope instability, deforestation, and flash floods as seen in the **Chamoli disaster (2021)**.
- **Unplanned Development and Infrastructure:** The rapid and unplanned development of the Himalayan regions has led to significant rise in the frequency and occurrence of disasters for example **Josimath landslides**.

Balancing Development and Sustainability

- **Reducing Infrastructural Load:** Adopt a “**hydropower-lite**” model with smaller, run-of-the-river projects in order to reduce load on already fragile landforms.

- ◆ Rather than incessant development undertake a sensitive approach towards infrastructural development in the Himalayan landforms.

- **Enhancing Alert Mechanisms:** Strengthen **early warning systems** for GLOFs and landslides.
- **Landform Mapping and Prediction:** Enforce **carrying capacity studies** before new infrastructure.
- **Enhance Coordination:** Promote regional cooperation under initiatives like the **International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)**.

Conclusion:

As the **NITI Aayog's report on Himalayan sustainability** warns, unchecked exploitation could imperil both ecology and livelihoods. A future-ready policy must treat the Himalayas not merely as a resource base, but as a fragile ecosystem requiring **resilient, inclusive, and ecologically sensitive development**.



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GENERAL STUDIES PAPER-4

Theoretical Question

29. Public service is often described as a balance between compassion and detachment. Analyze this statement with suitable examples. (150 words)

Approach :

- Introduce with a relevant quote.
- Compassion in public service.
- Detachment in public service.
- Dangers of imbalance
- Conclude with the way forward.

Introduction:

Public service is rooted in serving citizens with empathy while upholding objectivity. As Kautilya noted in the *Arthashastra*, “*The king shall look to the welfare of his subjects as a father looks after his children.*”

- This calls for compassion i.e., **empathizing with people's suffering and acting to ease it** balanced with detachment, **which ensures impartiality by keeping emotions and biases in check.**

Body :

Compassion in Public Service:

- **Provides Bottom Up Perspective:** Compassion enables administrators to understand lived realities of the poor and marginalized.
- **Ensures Moral Accountability:** Compassion ensures moral accountability and sense of service.
 - ◆ During disasters such as the **Uttarakhand floods**, civil servants displayed compassion through proactive rescue and rehabilitation.
- **Building Trust and Legitimacy:** By showing genuine care, public servants foster trust between the government and the people, particularly marginalized communities.
 - ◆ Citizens are more likely to cooperate when they perceive fairness and empathy in administration.
 - ◆ Policy level intervention to ensure compassion, eg. Welfare schemes like **PM Garib Kalyan Yojana** demand empathetic outreach to ensure inclusion.

- **Promoting Social Equity:** A compassionate approach prioritizes welfare and addresses inequalities, **ensuring that developmental programs reach the needy effectively rather than being applied mechanically.**

Detachment in Public Service:

- **Guarding Against Personal Biases:** Detachment ensures that **administrators do not allow personal likes, dislikes, or relationships** to influence official decisions.
- **Balancing Compassion with Objectivity:** While compassion drives empathy, detachment ensures that actions remain fair and principled, avoiding partiality or emotional excess.
 - ◆ For instance, in ration distribution, eligibility norms must be applied uniformly despite individual appeals.
- **Maintaining Professional Resilience:** Detachment helps officials handle stress, criticism, or challenging situations calmly, enabling sustained effectiveness in public service.

Dangers of Imbalance

- **Excessive Compassion:** risk of **favoritism, policy dilution, and fiscal imprudence.** E.g. Indiscriminate loan waivers may strain the economy.
- **Excessive Detachment:** **bureaucratic apathy, erosion of public trust, and alienation.** E.g. rigid eviction drives without rehabilitation can deepen social unrest.

Conclusion:

A civil servant must strike a **fine balance—avoiding excessive compassion that leads to favoritism and excessive detachment that results in bureaucratic indifference.** Leaders like **Lal Bahadur Shastri** exemplified this equilibrium by empathizing with farmers while ensuring disciplined food management during shortages. Ultimately, as **Gandhiji** reminded us to “**recall the face of the poorest,**” compassion must guide decisions, while constitutional duty ensures necessary detachment and impartial governance.

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30. "Conscience is the voice of the soul, not the echo of society." Analyze the role of conscience in decision-making for public servants. (150 words)

Approach:

- Briefly explain what is conscience.
- Write role of conscience in public service
- Delve into Dangers of ignoring conscience
- Suggest how to ensure conscience in public service
- Conclude suitably

Introduction:

Conscience refers to the **inner moral compass** that guides individuals in distinguishing right from wrong, beyond external pressures or societal expectations. For public servants, conscience plays a pivotal role in ensuring decisions are not just legal, but also ethical.

Body:

Role of Conscience in Public Service

- **Moral Compass:** Conscience prevents ethical compromise when laws or rules remain silent. For example, **Ashok Khemka, IAS**, annulled fraudulent land deals despite political pressure.
 - ◆ Similarly, **T.V. Anupama, IAS**, took a firm stand against powerful lobbies in Kerala, seizing adulterated food items despite resistance, guided by her inner moral conviction.
- **Courage to Uphold Integrity:** Conscience instills courage to act with integrity in the face of risks.
 - ◆ **Satyendra Dubey**, a whistleblower in the Golden Quadrilateral project, exposed corruption despite grave personal danger.
 - ◆ Likewise, **K. Vasuki, IAS**, while serving as **Collector of Thiruvananthapuram**, resisted political interference in waste management, showing moral courage rooted in conscience.
- **Humanizing Administration:** Conscience enables administrators to move beyond rigid procedures and connect with people empathetically.
 - ◆ During the **2018 Kerala floods**, civil servants mobilized relief, coordinated with communities, and provided immediate support, demonstrating compassion and empathy guided by conscience.

- **Balancing Law and Justice:** **Justice Krishna Iyer's judicial philosophy** frequently highlighted the idea that law without conscience undermines justice.

- ◆ Officers apply conscience to interpret policies in ways that uphold fairness and dignity.

Dangers of Ignoring Conscience

- **Mechanical Obedience and Complicity in Wrongdoing:** Blind conformity to orders can make officers silent collaborators in corruption or injustice (e.g., **misuse of authority during the Emergency 1975**, or role of officials in major scams).
- **Apathy towards Citizens and Erosion of Trust:** Absence of conscience makes governance insensitive, leading to alienation (e.g., rigid eviction drives without rehabilitation). This gradually erodes **public trust** in administration.
- **Institutional and Ethical Decay:** If conscience is consistently ignored, it normalizes unethical practices, corrodes institutional integrity, and undermines democratic accountability (e.g., **systemic corruption in recruitment scams**).

Measures for Ensuring Conscience in Public Service:

- **Ethical Training:** Build **moral reasoning through enhancing and sensitizing training curriculum**, emphasizing on grassroot connect through village immersions and direct interaction with marginalized communities.
- **Strengthening Accountability:** Laws such as the Right to Information (RTI) and the Lokpal Act promote transparency in governance, compelling public officers to act responsibly and conscientiously.
 - ◆ By **making administrative actions visible to citizens**, these frameworks reinforce ethical decision-making.
- **Personal Reflection & Values:** Encouraging meditation, self-reflection, and ethical introspection allows individuals to align actions with core values.
 - ◆ **Recalling Gandhiji's "Talisman"**, which urges considering the poorest and weakest while making decisions, fosters empathy and social responsibility in public service.

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- **Institutional Safeguards:** The **Whistleblower Protection Act** must ensure anonymity, quick inquiry, and protection from harassment.

- ◆ **Citizen Charters** should include measurable service standards and penalties for delays.
- ◆ **Vigilance bodies** like Lokayuktas and CVC need more independence and digital tools for transparency.

Conclusion:

Thus, conscience is not a passive echo of societal norms but the active voice of moral responsibility. **As Mahatma Gandhi said, "In matters of conscience, the law of the majority has no place."** For public servants, aligning decisions with conscience fosters integrity, justice, and people-centric governance, strengthening the ethical foundations of democracy.

31. Can strict adherence to duty ever override compassion? Analyze with reference to Kantian ethics and public administration. (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about the dilemma of duty and compassion
- Delve into the Kantian Ethics Perspective
- Delve into the Public Administration Perspective
- Give critical analysis in short and conclude suitably.

Introduction

The dilemma between **duty and compassion** has been a recurring theme in both **philosophy and governance**. While **Immanuel Kant's deontological ethics** emphasizes unconditional adherence to duty based on universal moral law (**categorical imperative**), public administration often demands a balance between rule-bound conduct and humane consideration for citizens.

Body:

Kantian Ethics Perspective

- **Primacy of Duty:**
 - ◆ For Kant, moral worth arises only when actions are guided by duty, not by emotions like compassion.

- ◆ **Example: Telling the truth is obligatory** even if lying could save someone's life, since truth is a categorical imperative.

Compassion as Secondary:

- ◆ Compassion, being contingent on emotions, lacks universality.
- ◆ Hence, **Kantian ethics** allows strict duty to override compassion if both come into conflict.

Public Administration Perspective

Role of Duty:

- ◆ Civil servants are bound by **constitutional values, rule of law, and codes of conduct**. Strict adherence to duty ensures impartiality, consistency, and accountability.
- ◆ **Example:** Denying welfare benefits to an ineligible applicant despite their distress, to uphold fairness and legality.

Role of Compassion:

- ◆ Compassion is integral to **citizen-centric governance**. Policies like the **Right to Education Act** or **Ayushman Bharat** embody compassion within legal frameworks.
- ◆ Excessive rigidity in applying rules can lead to injustice, alienation, and erosion of trust in governance.

Balancing the Two:

- ◆ **Nolan Committee Principles (objectivity, integrity, accountability)** require strict duty adherence.
- ◆ But initiatives like **Mission Karmayogi** and the **Sevottam model** emphasize empathy and responsiveness.
- ◆ Administrative ethics suggests a **pragmatic middle path**, where duty is the guiding principle, but compassion tempers its application.

Critical Analysis

- **Merits of Duty over Compassion:** Ensures rule of law, prevents arbitrariness, upholds equality.
- **Risks of Excessive Duty:** May lead to mechanical governance and "red-tapism."

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- **Role of Compassion:** Acts as a corrective lens to interpret duty in a humane and context-sensitive manner.

Conclusion

While **Kantian ethics** privileges duty over compassion, modern public administration requires **synthesis**: duty provides structure, while compassion ensures sensitivity. A responsible civil servant should act within the framework of law and duty, but **interpret and implement them with compassion**, thereby harmonizing efficiency with empathy.

32. Can true impartiality coexist with empathy, or does empathy inevitably lead to bias? Critically analyze in the context of public service. (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about Impartiality and empathy
- Give key arguments to Impartiality and Empathy in Public Service
- Highlight arguments in favour and against Does Empathy Lead to Bias?
- Give critical analysis in short and conclude suitably.

Introduction:

Impartiality and empathy are two essential yet seemingly conflicting values in public service. **Impartiality** demands neutrality, fairness, and adherence to rules, while **empathy** requires understanding and responding to the needs and emotions of citizens.

Body:

Impartiality in Public Service

- Ensures **fairness and equal treatment** of citizens.
- Anchored in **constitutional principles** like **Article 14 (equality before law)** and the **rule of law**.
- Upholds **administrative justice**, preventing favoritism, nepotism, or arbitrariness.

Empathy in Public Service

- Recognized as a core value in **Nolan Committee principles (selflessness, objectivity)** and **Second ARC recommendations**.

- Enhances **citizen-centric governance**, making policies responsive to vulnerable groups.

- ◆ **Example:** During disasters, empathetic officers go beyond rigid rules to provide relief to the needy.

Does Empathy Lead to Bias?

- **Arguments that empathy can cause bias:**

- ◆ May result in **preferential treatment** (e.g., favoring an individual based on emotional appeal).
- ◆ Risk of **subjectivity** in decision-making, undermining rule of law.
- ◆ Could lead to inconsistency and accusations of unfairness.

- **Arguments that empathy strengthens impartiality:**

- ◆ Empathy ensures policies do not become **mechanical or exclusionary**.
- ◆ Enables administrators to **understand structural disadvantages** (e.g., gender, caste, disability) and apply rules more equitably.
- ◆ **Example:** Targeted welfare schemes (e.g., **scholarships for SC/ST, Divyangjan initiatives**) are empathetic yet institutionalized to ensure fairness.

Critical Analysis

- **Excess empathy without institutional safeguards** may cause bias and inequity.
- **Strict impartiality without empathy** may lead to alienation.
- The ideal approach is **empathetic impartiality**—where empathy guides understanding of diverse needs but decisions remain within the framework of fairness and constitutional morality.

Conclusion

True impartiality can indeed coexist with empathy if empathy is institutionalized as a guiding principle, not an arbitrary personal emotion. A civil servant must act as a **“firm administrator with a humane heart”**, ensuring rule-based impartiality while exercising empathy to interpret and implement laws justly.

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33. "Social re-engineering through welfare policies requires not only administrative efficiency but also ethical reasoning and critical analysis by civil servants." Discuss with suitable illustrations. (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about Social re-engineering
- Delve into the Indispensable Role of Administrative Efficiency
- Highlight the Necessity of Ethical Reasoning
- Delve into the Importance of Critical Analysis
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

Social re-engineering refers to the state's deliberate efforts to **alter societal structures, values, and behaviors** through policy interventions to achieve broader goals of equity, justice, and development. Welfare policies are the primary instruments for this transformation.

Body:

Indispensable Role of Administrative Efficiency:

Administrative efficiency forms the procedural backbone of any welfare policy. It ensures that the intended benefits reach the right people at the right time. It involves:

- **Targeting and Identification:** Accurately identifying **beneficiaries to prevent inclusion and exclusion errors**.
- **Logistics and Delivery:** Ensuring the timely and **leak-proof delivery of services or goods**.
- **Resource Management:** Utilizing funds and human resources optimally.

Illustration: The transition from a **universal Public Distribution System (PDS) to a Targeted PDS**, and now its further refinement through the '**One Nation, One Ration Card**' scheme, is a testament to the pursuit of administrative efficiency.

Necessity of Ethical Reasoning:

Welfare policies operate in a complex human landscape, often involving vulnerable populations and moral dilemmas that rules and procedures alone cannot address. Ethical reasoning equips a civil servant to **navigate these grey areas with compassion, integrity, and a sense of justice**.

- **Compassion and Empathy:** Bureaucratic rules can be rigid. An ethical civil servant uses empathy to apply them humanely.

◆ **Illustration:** A District Collector implementing the Forest Rights Act, 2006. A purely efficient approach might involve mechanically verifying documents and rejecting claims with minor procedural flaws.

- However, a civil servant guided by **ethical reasoning** would understand the historical injustice faced by tribal communities.

- **Integrity and Impartiality:** Welfare schemes often involve the distribution of scarce resources, making them susceptible to corruption and cronyism.

◆ **Illustration:** When **allocating housing under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana**, an administrator faces immense pressure from local political leaders to favor certain individuals.

- **Ethical reasoning demands impartiality and integrity**, ensuring that allotments are made strictly based on a **transparent, needs-based survey**, thereby upholding the principle of fairness and serving the most destitute.

Importance of Critical Analysis:

- **Contextual Adaptation:** Policies designed at the national level may not be suitable for every local context. Critical analysis allows for necessary adaptations.

◆ **Illustration:** The **MGNREGA scheme mandates employment generation**. An efficient officer would ensure work is provided and wages are paid on time.

- However, a civil servant with **critical analytical skills** in a drought-prone region like Bundelkhand would prioritize and approve projects focused on **water conservation (like check dams and pond deepening)**, even if they are more complex to execute.

- This ensures the scheme not only provides employment but also builds climate-resilient community assets, addressing the root cause of local distress.

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- **Evaluating Unintended Consequences:** Every policy can have unforeseen negative effects. Critical analysis helps in identifying and mitigating these.

◆ **Illustration:** A scheme offering cash transfers to encourage girls' education might be efficiently implemented.

- However, a critical analysis on the ground might reveal that in some patriarchal families, the money is being controlled by male members and not being used for the girl's benefit.
- A civil servant who critically analyzes this outcome can provide crucial feedback to policymakers, suggesting modifications like linking the transfer directly to school-related expenses.

Conclusion:

Social re-engineering through welfare is not a mechanical process of inputs and outputs. It is a deeply human endeavor. While **administrative efficiency** builds the highway for policy delivery, it is **ethical reasoning** that provides the moral compass, and **critical analysis** that steers the vehicle, allowing it to navigate complex terrains and adapt to unforeseen challenges.

34. "Public trust in institutions is often eroded not by the absence of laws, but by the erosion of ethical values." Critically analyse this statement with reference to the challenges of accountability, discretion, and corruption in civil services. (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by justifying the quote with an example
- Give key arguments to Primacy of Ethics Over Law
- Delve into the Challenges Arising from Ethical Erosion in Civil Services
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

Public trust in institutions depends more on ethical conduct than mere legal frameworks. The 2008 financial crisis is a striking example: while laws existed to regulate

banking and financial practices, unethical decisions like issuing subprime loans and manipulating risk, eroded public confidence globally.

Body:

Primacy of Ethics Over Law:

Laws provide a framework for action, but they cannot anticipate every situation. **Ethics**, on the other hand, provide a moral compass that guides a civil servant's conduct, especially in complex and unforeseen circumstances.

- **Laws are reactive, while ethics are proactive.** Laws often emerge in response to a problem, whereas a strong ethical foundation can prevent problems from arising in the first place.
- **Laws can be circumvented, but ethics are internal.** A person with low integrity can find loopholes in the law, but an ethical individual will do the right thing even when no one is watching.

Challenges Arising from Ethical Erosion in Civil Services

- **Accountability:** Accountability is not just legal compliance but moral responsibility towards citizens. Ethical lapses, even if not illegal, diminish public confidence.
 - ◆ Officers may formally follow rules yet **fail to act transparently or respond to citizen needs**.
 - In many Indian bureaucratic scandals, **even where rules exist, selective enforcement or non-implementation has led to loss of faith in institutions** like municipal bodies or public distribution systems.
- **Discretion:** Misuse of discretion for personal or political gains reflects value erosion. When officers prioritize self-interest over public welfare, trust diminishes.
 - ◆ Allocation of **government contracts or licenses without transparency**, even if legally permissible, often leads to accusations of nepotism or favoritism, highlighting the gap between legality and ethical governance.
- **Corruption and Value Erosion:** Corruption is often seen as a breach of law, but more fundamentally, it is a moral failing.

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- ◆ Even in the presence of **anti-corruption laws like the Prevention of Corruption Act**, unethical behaviour persists due to inadequate internalization of public duty.
- ◆ The **2G spectrum or coal allocation cases** show that legal loopholes alone were not the cause; the erosion of ethical standards among officials was central.

Conclusion:

While a strong legal framework is the **skeleton of good governance, ethical values are its lifeblood**. To rebuild and sustain public trust, it is imperative to foster a culture of integrity and ethical conduct within the civil services, ensuring that **accountability is not just a procedural formality but a deeply held value and discretion is exercised with wisdom and fairness**.

35. Do values precede laws, or do laws shape values? Examine with reference to the evolution of ethical norms in society. (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about Value and Laws
- Give Arguments to Values Preceding Laws – The Moral Foundation of Legal Systems
- Give Arguments to Laws Shaping Values – Institutionalizing Ethics Over Time
- Delve into the Evolution of Ethical Norms- A Reciprocal Relationship
- Conclude suitably in a balanced manner.

Introduction:

Values and laws are both foundational to any society. While **values** represent the collective **moral conscience**, **laws formalize acceptable conduct through enforceable codes**. The question of whether **values precede laws or vice versa** is complex, as both have historically influenced each other in the **evolution of ethical norms**.

Body:

Values Preceding Laws – The Moral Foundation of Legal Systems

- **Natural Law Tradition:** Thinkers like *Cicero* argued that **laws (natural law) derive legitimacy from universal moral values** such as justice, liberty, and equality.

Historical Examples:

- ◆ **Abolition of Sati (1829):** Driven by reformers like **Raja Ram Mohan Roy**, rooted in evolving moral values.
- ◆ **Freedom Struggle: Gandhi's Satyagraha** drew from ethical principles of non-violence and truth before codified independence.

Laws Shaping Values – Institutionalizing Ethics Over Time

Transformative Constitutionalism:

- ◆ **Navtej Singh Johar vs Union of India (2018):** Decriminalization of homosexuality helped society re-evaluate deep-rooted prejudices.
- ◆ **Triple Talaq verdict:** Law as a vehicle for gender justice.

Behavioral Change via Legislation:

- ◆ **Swachh Bharat Mission** changed hygiene and public health values.
- ◆ **The Motor Vehicles Act 1988 (with subsequent Amendments)** enforced road safety, shaping civic responsibility.

Legal Prohibitions Internalized Over Time:

- ◆ **Child Marriage, Dowry, and Manual Scavenging:** Once normalized practices, now largely viewed as unethical due to legal reform.

Evolution of Ethical Norms- A Reciprocal Relationship

Aspect	Values Precede Laws	Laws Shape Values
Origin	Moral awakening	Institutional intervention
Driver	Reformers, civil society	Legislature, judiciary
Nature	Bottom-up	Top-down
Example	Environmentalism, women's rights	RTI Act, RTE, LGBTQ+ rights

Conclusion:

In the dynamic ethical landscape of society, **values and laws are interdependent**. While values often act as the **precursors and moral compass** for legal frameworks, laws play a **crucial role in shaping, reinforcing, and modernizing societal values**, especially in a pluralistic and evolving democracy like India. A **just society** requires a **synergy between the moral vision of the people and the normative force of the law**.

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36. "Essential services cannot be treated as commodities." Examine the ethical concerns arising from the commercialization of education and healthcare in modern society. (150 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by briefing about the essential services that forms the core of just and equitable society
- Give Ethical Concerns Arising from Commercialization
- Suggest Measures to Tackle Commercialisation
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

Education and healthcare are fundamental human rights and essential services that form the core of a **just, equitable, and humane society**, as envisioned by the **Preamble** of the Indian Constitution- ensuring **Justice, Equality, and Fraternity**.

- When such services are commodified, they shift from being **rights-based entitlements** to **market-driven products**, undermining the ethical fabric of a welfare state.

Body:

Ethical Concerns Arising from Commercialization

- **Violation of Social and Economic Justice**
 - ◆ **Directive Principles (Art 39, 41, 47)** mandate the State to provide equal access to health and education.
 - ◆ Privatization undermines these ideals by limiting access to those who can afford it.
 - For instance, exorbitant medical bills or tuition fees exclude the poor and marginalized.
- **Equity and Accessibility Issues**
 - ◆ Commodification widens the gap between the rich and the poor.
 - ◆ This translates into **exclusive access to quality private institutions**, leaving public services underfunded and neglected.
- **Erosion of Ethical Purpose**
 - ◆ **Healthcare becomes transactional**: Focus shifts to profit maximization rather than patient well-being.

- E.g., unnecessary surgeries, tests, or prescriptions to boost revenue.

- ◆ **Education becomes a commodity**: Coaching institutes thrive on fear and competition, undermining holistic development and ethical reasoning.

- **Loss of Human Dignity and Autonomy**

- ◆ Treating patients or students as "**clients**" reduces them to means, not ends — violating **Kantian ethics**.
- ◆ The poor may be coerced into debt or unethical choices for access to basic services.

- **Compromise of Professional Ethics**

- ◆ Doctors and teachers are expected to uphold the values of **beneficence, non-maleficence, and integrity**.
- ◆ Market incentives distort professional decisions — leading to conflicts of interest.

- **Decline in Public Trust**

- ◆ Perception of biased, profit-motivated institutions diminishes **trust** in both public and private systems.
- ◆ Undermines the **social contract** between citizens and the State.

- **Violation of the Spirit of the Constitution**

- ◆ **Article 21 (Right to Life)** includes the right to health and education.
- ◆ Treating essential services as commodities risks creating a *market apartheid*, where rights depend on purchasing power.

Measures to Tackle Commercialisation:

- **Strengthen Public Sector Institutions**

- ◆ Increase public spending on health and education to **6% and 2.5% of GDP** respectively (**NEP 2020, National Health Policy 2017**).

- **Ethical Regulations and Oversight**

- ◆ Strengthen regulatory bodies like **National Medical Commission** and **National Accreditation Board for Education** with a focus on ethics and transparency.

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● Ethics in Professional Training

- ◆ Include medical and teaching ethics in professional curricula, promoting service orientation over profit motive.

● Inclusive Models of Service Delivery

- ◆ Implement **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)** with strict ethical guidelines and pro-poor focus.
- ◆ E.g., **Ayushman Bharat** combines public financing with private delivery, aiming for universal coverage.

Conclusion

Essential services like education and healthcare form the **bedrock of a democratic and welfare state**. Their commercialization erodes constitutional values, compromises ethics, and deepens social inequities. The ethical path forward lies in reaffirming the **State's role as a provider of justice, not just a market regulator**. Only then can India uphold the vision of a society based on **dignity, equality, and fraternity**.

Case Study

37. You are posted as the District Magistrate of a metropolitan city. The State Government has recently rolled out an Artificial Intelligence based Predictive Policing System aimed at preventing crime by analyzing large amounts of citizen data such as CCTV feeds, mobile records, and online activity patterns.

While the system has shown early success in reducing street crimes and improving response times, several concerns have emerged. Civil society groups and digital rights activists allege that the technology disproportionately targets marginalized communities, leading to bias and profiling. Citizens have also raised objections over the lack of consent in data collection and the possibility of mass surveillance.

Meanwhile, the Home Department is pressuring you to expand the use of AI tools across all police stations, citing efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and better law enforcement outcomes. At the same time, a section of police officers informally confide that blind reliance on AI tools may undermine their professional judgment and discretion.

You are expected to prepare a report for the State Government balancing the twin imperatives of public safety and protection of fundamental rights.

Questions

- What would be your immediate response to the concerns raised regarding predictive policing?
- Identify and discuss the ethical issues involved in this case.
- If asked to justify the use of AI for public safety, what logical and ethical arguments would you present?
- As a public servant, what measures would you recommend to ensure accountability, fairness, and respect for citizens' rights while using AI in governance?

Approach:

- Introduce the topic
- Write an immediate response to the situation.
- Identify and discuss the ethical issues involved.
- Points in favour of AI for public safety.
- Measures to Ensure Accountability, Fairness, and Protection of Rights of Citizens.
- Write suitable conclusion

Introduction:

As the **District Magistrate of a metropolitan city**, I face the **dual challenge** of ensuring public safety through innovative technologies like **Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based predictive policing**, while simultaneously safeguarding citizens' fundamental rights and addressing concerns of bias, consent, and surveillance. Balancing efficiency in crime prevention with constitutional values is the ethical imperative in this case.

Body:

A. Immediate Response to Concerns

- **Acknowledge the Concerns and Engage with the Stakeholders:** Hold consultations with civil society groups, digital rights activists, and marginalized community representatives to ensure their concerns are formally recorded.
 - ◆ Create a **grievance redressal mechanism** where citizens can report and challenge if required the misuse of predictive policing.
- **Ensure Transparency Measures:** Issue public statements clarifying the scope and safeguards of predictive policing to build trust.

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- ◆ Require every AI generated alert or prediction to be verified and validated by trained police officers before action.
- **Safeguarding Privacy and Consent:** Issue instructions to ensure strict data minimization, only necessary and proportionate data should be collected and used.
 - ◆ Push for **anonymization and encryption of sensitive personal data**, preventing misuse or unauthorized access.
- **Conduct Independent Audit:** Commission a technical and ethical audit of the AI tool to assess risks of bias, profiling, and data misuse.
- **Temporary Safeguards:** Suspend expansion until initial robust safeguards, such as oversight mechanisms and grievance redressal, are instituted.
 - ◆ Embark necessary **pilot projects** and review before on ground expansion.

B. Ethical Issues Involved

- **Privacy vs. Surveillance:** Non-consensual mass data collection challenges the right to privacy (**Justice K.S. Puttaswamy case**).
- **Bias and Discrimination:** Algorithmic profiling may disproportionately target marginalized communities, violating equity and justice.
- **Autonomy and Human Judgment:** Over-reliance on AI risks eroding police discretion, accountability, and human empathy.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** AI's "black box" nature makes it difficult to assign responsibility for wrongful outcomes.
- **Public Trust:** Lack of citizen participation in the decision-making process may erode democratic legitimacy.

C. Justifying AI for Public Safety

- **Efficiency and Proactive Crime Prevention:** AI can analyze vast datasets to detect patterns, reducing crime before it occurs.
- **Resource Optimization:** Enables better deployment of limited police personnel and faster response times.

- **Evidence-Based Policing:** Data-driven insights can minimize arbitrariness compared to subjective judgment.
- **Ethical Justification:** Utilitarian perspective maximizing public safety and reducing harm to the greatest number of people.
- **Comparative Learning:** Many global cities successfully use AI-driven policing under strict oversight, showing it can work if regulated.

D. Measures to Ensure Accountability, Fairness, and Protection of Rights of Citizens.

- **Rule of Law & Oversight:** Establish independent regulatory authority to oversee AI use in policing, with parliamentary/state legislature reporting.
- **Algorithmic Transparency:** Mandate disclosure of AI models, training datasets, and decision-making criteria.
- **Bias Mitigation:** Ensure periodic third-party audits and inclusion of diverse datasets to minimize systemic discrimination.
- **Data Protection:** Align usage with the **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023** ensuring informed consent, anonymization, and limited data retention.
- **Human-in-the-Loop:** Make AI an assistive tool, not a replacement — final decisions must rest with accountable police officers.
- **Citizen Grievance Mechanism:** Create complaint redressal forums where individuals can challenge AI-based profiling or actions.
- **Capacity Building:** Train police officers in ethics of technology use, digital rights, and responsible AI practices.

If deployed with **informed consent, oversight, and accountability**, predictive policing can balance public safety with citizens' rights, ensuring legitimacy in a democracy.

Conclusion

As **Aristotle** observed, "Law is reason, free from passion." Similarly, technology must serve justice without bias. **Predictive policing can be a valuable tool for public safety**, but only if deployed with transparency, accountability, and strict adherence to constitutional safeguards. As District Magistrate, my role is to ensure that innovation strengthens not undermines democracy and citizens' trust.

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38. Arjun is an IAS officer posted as District Magistrate (DM) in a backward district. The district has recently been declared as an “Aspirational District” and is receiving special funds for education, health, and infrastructure development.

During a routine review, Arjun discovers that a large portion of the education funds have been diverted by middle-level officials to construct a new VIP Guest House. The justification given is that frequent visits of ministers and senior bureaucrats require better accommodation facilities, which indirectly helps the district by attracting more attention and projects.

Arjun confronts the officials, but they argue that:

- The project has political backing and halting it will upset powerful leaders.
- The guest house is “technically within public interest.”
- Exposing the misuse might delay other ongoing schemes due to political retaliation.

At the same time, Arjun receives a complaint from local civil society groups that several schools lack even basic facilities like toilets, clean drinking water, and teachers. He realizes that continuing the misuse of funds will directly harm the education of children, worsening inequality.

If he resists, he risks straining relations with political leaders, possible transfer, and jeopardizing his ability to work in the district. If he complies, the basic rights of children will be sacrificed.

Questions

- What are the ethical dilemmas faced by Arjun in this case?
- If you were guiding young civil servants on this case, what ethical principles and leadership qualities would you emphasize for handling such dilemmas in public life?
- Suggest the most appropriate course of action for Arjun, balancing administrative pragmatism with ethical responsibility.

Introduction:

Arjun, an IAS officer posted in a backward district recently designated as an **Aspirational District**, discovers

misuse of education funds diverted to construct a **VIP Guest House**. This raises a **conflict between upholding ethical governance and managing political pressures**, as continuing the diversion harms children’s education while resisting it risks administrative and political repercussions.

Body:

- What are the ethical dilemmas faced by Arjun in this case?

• Conflict between Public Interest and Political Pressure:

- ◆ Diverting education funds to build a VIP Guest House benefits political leaders and bureaucrats but directly harms the education of children.
- ◆ Arjun must decide whether to prioritize **children’s rights and public welfare** or **maintain political goodwill** for administrative ease.

• Short-term Administrative Convenience vs Long-term Ethical Responsibility:

- ◆ Compliance with the officials’ justification may avoid immediate political backlash and ensure smooth execution of other projects.
- ◆ However, it compromises **ethical governance** and violates the principle of **responsible use of public funds**, affecting long-term social development.

• Rule of Law vs Expediency:

- ◆ Stopping the misuse of funds aligns with legal and constitutional duty (funds meant for education must be used for education).
- ◆ Ignoring the violation for political expediency challenges **Arjun’s commitment to law and justice** and risks normalizing corruption.

• Equity and Social Justice vs Fear of Repercussion:

- ◆ Allowing the diversion of funds exacerbates **educational inequality** in a backward district.
- ◆ Resisting misuse may risk **transfer, career setbacks, or retaliation**, posing a personal ethical challenge.

• Ethics of Accountability vs Pragmatism:

- ◆ Reporting or halting the project ensures accountability and transparency.
- ◆ Choosing pragmatism might maintain short-term peace but violates **moral duty towards vulnerable sections of society**.

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- (b) If you were guiding young civil servants on this case, what ethical principles and leadership qualities would you emphasize for handling such dilemmas in public life?

Ethical Principles:

- **Integrity:** They must act honestly and resist the diversion of education funds, even if the guest house has political backing.
- **Public Interest and Social Justice:** The primary duty is to ensure children in backward districts receive proper education, clean drinking water, and basic facilities.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** Misuse of funds must be checked, and decisions documented to uphold public trust.
- **Rule of Law:** Funds allocated for education must be used for that purpose; bending rules for expediency undermines governance.
- **Courage and Moral Fortitude:** Standing against middle-level officials and political pressure, despite possible personal or career risks, reflects ethical leadership.

Leadership Qualities:

- **Citizen-Centric Decision-Making:** Prioritize the welfare of students over temporary administrative or political convenience.
 - **Courageous Communication:** Engage tactfully with political leaders and officials to redirect funds ethically.
 - **Resilience:** Maintain ethical standards despite threats of transfer, retaliation, or strained relations.
 - **Visionary Leadership:** Focus on long-term educational and social development rather than short-term political gains.
- (c) Suggest the most appropriate course of action for Arjun, balancing administrative pragmatism with ethical responsibility.
- **Ensure Funds Serve Their Intended Purpose:** Prioritize allocation of education funds for critical needs like toilets, clean drinking water, teachers, and learning resources, protecting children's fundamental right to education.

- **Evidence-Based Advocacy:** Prepare a **data-driven report** demonstrating the adverse impact of fund diversion on educational outcomes.
 - ◆ Use this report to engage **senior authorities** and relevant stakeholders without creating unnecessary political friction.
- **Diplomatic Stakeholder Engagement:** Involve local civil society, school committees, and politically influential actors to **build consensus** for ethical fund utilization.
 - ◆ Frame the argument in terms of **long-term district development and national priorities**, not confrontation.
- **Leverage Legal and Policy Instruments:** Cite the **Aspirational District Programme, financial regulations, and RTE Act** to justify halting misuse.
 - ◆ Suggest alternative solutions for VIP accommodation that do not compromise essential services.
- **Protect Administrative Credibility:** Follow **formal reporting channels**, maintain transparency, and document all decisions.
 - ◆ This ensures ethical compliance while reducing personal and professional risk.

Conclusion:

Arjun should **uphold integrity and public duty by ensuring education funds serve their intended purpose**. By prioritizing the welfare of children over political expediency, **he embodies the ethical principle of "public interest above personal or political gain"**, demonstrating that ethical leadership **strengthens trust, accountability, and long-term development**.

39. You are Rahul, an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer posted as the District Development Officer in an agrarian district hit by seasonal unemployment and distress migration. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) has been a lifeline here—providing wage employment and creating rural assets. Recently, however, local activists and a whistleblower collective have compiled a dossier alleging massive corruption in MNREGA implementation across several Gram Panchayats.

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The dossier alleges the following irregularities: ghost beneficiaries and fake job-cards on muster rolls; inflated measurement and bills for rural works (roads, water harvesting structures) with poor or no physical progress; collusion between local contractors, panchayat functionaries and a few junior officials who split commissions; delayed wage payments that force workers to accept bribes for expedited pay; and deliberate misclassification of work to route funds to private contractors. A recent Social Audit showed many assets either not created or of sub-standard quality. Previous audit notes from the State Rural Development Department had flagged similar issues but resulted in token action.

A Central Ministry team is scheduled to visit the district next week to assess MNREGA outcomes. You are instructed by your political superiors and some senior district officials to present reports that attribute shortfalls to “operational constraints” and natural factors (poor monsoons, migration) while avoiding mention of systemic corruption. You are warned that exposing the truth may lead to transfer, adverse remarks in your record, and targeted political backlash against your family. Conversely, if you comply, millions of workers will continue to be deprived, and corruption will persist.

Local villagers, labour unions, and civil society groups demand a full, transparent public report, prosecution of culprits, timely wage payments, and restoration of genuine MNREGA works. National-level media and a public interest petition in the High Court have also drawn attention to the district’s problems.

Questions

- What are the ethical dilemmas faced by Rahul in this case?
- Evaluate the options available to him and the possible consequences of each option.
- Suggest the best course of action for Rahul.
- Justify your recommendation with ethical reasoning and principles of good governance.

Approach :

- Briefly describe the situation to establish context.
- Identify and discuss the ethical dilemmas faced by Rahul in this case.
- Evaluate the options available to him and the possible consequences of each option.
- Suggest the best course of action for Rahul.
- Justify your recommendation with ethical reasoning and principles of good governance.
- Conclude with a suitable way forward.

Introduction:

Rahul, an **Indian Administrative Service (IAS)** officer posted as **District Development Officer**, faces a complex **ethical dilemma** in a district grappling with **seasonal unemployment** and **distress migration**. The **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA)** has been critical in providing **wage employment** and creating **rural assets**.

However, a **whistleblower dossier** and **social audits** reveal **widespread corruption**, including **ghost beneficiaries**, **inflated bills**, **collusion** between **contractors** and **officials**, **delayed wages**, and **substandard works**. **Political** and **senior official pressure** instructs Rahul to **conceal these irregularities**, posing a conflict between **personal safety** and **public duty**.

Body:

Ethical Dilemmas

- ◆ **Integrity vs. Career Risk:** Reporting the truth may invite transfer, adverse remarks, and political backlash, while concealing corruption preserves personal safety.
- ◆ **Public Interest vs. Compliance:** Villagers, labor unions, civil society, and courts demand transparency, conflicting with directives to attribute shortfalls to operational constraints.
- ◆ **Accountability vs. Obedience:** Rahul’s duty to ensure effective MNREGA implementation clashes with instructions to suppress evidence of systemic corruption.

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◆ **Short-term Expediency vs. Long-term Governance:** Concealment may avoid immediate conflict but perpetuates corruption, undermining institutional credibility.

◆ **Moral Responsibility to Vulnerable Populations:** Millions of workers depend on MNREGA for livelihood; concealing corruption harms them directly.

● Evaluation of Options and Consequences

◆ **Complying with directives:** Temporarily protects Rahul's career and family, but perpetuates corruption, violates legal and ethical duties, and undermines public trust.

◆ **Reporting full truth:** Upholds integrity, transparency, and accountability, but carries risks of transfer, political backlash, and personal targeting.

◆ **Partial disclosure/nuanced reporting:** Highlights operational challenges while flagging irregularities, balancing risk and ethical duty but may dilute accountability.

◆ **Alternative mechanisms:** Leveraging social audits, civil society, media, and legal frameworks increases transparency while minimizing personal exposure, though impact may be slower.

● Recommended Course of Action:

◆ Rahul should meticulously document all evidence of irregularities, submit an official report highlighting operational constraints alongside verified corruption, and facilitate independent oversight by the Central Ministry team.

◆ Engaging civil society, labor unions, and leveraging social audits ensures accountability.

◆ Legal avenues, including PILs or whistleblower protection, can provide additional safeguards.

◆ This approach preserves integrity, promotes transparency, and mitigates personal risk.

● Ethical Justification:

◆ **Integrity:** Upholds truthfulness in reporting, even under pressure.

◆ **Accountability:** Ensures public funds serve their intended purpose.

◆ **Public Interest:** Prioritizes the welfare of MNREGA workers over personal or political convenience.

◆ **Rule of Law:** Aligns with MNREGA provisions, social audits, and anti-corruption statutes.

◆ **Utilitarian Perspective:** Maximizes benefits for the largest number of people—millions of workers.

◆ **Deontological Ethics:** Fulfills duty as a civil servant to report wrongdoing, independent of consequences.

Conclusion:

Rahul's decision must reflect **Rawls' idea of justice as fairness**. MNREGA is designed to benefit the **most disadvantaged**, and **corruption** undermines their **entitlements**. Ensuring **transparency** and **accountability** ensures that the "**least advantaged**" (*rural workers, migrants*) receive their **rightful share**, thereby aligning **governance** with **equity** and **fairness**.

40. You are Anil, an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer currently posted as the District Election Officer (DEO) in a politically sensitive district. Elections are approaching in two weeks, and you are responsible for ensuring a free and fair process.

Over the last few days, you have received numerous complaints from political parties, civil society groups, and independent monitors alleging serious irregularities. Many genuine voters' names have been mysteriously deleted from the rolls, while fake entries and names of deceased individuals remain. The ruling party's candidates are accused of misusing government vehicles, welfare schemes, and public funds for campaigning. In certain constituencies, reports suggest the use of musclemen to intimidate opposition workers and voters. Some lower-level election staff appear partisan and are suspected of colluding with influential candidates. There are also widespread allegations of the distribution of cash, liquor, and freebies to buy votes.

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When you bring these matters to the notice of senior officials, you are told to treat them as “minor operational issues” and not escalate the situation. Political leaders caution you that strict action might trigger unrest, lead to violence, and invite adverse consequences for your career and family. At the same time, civil society groups, the Election Commission’s observers, and sections of the media are demanding accountability and strict enforcement of electoral laws.

The stakes are high. On one hand, your duty is to uphold the sanctity of elections as the bedrock of democracy. On the other hand, you face the risk of political retaliation, career setbacks, and personal threats if you pursue the matter with full transparency.

Questions

- What are the ethical dilemmas faced by Anil in this situation?
- Evaluate the different options available to him and the possible consequences of each option.
- Suggest the best course of action for Anil in light of constitutional values, ethical reasoning, and principles of good governance.
- How can systemic reforms be introduced to reduce such electoral malpractices in the long run?

Introduction:

Elections are the cornerstone of democracy, reflecting the collective will of the people. As **District Election Officer (DEO)**, Anil holds the constitutional responsibility to ensure free, fair, and impartial elections under **Article 324**. However, widespread allegations of electoral malpractices, including voter roll manipulation, misuse of government resources, intimidation, and bribery, pose severe ethical dilemmas.

Body :

A. Ethical Dilemmas Faced by Anil

- **Duty vs. Personal Risk:** Upholding election integrity may invite political retaliation, threats, or career setbacks.
- **Impartiality vs. Pressure:** Senior officials and ruling party leaders urge leniency, compromising impartial decision-making.

- **Transparency vs. Public Order:** Exposing irregularities could trigger unrest, yet ignoring them erodes trust in democratic institutions.
- **Short-term vs. Long-term Democratic Health:** Inaction may preserve immediate calm but jeopardizes electoral legitimacy over time.

B. Options and Consequences

Option A – Ignore Complaints:

- **Pros:** Avoids personal and political risks.
- **Cons:** Undermines democracy, violates constitutional duty, invites legal liability, and erodes public confidence.

Option B – Partial or Discreet Action:

- **Pros:** Mitigates immediate conflict; addresses some issues.
- **Cons:** Perceived bias; malpractices persist; ethical compromise.

Option C – Decisive and Transparent Action (Recommended):

- **Pros:** Upholds rule of law, strengthens democratic institutions, reinforces public trust.
- **Cons:** Personal threats, political backlash, potential unrest.

C. Recommended Course of Action

- **Immediate Measures:** Verify complaints, deploy neutral staff, and secure polling areas.
- **Coordination with Election Commission:** Formally report issues; request observer deployment and law enforcement support.
- **Public Communication:** Maintain cautious transparency to inform civil society and media, reducing misinformation.
- **Ethical Justification:** Grounded in **constitutional duty, impartiality, and accountability**, aligned with **deontological ethics**—duty prevails over fear of consequences.

D. Long-Term Systemic Reforms

- **Digitized and Clean Voter Rolls:** Aadhaar-linked verification to eliminate ghost and duplicate entries.
- **Independent and Protected Election Staff:** Rotations, strict conduct codes, and protection from political influence.

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- **Strict Enforcement of Model Code of Conduct:** Penalize misuse of resources, vote-buying, and intimidation.
- **Transparency Measures:** Real-time reporting of campaign finances and expenditures.
- **Voter Awareness Programs:** Educate citizens to resist coercion or bribery.
- **Technology-Driven Monitoring:** CCTV, drones, and app-based grievance redressal.
- **Legal Safeguards for Officers:** Whistleblower protection and immunity to ensure impartial action.

Conclusion :

Anil's dilemma underscores the complex interplay of ethical responsibility, legal duty, and personal risk in democratic governance. Acting decisively, transparently, and in accordance with constitutional mandates reflects both **Kantian ethics and principles of good governance**, emphasizing duty over expediency. While short-term challenges are inevitable, institutional reforms, digitization, enhanced accountability, and citizen engagement, can safeguard electoral integrity and strengthen democracy, ensuring that the voice of the people prevails over malpractices and political expediency.



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41. Every finish line is the beginning of a new race.

Introduction:

In 1953, when Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay became the first humans to conquer Mount Everest, the world hailed it as the ultimate triumph. Yet, Hillary himself remarked that the climb was not the end, but the beginning of further exploration, of inspiring generations, and of testing the human spirit in new ways. Their “finish line” of Everest became a new “starting point” for global mountaineering.

Life is a continuum of goals, struggles, and achievements. Every milestone crossed is not the closure of a journey, but the threshold of new aspirations. This captures the essence of human progress: personal, social, and civilizational.

Body:

Philosophical Dimensions

- **Heraclitus:** “Change is the only constant.” The completion of one phase naturally leads to another.
- **Nietzsche:** The idea of eternal recurrence — life is a cycle where every end births a new beginning.
- **Indian Philosophy:** Concept of **Sansara cycles of life, death, and rebirth**; growth emerges through continuity.

Psychological and Individual Dimensions

- **Personal Growth:** Success in **exams, sports, or careers is never final**; each achievement sets higher benchmarks.
- **Athletics Example:** An Olympic medalist’s finish line is not the end of effort, but the beginning of training for the next games.
- **Resilience:** In failure too, each “**ending**” opens a **chance for renewal** (e.g., students after setbacks, entrepreneurs after business loss).

Social and Ethical Dimensions

- **Reforms: Abolition of sati by Raja Ram Mohan Roy** was a finish line for one evil, but began the larger race for women’s rights.
- **Civil Rights Movement (USA):** Ending segregation laws was only the beginning of a broader race for racial equality.

- **Whistleblowers: Expose corruption**—end of silence but beginning of accountability struggles.

Political Dimensions

- **Freedom Struggles: India’s independence** was a finish line for colonial rule, but the beginning of the race for nation-building, democracy, and social justice.
- **Constitution of India:** Drafting was an achievement, but **Ambedkar emphasized it was only the beginning**—the real test was in its working.
- **Democracy Worldwide:** Every election marks an end, but also the beginning of new governance challenges.

Scientific & Technological Dimension

- **Space Exploration: Moon landing in 1969** was seen as a finish line, but it began the race for Mars missions and interplanetary travel.
- **Medical Science: Polio eradication** marked the end of one struggle but opened the race against newer diseases (like **COVID-19**).
- **AI & Innovation:** Each breakthrough creates fresh ethical, social, and regulatory challenges.

Contemporary Global Dimension

- **Sustainable Development Goals: 2015 adoption ended the Millennium Development Goals** but began a new global race for **2030 sustainability**.
- **Climate Change: Signing of Paris Agreement was an achievement**, but only the beginning of a new race to save the planet.

Counter Perspective

- Some argue that chasing “**new races**” constantly **breeds dissatisfaction and burnout**.
- In Buddhist philosophy, **contentment (Santosh) is essential**; otherwise, human pursuit becomes endless desire.
- Thus, balance is needed—celebrating milestones while preparing for future challenges.

Way Forward:

- Individuals must view achievements as stepping-stones, not full stops.

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- Societies should institutionalize reforms to ensure continuity beyond symbolic victories.
- Nations must recognize global milestones (SDGs, treaties) as ongoing responsibilities, not one-time finishes.
- Education should cultivate resilience and adaptive learning, preparing citizens for lifelong “races.”

Conclusion:

Every finish line is not a dead end, but a doorway. From personal struggles to national milestones, human progress thrives on this continuity. As **Rabindranath Tagore** wrote, “**You cannot cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water.**” Each crossing leads to another horizon.

Thus, the **finish line is never the end; it is always the beginning of a new race towards higher** goals, greater justice, deeper knowledge, and a better world.

42. Without education wisdom is lost, without wisdom development is lost.

Introduction:

In 1848, **Jyotiba Phule** and his wife **Savitribai Phule** opened the first school for girls in Pune. At a time when women and lower castes were denied education, this act was revolutionary. **Phule believed that lack of education is the root cause of social slavery.** His mission was clear without education, there can be no wisdom, and without wisdom, true development of individuals or nations remains impossible.

Education is not just the ability to read and write but the foundation of critical thinking, moral wisdom, and social progress. History shows that societies that neglect education remain trapped in ignorance and underdevelopment.

Body:

Philosophical Dimension

- **Socrates:** “The only good is knowledge, the only evil is ignorance.” Education nurtures wisdom, enabling ethical living.
- **Indian Philosophy:** In the Upanishads, **Vidya (knowledge)** is seen as the path to **Moksha (liberation)**. Ignorance is bondage; wisdom is freedom.
- **Swami Vivekananda:** Defined education as “the manifestation of the perfection already in man.” Without it, higher wisdom cannot emerge.

Indian Freedom Struggle & Social Reformers

- **B.R. Ambedkar:** Educated despite immense barriers; used wisdom gained through education to draft the Indian Constitution. His call to Dalits: “**Educate, agitate, organize.**”
- **Mahatma Gandhi:** Advocated **Nai Talim** — holistic education for self-reliance, wisdom in simplicity, and ethical development.
- **Rabindranath Tagore:** Through **Visva-Bharati**, he promoted education that blended the wisdom of the East and West.
- **Jawaharlal Nehru:** Called children the nation’s future; invested in IITs, AIIMS, and scientific education for national development.

Psychological & Individual Dimension

- **Personal Growth:** Education develops reasoning; wisdom directs it ethically. For instance, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam’s scientific education turned into wisdom when channeled for India’s development in space and defense.
- **Ignorance & Superstition:** Lack of education leads to blind faith; wisdom dissolves fear and fosters rationality.

Social & Ethical Dimension

- **Social Justice:** Education empowers marginalized groups, enabling wisdom to challenge injustice (e.g., women’s education movements).
- **Ethical Citizenship:** Only educated and wise citizens can uphold democracy, resist divisive propaganda, and work for common good.
- **Example: Raja Ram Mohan Roy’s education and wisdom helped abolish sati, reform society, and modernize India.**

Political & Developmental Dimension

- **Democracy:** Without educated voters, wisdom in electoral choices is lost; without wise governance, development collapses.
- **India’s RTI Act:** Literacy empowered citizens to demand transparency; wisdom in its use ensures accountable governance.

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- **Economic Development:** Education builds skills, wisdom directs them toward inclusive growth. Example: Green Revolution — scientific education led to food security, guided by wise policies.

Scientific & Technological Dimension

- **Scientific Temper:** Education fosters questioning; wisdom ensures ethical use.
 - ◆ **Example:** Homi Bhabha's education in physics became wisdom when used for India's nuclear program with peaceful intent.
- **Contemporary Challenge:** AI, biotechnology without wisdom, misuse can threaten humanity; with wisdom, they can drive sustainable development.

Global & Contemporary Dimension

- **UNESCO:** Declares education a human right; it is the basis of peace and development.
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4):** Quality education is recognized as the foundation for all other goals.
- **Climate Change:** Scientific education reveals the crisis, wisdom demands sustainable living and global cooperation.

Counter Perspective

- Mere education without wisdom may create technically skilled but morally bankrupt individuals (e.g., **educated corruption**).
- **Wisdom without structured education may rely on tradition** but fail in modern complexities.
 - ◆ Hence, both must complement each other.

Conclusion:

As Dr. S. Radhakrishnan observed, "The end-product of education should be a free, creative man, who can battle against historical circumstances and adversities of nature." Without education, wisdom cannot bloom; without wisdom, development remains lopsided.

From Phule's schools to the Indian Constitution shaped by B.R. Ambedkar, India's journey proves that education lights the lamp of wisdom, and wisdom in turn illuminates the path of development. **True progress lies not in literacy alone, but in education that creates wise, ethical citizens** who drive inclusive and sustainable development.

43. Civilization advances when man masters nature, but regresses when he forgets his own nature.

Quotes to Enrich Your Essay:

- **Albert Einstein:** "Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better."
- **Mahatma Gandhi:** "The world has enough for everyone's needs, but not enough for everyone's greed."
- **Rachel Carson:** "Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts."

Theoretical and Philosophical Dimensions:

- **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:** Civilization's mastery over nature secures the base of the pyramid (**physiological, safety**).
 - ◆ However, regression occurs when this pursuit undermines higher-level needs like belonging, community, and self-actualization, the core of "our own nature."
- **Environmental Ethics:** Mastery over nature must be guided by ethical responsibility; exploiting nature without understanding its limits leads to regression.
- **Human Nature and Existentialism:** Forgetting one's own nature, **empathy, restraint, and self-awareness**, causes social and moral decline, despite technological advancement.

Policy and Historical Examples:

- **Mastering Nature:** The **Indus Valley Civilization** harnessed river systems for agriculture and urban planning, enabling societal advancement.
- **Forgetting Human Nature:** The **collapse of Easter Island society due to over-exploitation of resources** shows regression when human greed overrides natural limits.
 - ◆ **Industrial pollution** leads to public health crises, demonstrating the cost of ignoring human responsibility.
- **The Green Revolution in India:** This was a monumental achievement in mastering nature to ensure food security.

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- ◆ However, the accompanying regression included depleted water tables, soil degradation from chemical overuse, and the erosion of biodiversity, creating long-term ecological vulnerabilities

Moral and Strategic Implications:

- **Responsible stewardship** of natural resources balances progress with ethical conduct.
- Ignoring human nature, like **empathy and social responsibility**, undermines civilization despite material mastery.

Contemporary Examples:

- **Urban Planning:** Smart cities in India integrate technology with human-centric design to balance mastery of nature with quality of life.
- **Corporate Sustainability:** Companies like **Infosys and Tata Group** demonstrate that technological mastery must align with social and environmental conscience.
- **Artificial Intelligence and Automation:** We are mastering the nature of intelligence itself.
 - ◆ The potential regression lies in mass job displacement, algorithmic bias, and the erosion of human connection and critical thinking, forcing a debate on what aspects of our own nature we must preserve.

44. Power today lies not in weapons, but in narratives

Quotes to Enrich Your Essay:

- **Yuval Noah Harari:** "You could never convince a monkey to give you a banana by promising him limitless bananas after death in monkey heaven. Only Sapiens can believe such stories."
- **Joseph Goebbels:** "A lie told once remains a lie, but a lie told a thousand times becomes truth."
- **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie:** "The problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story."
- **Noam Chomsky:** "Propaganda is to a democracy what the bludgeon is to a totalitarian state."

Theoretical and Philosophical Dimensions:

- **Constructivism (International Relations):** Power in the modern world is socially constructed, narratives shape perceptions and influence global order.

- **Media and Communication Theory:** Control over information and narrative frames can **shift public opinion more effectively than military force** (Russia's interference in US State Elections 2016).

- **Psychology of Influence:** Stories create **identity, legitimacy, and trust**, emotional engagement often trumps brute strength.

Policy and Historical Examples:

- **Narratives in Nation-Building:**

- ◆ Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent resistance framed India's struggle for independence as morally righteous, attracting global support.
- ◆ The **United States' use of "American Dream" narratives** fostered national cohesion and international influence during the Cold War.

- **Weapons vs. Narrative:**

- ◆ **Cyber warfare and propaganda campaigns** demonstrate that controlling information and perception can be more decisive than physical confrontation.

Moral and Strategic Implications:

- Ethical storytelling can guide social change, while manipulative narratives can destabilize societies.
- Nations and leaders must balance **narrative influence with truth and transparency to maintain legitimacy.**

Contemporary Examples:

- **Social Media Movements:** Hashtags like **#MeToo** and **#ClimateStrike** shows the global power of narrative in shaping public discourse and policy.
- **Corporate Branding and "Woke Capitalism":** Companies like Nike and Apple wield immense power not just through their products but through the narratives they sell about identity, rebellion, and creativity.
 - ◆ By aligning with social movements, they shape culture and public discourse to a degree once reserved for states.
- **Geopolitics: India's "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" narrative** reinforces soft power in international forums, shaping alliances and cooperation without force.

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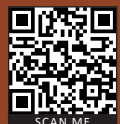
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45. You imagine what you desire, you will what you imagine, and at last you create what you will.

Quotes to Enrich Your Essay:

- **Swami Vivekananda:** "Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life; dream of it, think of it, live on that idea."
- **Abdul Kalam:** "Dream, dream, dream. Dreams transform into thoughts and thoughts result in action."
- **Buddha:** "What you think, you become. What you feel, you attract. What you imagine, you create."

Theoretical and Philosophical Dimensions:

- **Law of Attraction & Visualization:** Human imagination shapes intention, and sustained willpower converts it into reality.
- **Philosophy of Karma (Bhagavad Gita):** Focused action with clarity of purpose leads to outcomes. **Desire → Determination → Creation.**
- **Existentialist Thought:** Sartre's notion that humans define themselves through chosen projects; imagination fuels freedom.
- **Psychological Dimension:** Positive visualization enhances motivation and resilience. Athletes and leaders use imagination as a performance tool.
- **Indian Philosophy- Sankalpa Shakti (Power of Will):** Desire becomes destiny when pursued with dedication and dharma.

Policy and Historical Examples:

- **India's Freedom Struggle:** From the dream of Swaraj (Tilak, Gandhi) → sustained will of masses → creation of independent India.
- **Space Missions (ISRO):** From imagining moon/planetary missions (Vikram Sarabhai, Kalam) → willful pursuit → Chandrayaan & Mangalyaan.
- **US Civil Rights Movement:** King's "I have a dream" → mass mobilization → legislative change (Civil Rights Act, 1964).
- **Constitution of India:** Imagination of justice, liberty, equality → will of Constituent Assembly → creation of living document.

Contemporary Examples:

- **Start-up Ecosystem:** Founders imagine innovative ideas (e.g., Flipkart, UPI, Paytm), persist through challenges, and build new industries.

- **Climate Action Goals:** Global imagination of a carbon-neutral future → **policy will (Paris Agreement)** → **renewable energy expansion.**
- **Digital India:** Vision of inclusive governance → **political will + tech innovation** → UPI, Jan Dhan–Aadhaar–Mobile (JAM trinity).
- **Sports Inspiration:** Indian athletes like **Neeraj Chopra** or **Mirabai Chanu** turned dreams into historic Olympic achievements.
- **Personal Transformation Stories:** From **Malala Yousafzai's** dream of education to her Nobel-winning advocacy.

46. You can't cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water.

Quotes to Enrich Your Essay:

- **Rabindranath Tagore:** "You can't cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water."
- **Thomas Edison:** "Vision without execution is hallucination."
- **Chanakya:** "Man is great by deeds, not by birth."
- **Bruce Lee:** "Knowing is not enough, we must apply. Willing is not enough, we must do."

Theoretical and Philosophical Dimensions:

- **Action-Oriented Philosophy:** Dreams without effort remain fantasies. Karma Yoga stresses action as the path to fulfillment.
- **Pragmatism (William James, John Dewey):** Value of ideas lies in their practical consequences.
- **Buddhism – Right Effort:** Liberation requires not passive contemplation, but disciplined practice.
- **Existentialist Emphasis:** Responsibility lies in action; to delay is to deny freedom.
- **Psychology of Procrastination:** Fear, comfort, and inaction create barriers to success.

Policy and Historical Examples:

- **Indian Independence:** Passive desire would not suffice; movements like Dandi March and Quit India translated vision into decisive action.
- **Green Revolution:** Mere concern over food shortage was ineffective until bold agricultural reforms were executed.

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- **Women's Suffrage Movement:** Rights won through persistent activism, not silent hope.
- **Abolition of Apartheid:** Mandela's struggle showed liberation required relentless action, not contemplation.

Contemporary Examples:

- **Start-up India:** Entrepreneurs succeed not by ideas alone, but by execution, resilience, and market adaptability.
- **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan:** Cleanliness vision turned real only through mass participation and ground-level execution.
- **Climate Crisis:** Mere acknowledgment of climate change achieves nothing; action through renewable energy, lifestyle change, and policies matters.
- **Personal Level:** Students preparing for UPSC cannot succeed by planning or staring at books, **they must write, revise, and practice daily.**

47. Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought. (1200 words)

Introduction:

When **Martin Luther King Jr.** proclaimed, "*Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere*," he captured the universal truth that **justice** is the moral foundation of any society. Just as **truth** anchors systems of **thought** by giving them legitimacy and coherence, **justice** anchors **social institutions** by ensuring fairness, equality, and moral order.

A democracy without **justice** risks descending into tyranny, and a philosophy without **truth** collapses into dogma or propaganda. Hence, as **John Rawls** argued, "*Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought.*" This timeless principle highlights that both **justice** and **truth** are indispensable virtues that preserve the **legitimacy, credibility, and survival** of human societies.

Body :

Understanding the Core Idea

- **Justice in Social Institutions:** Ensures **equitable distribution** of rights and duties.
 - ◆ **Example:** **Article 14** of the **Indian Constitution** guarantees **equality before law**.

- **Truth in Thought Systems:** Knowledge rests on **evidence** and **rationality**. Without **truth**, even **science** becomes unreliable.

◆ **Example:** **Denial of climate change** undermines **global cooperation**.

- **Parallel:** **Justice legitimises institutions** just as **truth legitimises knowledge**.

Philosophical Dimensions

- **Plato:** Justice is the **harmony** of different **classes** performing their roles.
- **Aristotle:** Justice is "*giving each his due*."
- **Rawls:** **Justice as fairness**—ensuring **equal liberty** and protecting the **least advantaged**.
- **Gandhi:** Linked **justice** with **Satya (truth)**; believed **truth** and **non-violence** form the **bedrock** of a just society.
 - ◆ **Example:** Gandhi's fight against **racial injustice** in **South Africa** and **colonial injustice** in **India** showed **truth as a weapon** for **justice**.

Application in Social Institutions

- **Political Institutions:** Justice sustains **democracy**.
 - ◆ **Example:** **Kesavananda Bharati case (1973)** upheld **constitutional justice**.
- **Economic Institutions:** Schemes like **MNREGA** ensure **distributive justice** by guaranteeing the **right to work**.
- **Judicial Institutions:** **Fair trials** under **Article 21** safeguard **liberty**.
- **Social Institutions:** **Abolition of untouchability (Article 17)** and **reservation policies** promote **social justice**.

Relevance in Governance and Society

- **Justice builds trust** in institutions.
 - Example:** People's faith in the **Indian judiciary** despite delays.
- **Truth safeguards credibility** in **media** and **science**.
 - Example:** During **COVID-19**, **misinformation** eroded trust, while **data-driven policies** saved lives.
- **Absence of justice** turns into **unrest** (e.g., **Arab Spring**, **Dalit movements** in India).
- **Absence of truth** turns into **chaos** (e.g., **post-truth politics**, **fake news** in elections).

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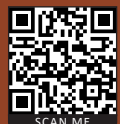
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Contemporary Relevance

- **India: Preamble** guarantees **Justice**—social, economic, and political.
- **Global: SDGs (Goal 16)** emphasise **peace, justice, and strong institutions**.
- **Challenges:**
 - ◆ **Rising inequality** (Oxfam report: **Top 1% hold 40% of India's wealth**) undermines **justice**.
 - ◆ **Misinformation on social media** undermines **truth**.

Counter Perspective

- **Justice is context-specific**—what is “just” in one society may differ in another.
- **Truth can be contested**—relativism vs. absolutism.
- Yet, the **pursuit of justice and truth** must remain **central to governance and thought**.

Way Forward

- Strengthen the **rule of law, transparency, and institutional independence**.
- Promote **evidence-based policymaking and media literacy**.
- Foster **inclusive development** to balance **freedom with equality**.
- Encourage **moral leadership** rooted in **truth and fairness**.

Conclusion:

A society can achieve **lasting peace, prosperity, and harmony** only when its **institutions are rooted in justice** and its actions guided by **truth**. Ensuring **inclusive governance, equitable opportunities, and moral leadership** empowers citizens, strengthens democracy, and fosters social cohesion. Upholding justice in public life and truth in thought not only safeguards human dignity but also inspires future generations to build a **fair and ethical world**. As Gandhiji wisely observed, *“Truth and justice are perhaps the two most powerful forces that can guide humanity towards peace.”*

48. Freedom of mind is real freedom. (1200 words)

Introduction :

Swami Vivekananda once said, *“You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.”* This highlights the essence of **freedom of mind**—true liberation

comes from within, through independent thought, reflection, and self-realisation. True freedom is not merely political or social, but resides in the ability to **think critically, question assumptions, and act ethically**.

For instance, during the **Bengal Renaissance**, **Raja Ram Mohan Roy** defied orthodox Hindu practices like Sati despite immense societal pressure, relying on **rational thought and moral courage**. Even in the colonial struggle, **Bhagat Singh** chose the path of conscious rebellion after reflecting on injustice, demonstrating that **inner freedom enables transformative action in the external world**.

Similarly, **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**, despite being born into a socially marginalized caste, exercised freedom of mind by critically evaluating social norms and advocating for **constitutional safeguards, education, and equality**, eventually shaping India's legal and social framework, demonstrating that **freedom of mind empowers both the individual and society**.

Body:

Conceptual Understanding

- **Freedom of mind:** Ability to **think critically**, reason independently, and remain autonomous in belief and action.
- The difference between **external freedom** (political rights, freedom of speech) and **internal freedom** (mental autonomy, self-awareness).
 - ◆ **Example:** Citizens in India may enjoy constitutional rights, but **social prejudices, caste hierarchies, and gender norms** limit true mental freedom.
- **UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report** highlights that **critical thinking in schools improves empowerment and decision-making**, showing the link between mental autonomy and real freedom.
- Without freedom of mind, **democracy is superficial**, as people may conform blindly despite legal liberties.

Philosophical and Historical Perspectives

- **John Stuart Mill:** Individual liberty includes **freedom of thought and expression**, essential for personal and societal progress.
- **Buddhism:** Mindfulness and detachment cultivate **inner freedom**, enabling ethical choices.
- Movements driven by free thinkers often lead to **social reforms**.

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● Historical examples:

- ◆ **Kabir**, the 15th-century poet-saint, challenged caste hierarchies and ritualistic practices through **critical thought and spiritual reasoning**, promoting equality and inner liberation.
- ◆ **Jyotirao Phule** challenged **caste oppression** using reason and education.
- ◆ **Mahatma Jotirao Phule's wife, Savitribai Phule**, used her freedom of mind to **revolutionise women's education in India**, establishing schools for girls despite societal opposition.
- ◆ **Nelson Mandela** (global example) exercised freedom of mind in resisting apartheid, showing how **inner conviction drives societal transformation**.

Importance in Personal Life

- Fosters **self-awareness, creativity, and resilience**.
- Reduces **susceptibility to manipulation, fake news, and blind conformity**.
- Encourages **ethical and informed decision-making**; people with mental freedom can **question authority and discriminatory practices**.
 - ◆ **Example:** Entrepreneurs and innovators like **Elon Musk** leveraged **independent thinking** to create breakthrough solutions.

Social and Political Relevance

- Societies of free minds nurture **democracy, pluralism, and innovation**.
- Limits the influence of **propaganda, misinformation, and authoritarian control**.
 - ◆ **Example:** Nordic countries with **high literacy and critical thinking** demonstrate strong **social justice, participatory governance, and civic engagement**.
- Free thought strengthens **civil liberties, rule of law, and human rights protections**, preventing societal stagnation.

Economic and Developmental Implications

- Mental freedom drives **innovation, entrepreneurship, and scientific discovery**.

- Encourages **adaptive thinking** in crises; e.g., **COVID-19 pandemic** showed how evidence-based decisions saved lives.
- Education systems emphasizing **critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving** strengthen mental autonomy.
- According to the **World Economic Forum**, countries with strong **innovation ecosystems** and independent thinkers outperform others in **economic resilience and technological development**.

Challenges to Mental Freedom

- **Social conditioning, caste/gender biases**, and rigid orthodoxies limit independent thinking.
- **Misinformation, ideological polarization**, and social media echo chambers weaken critical judgment.
- **Authoritarian regimes** often suppress dissent and free thought.
 - ◆ **Example:** Restrictions on media and academic freedom in certain countries limit **intellectual and societal progress**.

Way Forward

- Promote **education systems** focused on **critical thinking, ethics, and self-reflection**.
- Encourage **open dialogue, debates, and exposure to diverse perspectives**.
- Build **mental resilience** through **mindfulness, reasoning, and rational discourse**.
- Strengthen **laws and institutions** protecting **freedom of thought, expression, and conscience**.
- Encourage **social reforms** that challenge **discrimination, dogma, and blind conformity**.

Conclusion:

Real freedom begins in the **mind**; without **mental liberation**, all external freedoms remain incomplete. A society where individuals **think independently, question boldly, and act ethically** is resilient, progressive, and inclusive. Freedom of mind empowers the individual while strengthening **democracy, social justice, and innovation**. As **Albert Einstein** envisioned, "*The mind that opens to a new idea never returns to its original size.*" Nurturing this freedom ensures a future where humanity thrives in **wisdom, dignity, and ethical progress**.



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