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GENERAL STUDIES (TEST CODE : 1835)

Name of Candidate	POURUSH SOOD		
Medium Eng./Hindi	ENGLISH	Registration Number	1175138
Center	ONLINE	Date	

INDEX TABLE		
Q. No.	Maximum Marks	Marks Obtained
1	10	
2	10	
3	10	
4	10	
5	10	
6	10	
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9	10	
10	10	
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16	15	
17	15	
18	15	
19	15	
20	15	
Total Marks Obtained:		
Remarks:		

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Do furnish the appropriate details in the answer sheet (v Name, Registration Number and Test Code).
उत्तर पुस्तिका में सूचनाएं भरना आवश्यक है (नाम, प्रश्न-पत्र कोड, विद्य क्रांतांक आदि)।
2. There are **TWENTY** questions printed in **ENGLISH & HINDI** इसमें बीस प्रश्न हैं अंग्रेजी और हिन्दी में छपे हैं।
3. **All questions are compulsory.**
सभी प्रश्न अनिवार्य हैं।
4. The number of marks carried by a question/part is indicated against it.
प्रत्येक प्रश्न/भाग के अंक उसके सामने दिए गए हैं।
5. Answers must be written in the medium authorized in the Admission Certificate, which must be stated clearly on the cover of this Question-Cum-Answer (QCA) Booklet in the space provided. No marks will be given for answers written in a medium other than the authorized one.
प्रश्नों के उत्तर उसी माध्यम में लिखे जाने चाहिए जिसका उल्लेख आप प्रवेश पत्र में किया गया है और उस माध्यम का स्पष्ट उल्लेख प्रश्न-सह-उत्तर (क्यूसीए) पुस्तिका के मुख्य पृष्ठ पर अंकित निर्दिष्ट स्थान पर किया जाना चाहिए। उल्लिखित माध्यम के अतिरिक्त अन्य किसी माध्यम में लिए गए उत्तर पर कोई अंक नहीं मिलेंगे।
6. Word limit in questions, if specified, should be adhered to.
प्रश्नों में शब्द सीमा, जहाँ विनिर्दिष्ट है, का अनुसरण किया जाना चाहिए।
7. Any page or portion of the page left blank in the Question-Cum-Answer Booklet must be clearly struck off.
उत्तर पुस्तिका में खाली छोड़ा हुआ पृष्ठ या उसके अंश को स्पष्ट रूप से काटा जाना चाहिए।

16-B, 2nd Floor, Above National Trust Building, Bada Bazar Marg, Old Rajinder Nagar, Delhi-110060

Plot No. 857, 1st Floor, Banda Bahadur Marg (Opp Punjab & Sindh Bank), Dr. Mukherjee Nagar
Delhi- 110009

EVALUATION INDICATORS

1. Contextual Competence
2. Content Competence
3. Language Competence
4. Introduction Competence
5. Structure - Presentation Competence
6. Conclusion Competence

Overall Macro Comments / feedback / suggestions on Answer Booklet:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

1. The withdrawal of general consent to the CBI by certain state governments in India threatens the spirit of cooperative federalism in India. Discuss.

(150 words) 10

भारत में कुछ राज्य सरकारों द्वारा सी. बी. आई. से सामान्य सहमति वापस लेना भारत में सहकारी संघवाद की भावना के लिए खतरा उत्पन्न करता है। चर्चा कीजिए।

The Central Bureau of Investigation is a central body that derives its powers from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act 1946, with a mandate to investigate crimes related to corruption, heinous crimes like rape, etc.

The issue of General Consent

→ The CBI can investigate cases inside the states' jurisdiction with the concerned state's consent.

→ This consent is assumed, unless the state withdraws it otherwise.

→ Many states, especially with opposition governments to the ruling party in the

centre, have withdrawn general consent.

Why it threatens the spirit of cooperative federalism

→ Centre-State tussles are exposed : Since withdrawal is seen in opposition ruled states.

→ Politicization of CBI: The accusation of states that CBI acts in a partisan, biased manner is not unfounded. eg. West Bengal has accused CBI of favouring central ruling party.

→ Investigations, especially inter-state become difficult, especially in crimes that cross state borders.

→ Overinterference of judiciary to assign cases from states to the CBI (eg. Sushant Singh Rajput case) does not bode well for cooperative federalism.

The Lodha Committee has described CBI as a 'caged Parrot'. Unbiased investigations by CBI and cooperation from states is a must to preserve the federal spirit.

2. Stating the sources of finance for local self-governments in India, suggest ways to strengthen their financial position. (150 words) 10

भारत में स्थानीय स्व-शासी सरकारों के लिए वित्त के स्रोतों का उल्लेख करते हुए, उनकी वित्तीय स्थिति को मजबूत करने के उपाय सुझाए।

The local self-government bodies, constitutionalised in India by the 73rd and 74th amendments (1993) suffer from financial handicaps despite statutory devolutions.

Sources of Finance

- ① Devolution of finance from state finance Commissions
- ② Grants from the centre as per Finance Commission Recommendations. (Tied + untied)
- ③ Taxation powers:
 - ↳ Eg. Conservancy, ferry charges, etc.
 - ↳ Powers to Panchayats and Municipal Bodies of taxation
- ④ For Municipal Bodies, additionally:
 - ↳ Loans
 - ↳ Municipal Bonds (eg. Ahmedabad tried this)
- ⑤ Grants from states

- ⑥ Grants by centre to implement centrally sponsored schemes.

Strengthening Financial Devolution

- ① Increasing vertical tax devolution (eg. the State Finance Commission of Kerala allots ~33% of revenue to local bodies)
- ② Utilizing taxation powers: Many Panchayats refrain from taxing their own people.
- ③ Municipal bonds for urban local bodies, easier access to loans, etc.
- ④ Higher level of untied grants from centre and state.
- ⑤ Devolving more subjects of XI, XII schedule along with their finances.
- ⑥ Compulsory component of GST collections (say 1%) allotted to local bodies.

The hands of local bodies are tied with little autonomy and tied grants. True decentralisation will involve financial autonomy as well.

3. Cabinet Committees play an important role in reinstating collective responsibility and principle of homogeneity of the Executive in the Indian Parliamentary system. Elucidate. (150 words) 10

भारतीय संसदीय प्रणाली में मंत्रिमंडलीय समितियां सामूहिक उत्तरदायित्व और कार्यपालिका की एकरूपता के सिद्धांत को बहाल करने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाती हैं। स्पष्ट कीजिए।

Cabinet Committees are High Powered
Committees of Ministers of the executive that
help expedite decision making and promote
collective responsibility and homogeneity in
Executive decision making.

Eg. Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs,
Parliamentary Affairs, etc.

Role of Cabinet Committees (CC)

→ Promote Collective Responsibility

① Prevent concentration of absolute power
in a cabinet minister or the Prime
Minister

eg. CC on Economic Affairs has other
members also, other than the Finance
Minister.

② Ministers exercise their will of advise
and suggestions to government policy.

③ Help in assuming collective
accountability to decisions

→ Promote homogeneity

① Synchronisation between dimensions
of government policy : Due to involvement
of various ministers.

② Common policy frameworks eg. coordination
between Ministry of Commerce and Industry
and Finance through Econ Economic
Affairs.

③ Allow the "big picture" to be visible through
multiple viewpoints and stakeholders.

Hence Cabinet Committees play a major role
in upholding collective responsibility and
synchronised decision making in executive.

4. There is a need to overhaul the public procurement and project management (PPPM) framework of India for faster, efficient and transparent execution of government projects. Comment.

(150 words) 10

सरकारी परियोजनाओं के तीव्र, कुशल और पारदर्शी निष्पादन के लिए भारत के सार्वजनिक खरीद और परियोजना प्रबंधन (PPPM) ढांचे में सुधार की आवश्यकता है। टिप्पणी कीजिए।

Public Procurement and Project Management
refers to the handling of goods and
service purchases by public agencies and
evaluation and monitoring of projects
undertaken by them.

Current limitations in PPPM framework

→ Lack of transparency

Due to → Insufficient digitization
→ Improper documentation

→ Corruption often goes unnoticed

↳ Evasion from RTI requests
↳ Partisan nature of vigilance
agencies

Procurement models

↳ The 'least cost' model often leads to substandard assets.

→ Lax Project Management

- ↳ Out dated ERP systems
- ↳ Not accounting for delays and cost overruns in planning stage.

Way Forward

- ① Digitisation
- Procurement Systems (eg. GeM)
 - Open online auctions
 - State of art ERP systems
 - Use of Public Financial Management Systems (PFMS)

As per 2nd

ARC, 1% of all schemes' budget should be reserved for RTI and documentation

- ② Teeth to vigilance commissions, Lokpal, etc.

While the government has taken laudable steps to overhaul the procurement system (eg. GeM),

there is a scope for improvement in the Project Management side.

5. Adequate measures are required to overcome the challenges and vulnerabilities associated with undertaking social accountability initiatives and institutionalising them. Elaborate. (150 words) 10

सामाजिक जवाबदेही पहलों को शुरू करने और उन्हें संस्थागत बनाने से जुड़ी चुनौतियों और कमजोरियों को दूर करने के लिए पर्याप्त उपायों की आवश्यकता है। सविस्तार वर्णन कीजिए।

Social Accountability initiatives involve the evaluation of government's public service delivery on a common platform by the society in general. eg. social audits.

Challenges and Vulnerabilities

- ① Awareness: There is a lack of general awareness about government schemes for adequate public hearings and social audits.

↳ Many laws are drafted in non-native languages of regional speakers

- ② Digital Divide: Lack of smartphones, internet access hampers ensuring accountability in Financial Inclusion and e-governance

- ③ Political interference and use of muscle

power, especially in rural areas, to
coax the public into silence.

④ Redtapism and inefficient bureaucracy

Measures Needed

- ① Statutory backing of social audits for most large schemes.
- ② Video recording of public hearings
- ③ Involvement of independent experts in public hearings
- ④ Use of technology, eg. e-surveys, feedback forms, etc. for more transparent social reviews.
- ⑤ Availability of laws in native languages
- ⑥ Improving financial inclusion and reducing digital divide.
- ⑦ GPS tagging of scheme assets, and availability of so on apps.

Rajasthan is trying to bring a statutory backing to social audit, like Meghalaya. Other states must follow suit.

6. In view of the recent Parliamentary Standing Committee report, discuss the issues faced by the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) and suggest measures that can be adopted to strengthen it. (150 words) 10

एक संसदीय स्थायी समिति की हालिया रिपोर्ट को ध्यान में रखते हुए, राष्ट्रीय अनुसूचित जनजाति आयोग (NCST) द्वारा सामना किए जाने वाले मुद्दों की विवेचना कीजिए और इसे मजबूत बनाने के लिए अपनाए जा सकने वाले उपायों का सुझाव दीजिए।

The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, established by Article 338-A of the constitution, aims to safeguard the interests of the ST population (~8%) of the country.

Issues faced by the NCST

- ① Vacancy: As with many central government commissions and tribunals, vacancies continue to persist in NCST, hampering administrative efficiency.
- ② Lack of discussions and meetings: Especially during and post COVID-19.
- ③ Lack of reports: Hardly any reports and

recommendations have been published in the last few years, especially since COVID-19.

- ④ Partisan nature: As accused by forest rights groups of being partisan towards the ruling party.

How to strengthen the NCST

- ① Fill up the vacancies and increase the number of members.
- ② Statutory requirement of number of sittings and meetings in a year.
- ③ Coordination with State Tribal Welfare Committees for successful implementation of Forest Rights Act, 2006.
- ④ Digitization: ~~see~~ of records, meetings, etc.

The NCST, with the aforementioned reforms, can truly empower one of the most vulnerable and historically wronged sections of India.

7. While the Mid-Day Meal scheme was aimed at fulfilling the nutritional needs of students, it is far behind in achieving this objective. Discuss. Also, suggest remedial measures in this context. (150 words) 10

यद्यपि मध्याह्न भोजन योजना का उद्देश्य छात्रों की पोषण संबंधी आवश्यकताओं को पूरा करना था, किंतु इस उद्देश्य को प्राप्त करने में यह काफी पीछे है। चर्चा कीजिए। साथ ही, इस संदर्भ में उपचारात्मक उपायों का सुझाव दीजिए।

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme aimed to achieve the twofold objective of child literacy as well as food and nutritional security of children. However, it has had its limitations.

Limitations

→ Corruption: Corruption has led to diversion of food, funds and functionaries, and has hampered the quality of food (eg. in a recent case in U.P., children were given salt and roti as meal.)

→ Inadequate nutrition: Fruits, pulses and vegetables are usually missing from the diet which is mostly carbohydrate.

- based.

→ Impact of COVID-19: Many states were lax in implementation of financial aid, home delivery of mid-day meals or uncooked ration delivery during COVID-19 lockdowns.

Remedial Measures

→ Social Audits: Involvement of parents as "one parent - one mess inspection" per day, regular social audits.

→ Use of technology: To publish centralized food menus with grievance redressal if there is an inconsistency.

→ Procurement of eggs, pulses, fruits and vegetables

→ Shifts on nutritional security over food security.

The POSHAN 2.0 Abhiyaan is the right step towards India's nutritional security.

8. Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) remain critical for the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this context, discuss the impediments in the fulfilment of SRHR in India. Also, mention the steps that can be taken in this regard. (150 words) 10

सतत विकास लक्ष्यों (SDGs) की प्राप्ति के लिए यौन एवं प्रजनन स्वास्थ्य और अधिकार (SRHR) महत्वपूर्ण हैं। इस संदर्भ में, भारत में SRHR की प्राप्ति में आने वाली बाधाओं पर चर्चा कीजिए। साथ ही, इस संबंध में उठाए जा सकने वाले कदमों का भी उल्लेख कीजिए।

Sexual and reproductive rights (SRHR)

include the right to contraceptive access,
sex education, access to sanitary pads,
among others.

Impediments to fulfilment of SRHR

① Social Reasons

- Reproductive health is considered a taboo topic in Indian society
- In Meghalaya, there are cases of menstruating women being excluded from household while on periods
- Lack of sex education, information about contraceptives, etc.
- Lack of welfare schemes for pads and contraceptive distribution

② Economic Reasons

- It is rightly said that "Development is the best contraception"
- Lack of resources to gain SRHR awareness and education
- Unaffordability of vasectomy, tubectomy, etc. ~~for~~ in many states.

Steps that can be taken

① Awareness

- Through sex education curriculum in schools
- Contraceptive awareness drives in villages
- Educating and empowering women to call for family planning.

② Social Schemes

- Distribution of sanitary pads
- Contraceptive distribution

Investing in SRHR will not only help India in population control but will also help reduce Maternal Mortality, unsafe abortions etc.

9. State the functions of the United Nations Human Rights Council. Also, discuss the issues faced by the Council in the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe. (150 words) 10

संयुक्त राष्ट्र मानवाधिकार परिषद के कार्यों का उल्लेख कीजिए। साथ ही, विश्व भर में मानवाधिकारों को बढ़ावा देने और उनके संरक्षण में परिषद द्वारा सामना किए जाने वाले मुद्दों की विवेचना कीजिए।

The United Nations Human Rights Council

is a multilateral body that aims to protect human rights across the world.

India has been elected to the UNHRC for the second time in a row for 3 more years.

Functions

- ① Inquire into human rights violations in countries

↳ Eg. Rwandan Genocide
Uighur Issue in China

- ② Help in implementation of treaties like UN Convention on Protection of Civil Rights, etc.

- ③ Investigate into human rights violations by aggressor countries eg. Russia's invasion in Ukraine

- ④ Publish reports, status and indices of human rights across the world.
- ⑤ Look into human rights protection frameworks and laws in different countries.

Issues Faced

- ① Members: Regular human rights violators like China and Russia continue to be members of UNHRC, which does not augur well to its integrity.
- ② Political Interference and Funding: Regularly used to sway resolutions in favour of violating countries eg. China.
- ③ No power to prosecute: Eg. UNHRC did little to prevent Russian atrocities in Ukraine.
- ④ Limited investigation power

In the increasingly multipolar world, the UNHRC must stand firm on principles of humanism and impartiality to function effectively.

10. West Asia is an important strategic region for India with profound geo-political and geo-economic significance. Discuss. (150 words) 10

अत्यधिक भू-राजनीतिक और भू-आर्थिक महत्व के कारण पश्चिम एशिया भारत के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण रणनीतिक क्षेत्र है। चर्चा कीजिए।

West Asia and India together formed the "old world" with trade connections reaching as far as the Indus Valley Civilization.

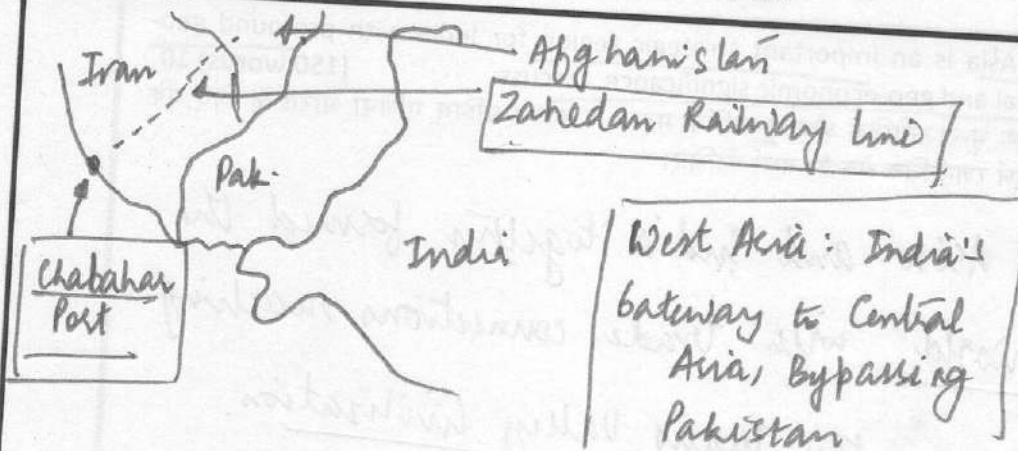
[West Asia's Strategic Importance to India]

→ (ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE)

- ① Vast oil Reserves : India imports 85% of its crude oil requirements, majority from Iraq and Saudi Arabia.
- ② Bilateral Trade : India and UAE have flourishing trade with UAE being India's 3rd largest trading partner.
- ③ Source of Remittances : over a million Indians work in West Asian countries. West Asia formed 2nd largest source of remittances in 2021.

→ (CONNECTIVITY AND GEOPOLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE)

- ① Gateway to Afghanistan and Central Asia



② INSTC transport corridor for trade with Russia and Central Asia

③ Countering China's influence in the region

→ STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

① Defence relations: Especially with Israel,
eg. the Iron Dome Technology

② Maritime exercises in Red Sea Region
with UAE, Oman, etc.

③ Balancing China through initiatives like
I2U2, etc.

The recent FTA with UAE and the I2U2
grouping show that India is on the right
track in its diplomacy with West Asia.

11. Disenfranchising prisoners desecrates a cherished value in a democracy i.e. 'right to vote', which should be guarded earnestly. Discuss in the light of The Representation of The People Act, 1951. (250 words) 15

कैदियों को मताधिकार से वंचित करना वस्तुतः लोकतंत्र के एक प्रशंसनीय मूल्य, अर्थात् "मतदान के अधिकार" का अपमान करना है, जिसकी गंभीरतापूर्वक रक्षा की जानी चाहिए। लोक प्रतिनिधित्व अधिनियम, 1951 के आलोक में चर्चा कीजिए।

In India, the Representation of People Act 1951 does not allow any person in prison, whether undertrial or convicted, to exercise franchise. (except under preventive detention)

Why disenfranchising prisoners is problematic under RPA 1951.

① Treats all crimes equally: The clause does not differentiate in crimes. A person in jail for heinous or petty crime is disenfranchised.

② Does not differentiate between undertrials and convicted:

↳ 70% of people in jail in India are undertrial and hence "innocent until proven guilty".

↳ They too are disenfranchised along with convicted prisoners.

③ Bail Issue

↳ People out on bail or parole can exercise their vote.

↳ Bail in India disproportionately affects the disadvantaged and poor, who do not have resources for surety bonds.

↳ Despite being granted bail, ~~some~~ ^{many} of the poor continue to remain in prisons and hence are disenfranchised.

④ Against Universal Adult Franchise : Where age is the only bar to vote.

Way Forward

① Undertrials should be allowed to vote

↳ Sufficient voting infrastructure should be made available in prisons.

② The RPA 1951 can be amended for allowing certain categories of convicts to vote, eg. those not convicted for heinous crimes.

③ Manifestos, electronic speeches, etc. should be made available in prisons to help in making an informed choice.

④ If voting infrastructure cannot be made available in all prisons, electronic or postal ballots should be allowed.

The Right to vote is the bedrock of any democracy. The RPA 1951 in its current form is discriminatory towards the underprivileged and disadvantaged ~~criminals~~ prisoners and must be amended.

12. There are similarities and interactions between the affirmative action adopted by India and USA owing to similar historical injustices faced by their respective vulnerable groups. Discuss.

(250 words) 15

भारत और यू. एस. ए. के सुभेद्य समूहों द्वारा सामना किए गए एकसमान ऐतिहासिक अन्याय के कारण, इनके द्वारा अपनाई गई सकारात्मक कार्यवाई के बीच समानताएं हैं और इनका एक-दूसरे पर प्रभाव पड़ा है। चर्चा कीजिए।

USA, the world's oldest democracy and India, the world's largest democracy have both adopted progressive policies to undo historical injustices done to vulnerable groups.

Historical Injustices

→

USA

① Against Blacks

① Slavery

② Racial discrimination

③ Biasness of judicial ^{and police} system against Blacks (still continues, eg. George Floyd case)

② Against Women

① Disenfranchisement

② Inequality in pay

③ LGBTQ Individuals

- ① Societal discrimination
- ② Bullying, hate crimes, etc.

→ India

① Caste system

- ① Temple Entry issue
- ② Social / Economic Backwardness

② Women

- ① Dowry, domestic violence, crimes, etc.
- ② unequal pay

③ LGBTQIA people

- ① Discrimination

Similarities in affirmative Action

① India	USA
① <u>Abolition</u> : of untouchability, dowry	<u>Abolition</u> : of slavery
② <u>Empowerment of women</u> • Equal remuneration Act • Dowry Prohibition Act • Maternity Benefit Act • PoSH Act	Legal Equal remuneration for women, maternity benefits, etc.
③ <u>LGBTQIA</u> : Removal of Sec 377 Recognition of relationships	Attor No discrimination against LGBTQIA individuals.

Differences

- Enfranchisement: USA gave right to vote to Blacks and women much later. India gave Universal Adult Franchise since independence.
 - Reservation: India allowed for reservation of socially and economically backward classes in politics, jobs and ~~school~~ education (art. 14, 15). USA has provided no reservation to disadvantaged communities.
 - LGBTQ Rights: USA allows for same sex marriage while India does not.
 - Abortion Rights: Indian views are more liberal (MTP Act 2021) than USA (Roe v Wade Judgement).
 - Targeted Acts in India: like Prevention of Atrocities to SCs/STs Act. USA has no such laws for crimes against races.
 - Religion: Positive ~~disc~~ enforcement for equality in India (opening religious institutions to SCs/STs) unlike USA.
- Both India and USA have come a long way in correcting historical injustices against vulnerable communities.

13. Objections to domicile-based reservation in private sector jobs on the grounds of constitutional equality and freedom are misplaced. Critically discuss.

(250 words) 15

संवैधानिक समानता और स्वतंत्रता के आधार पर निजी क्षेत्र की नौकरियों में अधिवास आधारित आरक्षण पर आपत्ति अनुचित है। समालोचनात्मक चर्चा कीजिए।

Recently, Haryana passed a law to reserve 75% of jobs in the private sector for local residents. While the Supreme Court reversed the High Court's stay on the order, certain objections against the law have come to surface.

Objections to the law	Why are they misplaced?
① Against the Constitution (Freedom of Movement (Article 19))	Article 16 clearly states that the parliament can create laws requiring residence as a requirement for employment. Hence it does not violate the constitution.
② Against Right to Equality	Exceptions towards positive discrimination are allowed as

③

Will drive
companies away
from state

per the constitution and
supreme court judgements

The law will affect only
limited number of
employees (based on
salary)

Issues with the law

①

Whether reservation in private sector is
constitutionally allowed or not.

↳ It is upto the judiciary to
interpret this.

②

Creates barriers for migrants

③

~~to~~ Restrictive for companies since they have
to hire from a smaller pool of
applicants that may not have the
required skillset.

④

Will render the state uncompetitive in the
long run.

Way Forward

→ Domicile based reservation in private sector must be allowed only for unskilled-semi skilled labour.

→ This is because of the dearth of skilled workers.

→ The reservation should not exceed 50%.

→ The reservation should occur only for a limited period in which the state should upskill its own residents and improve competitiveness.

While objections to domicile-based private sector reservations may be misplaced, the forementioned points must be kept in mind to promote national integration.

14. There have been arguments that sedition law is an attack on the very foundation of India's liberal democratic principles, as enshrined in the Constitution. Do you agree? (250 words) 15

ऐसा तर्क दिया जाता है कि राजद्रोह कानून भारत के उदार लोकतांत्रिक सिद्धांतों की नींव पर हमला है, जैसा कि संविधान में निहित हैं। क्या आप सहमत हैं?

Sedition, penalized by Article 124 of the Indian Penal Code, is a colonial era law that heavily impugns on India's liberal democratic principles.

What is sedition?

→ The act of causing hatred or 'disaffection' towards the government through printed, spoken or electronic material.

→ Can lead to imprisonment for life, seizure of passport and bar on government jobs.

Issues with Sedition law

① Historical Factors

This very law was used to attack free speech in the National Movement and

led to arrests of leaders like B. G. Tilak and Jurandranath Banerjee.

② Ill defined terms: Words like "disaffection" are ill defined and open to interpretation.

③ Excessive Punishment:

→ Seizure of Passport is against Article 21 (Right to travel abroad)
→ Bar on government jobs and life imprisonment are excessive and not commensurate to the crime.

④ Against Art 19(1): Freedom of speech and Expression, and disallows constructive criticism of the government.

⑤ Misuse: Has been misused time and again by making parties to quell dissent eg. Dr. Kafil Khan, Journalist Siddique Kappan, various comedians, etc.

Why it is needed

- ① To prevent genuine hostility towards the government.
- ② For a new democracy in 1947, it might have been needed to ensure peace.

Way Forward

- The sedition law is clearly prone to abuse and misuse, and can target civil liberties in the country, endangering its democratic principles.
- The Supreme Court has rightly kept the law in abeyance until the legislature takes action on it.

The Article 124-A of the IPC must be repealed or sufficient safeguards must be added with reduced quantum of punishment.

15. Despite Government e-Marketplace facing certain challenges, it has brought about a significant improvement in the procurement of goods and services by various government agencies. Discuss. (250 words) 15

गवर्नमेंट ई-मार्केटप्लेस द्वारा कुछ चुनौतियों का सामना करने के बावजूद, इन्होंने विभिन्न सरकारी एजेंसियों द्वारा वस्तुओं और सेवाओं की खरीद में महत्वपूर्ण सुधार किया है। चर्चा कीजिए।

The Government e-Marketplace is an electronic portal through which government departments can procure good and services.

[Improvements brought by GeM]

① Transparency

~~the~~ Industries list goods with price
↓
Government can use its cost
model to procure good and services
↓
Transparency in price, selection and
payment.

② Reduction in costs

Since industries anywhere in India can
sell on the portal, this reduces

overhead costs.

③ Common Procurement and Rating System

Various departments can procure at the same price through vendors based on their rating.

④ Digitized documentation of purchases

Helps in simplified audits, budgeting

⑤ Expeditions procurement due to digitized records, digital auctions, etc.

⑥ Can help in data analysis for testing out different procurement models and

[Challenges Faced]

① lack of training and know-how of portal usage

② Regularly appearing glitches and software bugs

- ③ Frivolous companies entering the portal to show increased price
- ④ lack of adoption by states
- ⑤ Difficulty in testing models other than the least cost model, eg- quality based model, etc.

While the GeM portal has revolutionized public procurement, the mentioned challenges must be overcome for true transparency in procurement.

16. A reformed system of recruitment, training and evaluation needs to be put in place to take forward the development of a highly efficient and accountable civil service. Discuss in the context of India. (250 words) 15

अत्यधिक कुशल और जवाबदेह सिविल सेवा के विकास को आगे बढ़ाने के लिए भर्ती, प्रशिक्षण और मूल्यांकन की एक संशोधित प्रणाली लागू करने की आवश्यकता है। भारत के संदर्भ में चर्चा कीजिए।

While the civil service in India has greatly helped in its developmental story in the past 75 years of independence, it suffers from inefficiencies and red-tapism in decision making.

Reforms in Civil Service

A. RECRUITMENT

- ① Encouraging lateral entry : The 'Generalized vs Specialized' debate continues to plague the bureaucracy.

→ There should be a mix of generalized officers and specialized lateral entry officers

- ② Specialized All India Services

- Services like All India Medical Service, All India Judicial Service and All India Environment Service should be brought in, with candidates having appropriate academic background.
- will require immense cooperation from the states

- ③ ~~ARC Recommendation~~ Hota Committee Recommendations on recruitment, eg. should be ~~recommended~~ implemented with regards to age limit, number of attempts, etc.

B. TRAINING

- ① Training in Public Relations and Ethics

→ There is a usual complaint about the bureaucracy being rule-minded and disconnected from the public

→ Training in public interactions, speaking and relations is a must.

- ② Training in Emerging Technologies

eg. Social Media and its threats, AI

and cryptocurrency, etc.

③ Retraining periodically

↳ For continuous education, eg. every 5 years.

C. EVALUATION

① Code of ^{Ethics} ~~conduct~~, and not just Code of Conduct Rules (1984) should guide civil servants.

② Performance, and not just seniority-based promotions.

③ Penalisation for unlawful/unethical behaviours but discouraging punitive transfers

④ social audits in districts for periodic evaluation of government officials.

⑤ Career-based evaluation (say every 5 years) with a possibility of dismissal upon inadequate performance.

The 2nd ARC and the Hota Committee Reforms must be brought in to ~~fix~~ ^{give} a well functioning bureaucracy.

17. Despite initiatives taken by the Indian government to achieve critical goals in the education sector, major interventions are required to tackle learning poverty as well as the persisting inequalities. Discuss. (250 words) 15

शिक्षा के क्षेत्र में महत्वपूर्ण लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करने के लिए भारत सरकार द्वारा आरंभ की गई पहलों के बावजूद, लर्निंग पावर्टी (अधिगम निर्धनता) के साथ-साथ विद्यमान असमानताओं से निपटने के लिए बड़े हस्तक्षेपों की आवश्यकता है। चर्चा कीजिए।

While India has greatly improved its literacy rate to over 75% in recent years, learning poverty and inequalities continue to plague the education sector.

Initiatives by the Government

- Samagra Shiksha Abhiyaan
- Beti Padhao Beti Bachao
- Mid-day meal scheme / POSHAN 2.0
- Schemes like Nai Roshni, Nai Manzil, Naya Savera, ~~the~~ NIPUN Bharat, etc.
- Scholarships like Prime Minister's Research Fellowship, etc.

Issues with Education in India

A. LEARNING POVERTY

- Inadequate Skillset: Majority of graduates are unskilled for jobs in the formal sector. This is

due to :

- ① Outdated curriculum
- ② Insufficient lab/technological equipment in schools
- ③ Inadequate use of educational technology in schools.

→ Early Childhood care and Education

- ① Lack of reading / numeracy skills in children (Like ASER Report by Pratham highlights this)
- ② Stunting/Wasting in children affecting educational outcomes.

B. INEQUALITY

→ Digital Divide : ① Around 50% children lack smartphone access.

- ② Digital literacy is inadequate
- ③ Exacerbated during COVID-19.

→ Private Education is very expensive in India.

↳ Eg. many students go abroad for medical studies.

Way ForwardA. Tackling Learning Poverty

- ① Implementation of NIPUN Bharat,
Student-Teacher Assessment Programme
in line with NEP-2020.
- ② Revamping curriculum to teach practical,
vocational and emerging technologies
- ③ Encouraging teaching in mother tongue
- ④ Use of Educational Technology like
smart boards, NPTEL, etc.

B. Tackling Inequality

- ① Digital literacy and awareness
- ② Supply of learning tablets
- ③ Encouraging e-learning through portals
like DIKSHA, SWAYAM, etc.

The NEP-2020 has been a revolutionary
guiding policy towards a skilled India.

It should be implemented in letter and
spirit.

18. In light of the burgeoning burden of both communicable and non-communicable diseases, there is a need to revamp the public health surveillance system in India. Discuss. (250 words) 15

संचारी और गैर-संचारी दोनों प्रकार के रोगों के बढ़ते बोझ के आलोक में, भारत में सार्वजनिक स्वास्थ्य निगरानी प्रणाली में सुधार की आवश्यकता है। चर्चा कीजिए।

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the inefficiency of and inadequacies of India's public health surveillance, and it needs to be revamped.

Limitations of the system

→ lack of technological infrastructure

(a) like computers, smartphones, etc. especially in rural areas, which makes record keeping and surveillance difficult.

(b) Digital Divide: Due to only 50% of population owning smartphones, the remaining 50% is out of the surveillance net of Aarogya Setu, COWIN, etc.

(c) Privacy Issues: Apps like Aarogya Setu which store a lot of personal data could

potentially be misused, especially in the absence of a Data Protection Law.

(d) Lack of digitized health records: Especially the medical history in case of non-communicable diseases like heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, etc; which are though not contagious, but can run in the family.

(e) Low GDP expenditure on health sector, close to 1.3 % only.

Why the need to revamp?

→ communicable ~~diseases~~ diseases

① to prepare for COVID-19 like future pandemics

↳ contact tracing
↳ data analytics

② to disseminate information about threats and precautions

③ to streamline vaccination programmes

→ Non communicable diseases

- ① to perform longitudinal (time-based) checks on cancer, diabetes, etc patients
- ② For digitised records for insurance, medical access, etc.

Way Forward

→ Lessons from COVID-19 : Need to improve digital literacy, effective apps for contact tracing, hospital bed availability, etc.

→ Digital infrastructure: computers, high-speed internet and smartphones especially in rural areas.

→ Digitisation of health records. eg. NDHM

With India's population aging starting to age rapidly from the 2040s, it is high time that we revamp the public health surveillance system.

19. The repercussions of the ongoing economic crisis in Sri Lanka extend beyond its borders. Discuss with specific reference to India. Also, mention the steps that India has taken to assist Sri Lanka tide over the crisis.

(250 words) 15

श्रीलंका में जारी आर्थिक संकट का प्रभाव उसकी सीमाओं से परे भी पड़ रहा है। भारत के विशिष्ट संदर्भ में विवेचना कीजिए। साथ ही, उन कदमों का भी उल्लेख कीजिए जो भारत ने इस संकट से निपटने में श्रीलंका की सहायता के लिए उठाए हैं।

The economic crisis in Sri Lanka that started off as a protest and culminated in a virtual revolution has sent warning signals across the globe as to what fanciful economics can do.

Repercussions of the Sri Lanka's crisis beyond borders

→ Economic Front

- Sri Lanka had defaulted on its debt and had huge fiscal deficit.
- India and many Indian states suffer from major twin deficit issues, and while India is unlikely to default on debt, the Sri Lankan crisis clearly offers a warning.

→ Social Front

- Influx of refugees: especially into Southern states like Tamil Nadu
- Social unrest in Sri Lanka can cause spillover effect in Tamil Nadu.

→ Security

- A crisis hit Sri Lanka can become a hub for terrorism and drug trafficking which can cause security issues in India
- Persecution of minorities like Tamils can cause unrest and growth of terrorist outfits in Tamil Nadu.

Positive Impact on India

- Improved relations with Sri Lanka on account of India's assistance
- Kochi Port emerging as alternate for Colombo Port.
- Tourism being diverted to India

India's Assistance to Sri Lanka

- \$3.8 billion Line of Credit
- Restructuring of existing loans.
- Aid in the form of fuel, milk and grain supply.
- Promised assistance in new policy making
- Persuading IMF to extend aid to Sri Lanka
- Accepted Tamil Refugees
- Cooperation between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka
- Investment in port projects by Indian businessmen.

India has shown to be a reliable partner to Sri Lanka in the times of need, as opposed to China, and this bodes well for Indian diplomacy.

20. India is a reliable partner in the Indian Ocean Region and can take on the role of being the net security provider in the region. Discuss.

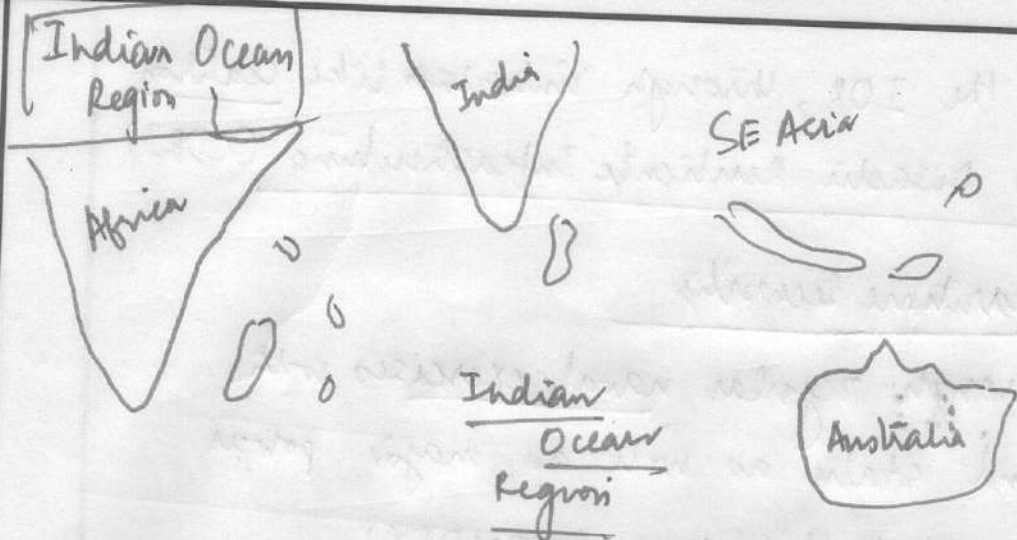
(250 words) 15

भारत हिंद महासागर क्षेत्र में एक विश्वसनीय भागीदार है और इस क्षेत्र में निवल सुरक्षा प्रदाता होने की भूमिका निभा सकता है। विवेचना कीजिए।

The Indian Ocean is considered as
'India's Backyard', and rightly so,
because India is a major security powerhouse
in the Indian Ocean Region.

Why India is a reliable partner in IOR

- Transparent, reliable investments
unlike China's debt trap diplomacy.
- Panchsheel Policy of mutual cooperation
and non-interference.
- Security initiatives
 - ↳ SAGAR (Security & Growth for All in Region)
 - ↳ Indian Ocean Rim Association
 - etc.
- Pivotal to problems of Small Island Developing States like Climate Change, etc.



Security Issues in IOR

- ① Piracy: Especially in Eastern Africa
- ② China's 'String of Pearls Policy': Bases in Djibouti, etc.
- ③ Sensitive trade routes eg. near Strait of Malacca.
- ④ Resource rich regions

How India can take a role of net security provider in the region

① Climate security

India can help in adaptation/mitigation measures of Small Island Developing States

in the IOR, through initiatives like Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

② Maritime Security

① Through regular naval exercises with Island states as well as major powers like Australia (eg. AUSINDEX)

② Use ~~nav~~ naval resources to eradicate piracy issue in the region -

③ Discourage Chinese intrusion and deft trap diplomacy ultimately helping Indian interests.

③ Economic security

① Alternative to China through soft loans that are reliable and transparent

② Help towards food security eg. Sri Lanka

India continues to remain the most important player in the IOR and must enhance security provisions to other states on all fronts.