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GENERAL STUDIES (TEST CODE : 2086)

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Q. No.	Maximum Marks	Marks Obtained
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Total Marks Obtained:

Remarks:

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Do furnish the appropriate details in the answer sheet (viz. Name, Registration Number and Test Code).
2. There are **TWENTY** questions printed in **ENGLISH**.
3. **All questions are compulsory.**
4. The number of marks carried by a question/part is indicated against it.
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 medium other than the authorized one.
6. Word limit in questions, if specified, should be adhered to.
7. Any page or portion of the page left blank in the Question-Cum-Answer Booklet must be clearly struck off.

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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.

All the Best

1. Do you agree with the view that there is a need to enact a new law for ensuring judicial accountability in India? (Answer in 150 words) 10

Judicial accountability refers to judicial standards of judgements and respect of separation of powers by exercising judicial restraint.

Need for law to ensure judicial accountability

1. Art 50 of Consti provides for separation of judiciary from executive.
2. Judiciary is the custodian and guardian of constitution; responsible for interpreting provisions and preventing abuse of power by organs.
3. Art 13 provides for judicial review and declares laws contradicting & violating Part III as void.
4. Judiciary is composed of higher Judiciary which includes supreme court and high court and lower judiciary at district level.

5. In exercise of wide powers, judiciary sometimes transgresses separation of powers through judicial activism and adventurism.

Eg: 29 scam case and smoking coal blocks for coalgate scandal.

6. However judiciary also plays an important role of filling the vacuum for legislative incompetence.

Eg: Vishakha guidelines.

7. Law for judicial accountability may control instances of judicial activism. However it suffers the risk of excessive regulation which may prevent judiciary from carrying out its role sufficiently.

8. Judiciary also struck down NJAC (99th CAA) as it was held atg basic structure doctrine.

Therefore certain changes to ensure accountability of appointment is required.

2. Constitutionally reconciling Fundamental Rights with the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs) has been a tough task since the inception of the Indian Constitution. Discuss with the help of relevant case laws. (Answer in 150 words) 10

Fundamental rights are provided under Part III of the constitution & DPSP under Part IV which account of basic rights of the citizens and guidance for state policy respectively.

Reconciliation has been arrived at through a range of judgements and constitutional amendments:

1. Champakam Dorairajan v. UoI 1950: was the first case dealing with the conflict b/w Part III and Part IV and it was held that Part IV cannot supersede Part III.
2. This led to the first constitutional amendment adding provisions of Art 15(4) and Art 16(4) for reservations and the 9th schedule.

3. Again under TMA Pai case, Supreme Court held that provisions of Fundamental rights can be abridged for giving effect to DPSP.
4. 24th and 25th Constitutional Amendments added Art 39(b) and Art 39(c) which state that any provision of FRs can be amended & changed for common good and welfare.
5. Golaknath v. State of Punjab held that Part III is sacrosanct and cannot be amended at all and supersedes DPSP.
6. Kesavananda Bharati v. UOI finally propounded the basic structure doctrine holding both FRs and DPSP in equilibrium therefore, currently both have been reconciled according to the basic structure.

3. Discuss the functions performed by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and its role in shaping policy-making in India. (Answer in 150 words) 10

Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is an executive body which includes officers and be bureaucrats working directly for the PM.

Functions of PMO :

1. PMO provides secretarial support
2. Redressal of grievances by facilitation of coordination & communication b/w ministries
3. Communication and direct responsiveness to letters and applications addressed to PM.
4. Information dissemination through various social media handles about schemes & plans of PM visits.

Role for Policy-making :

1. PMO is directly appointed by the PM and constitutes of experts from various fields.
2. PMO works in close tandem with the cabinet and secretaries of various ministries to ensure coordination and integration of policy-making.
3. PMO works with NITI Aayog to develop broad vision and long-term goals for socio-economic development.
4. PMO is closely associated w various programmes like Gati Shakti to break silos in admin,

Therefore, even though not a constitutional body, PMO plays a vital role for maintaining uniformity.

4. Re-examination and reconsideration of the provisions of Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) requires striking a balance between concerns of civil liberties and human rights, and maintaining and protecting the sovereignty and integrity of India. Comment. (Answer in 150 words) 10

Supreme Court in 2021 has put an indefinite stay on all ongoing cases of sedition under sec 124A and has barred constitution of any fresh cases to give govt. time to reconsider and amend sec 124A.

→ Need for sedition:

1. Art 19(2) provides for reasonable restrictions on freedoms provided under Art 19; which include restrictions to protect sovereignty and integrity of India
2. Colonial past: Sedition was utilized as a tool to drown dissent but was added post independence to fight fissiparous tendencies of princely states & communal splits.

→ Balance b/w civil liberties and sovereignty and integrity:

1. Sec 124A provides that disaffection against state causing violence or threat thereof amounts to sedition. Hence the purpose of the section is to prevent violence, public disorder and national security as upheld by AK Gopalan v. State of Madras.
2. Balwant Singh v. State of Punjab held that only those words & actions which lead to violence will be seditious and mere sloganeering cannot attract it. & therefore, in light of increased cases & increase in rate of conviction from 3% in 2016 to 35% in 2019, it is important to harmonize the section with fundamental rights guaranteed.

5. "Citizen participation is key to the success of e-governance initiatives in rural India." Comment. (Answer in 150 words) 10

E-governance (e-gov) means service delivery, grievance redressal and implementation of policies through electronic and remote means.

Citizen participation key to success of e-gov in rural India:

1. E-gov includes DBT, transfer of subsidies and various services like information, weather reports, self health cards etc.
2. E-gov requires citizen participation because without technologically empowered and aware citizens, e-gov policies cannot function.
3. E-gov requires closing of digital divide as success of policies depends on ability of citizens to utilize services.

4. Ego also requires financial inclusion and elimination of unbanked populations.

Initiatives to increase citizen participation

1. JAM trinity : linking of mobile with aadhaar and bank accounts and opening of zero balance accounts has ensured financial inclusion.
2. Apps like sagarmitra which guide fishermen about navigation and weather conditions in vernacular languages.
3. soil health cards for increased input efficiency.
4. Embedding provision of social audits in various schemes like MGNREGA for PBT wages.

Therefore, capacity building & availability of devices is important for ego.

6. How far do you think the Aspirational District Programme has been able to achieve its objectives since its inception? (Answer in 150 words) 10

Aspirational Dist. Prog focuses on 356 districts that lag behind in socio-economic indicators and is implemented by Min of Rural Development and conceptualized by NTI Aayog.

Success of Aspirational Dist. Prog. -

1. ADP has successfully identified districts that need special policy focus and increased disbursement of funds.
2. ADP has helped streamline measures specific to local requirements. Eg: different policies for NE districts compared to districts in central India.
3. ADP districts have shown improved performance in

various indicators of NITI's index :

Eg: improvement in MMR and child mortality rates in all districts.

5. ADP has been lauded by World Bank for quality of implementation and infrastructure development.

Challenges in success of ADP :

1. More than 60% of the districts have still not achieved targets outlined.
2. Regional disparities as NE states lagging behind.
3. Underutilization of funds

Therefore, ADP needs to be transformed into a needs and sights-based, demand oriented prog. with increased citizen participation.

7. Technology has a crucial role to play in advancing the NGO sector and improving outcomes for beneficiaries. Discuss with examples. (Answer in 150 words) 10

NGOs as per World Bank are these organisations which work for relieving suffering and upliftment of poor.

Role of technology in advancing NGOs :

1. Helps NGOs connect with wider base for both volunteers and beneficiaries. Eg: NGOs utilize social media to popularize their agendas- etc. PETA's instagram handle important for awareness.
2. Technology helps NGOs employ remotely: many people volunteer for Teach India campaigns online.
3. Technology helps increase funds and crowdfunding through marketing.

Role of technology in improving outcomes :

1. Technology has increased outreach of NGOs with increased uses of mobiles.
2. Teach India campaign in association w digital education campaigns of govt. have made education more accessible and available.
3. Smile Foundation working for children uses technology to connect with beneficiaries.
4. NGOs working for geriatric care employ technology for remote diagnosis and support through telemedicine.
5. ASER utilizes technology to conduct surveys remotely.

Therefore, digitalization improves outcomes by connecting and enhancing interaction & participation.

8. Discuss the implications associated with the entry of foreign educational institutions for technical and higher education in India. (Answer in 150 words) 10

Foreign educational institutes are now allowed to open campuses in India and are allowed to invest through automatic FDI route.

Implications with entry of foreign institutions for technical education :

1. Increased quality of research with eminent institutions like MIT working with IITs and guiding R&D environment.
2. Increased focus on doctoral efforts instead of viewing technical education only for employment purposes.
3. Increased investments for infrastructure development.

4. Accessibility to state of the art technology for labs and campuses.

⇒ Implications for higher education

1. Increased cost of education:
hamper affordability of higher education and further marginalize poor.

2. Hamper accessibility of students with lower proficiency in English and from rural backgrounds.

3. It may increase availability as no. of institutions may be increasing leading to improved enrollment.

Therefore, policy needs to be formulated in a way to tackle obstacles while harnessing benefits.

9. The flourishing relationship between India and countries of Latin America has become a critical element of India's foreign policy. Examine. (Answer in 150 words) 10

Latin America includes nations of South America and Caribbean islands which are similar in goals and aspirations to India being part of global south.

Flourishing relationship —

1. Energy & countries like Venezuela, Guyana being rich in oil and mineral deposits.
2. Trade: has increased manifold and Latin America as a whole is India's 5th largest trading partner.
3. Critical minerals: Lithium triangle of Argentina.

Bolivia and Chile are important for EV and semiconductors.

4. South-South cooperation provides platform to discuss common goals.

Challenges to relationship

1. Distance b/w India and Latin America has been a big factor for lukewarm contact.
2. Lack of investments and utilizing trade potential — India has a trade agreement with Mercosur but lags behind with other nations.

Therefore, dedicated policy & increased focus can help India build a holistic equation.

10. What is debt-trap diplomacy? How does China's debt-trap diplomacy impact India's interests in its neighbourhood? (Answer in 150 words) 10

Debt trap diplomacy is when the creditor country deliberately flows credit into the debtor country with intention of leveraging economic and territorial benefits because they know the debtor country will faulter.

China's debt trap diplomacy impacts India's interest -

1. Threat of sovereignty and integrity of India: Eg: CPEC passes through POK.
2. Security threats: Eg: China's string of pearls is capturing strategic points like

Hambantotta of Sri Lanka and Gwadar in Pakistan to surround India.

3. Eating into India's sphere of influence: China utilizes debt trap diplomacy to promote anti-India sentiment

Eg: "India Out" movement in Maldives and funding to leftist parties in Nepal.

4. Impact India's trade relations

China is biggest trading partner of all South Asian nations.

Therefore, debt trap diplomacy of China threatens India's interests as it indirectly influences all aspects of Indian foreign policy.

11. Despite being an amalgamation of various constitutions from across the world, the Indian Constitution imbibes social justice, pluralism, and equality through its various provisions. Comment. (Answer in 250 words) 15

Indian Constitution is an amalgamation of various constitutions with inspired provisions from various countries. Eg: fundamental rights from USA, parliamentary democracy from Westminster.

Despite being an amalgamation India constitution has not copied straight but has tweaked every provision to suit Indian conditions -

1. Social Justice's affirmative action and provision of reservations for marginalized is unique to India. Hence even though motivated by Bill of Right - USA, some

justice has unique provisions:

i) Art 15(3) provides for sp. provisions for women and children.

ii) Art 15(4) provides for reservation for educationally & socially backward.

iii) Art 16(4) provides for reservations in public employment.

→ DPSP are inspired from Ireland but many provisions are unique to India:

i) Art 43 : provides for cooperatives.

ii) Art 39(b) allows state to ensure distribution of wealth.

2. For Pluralism — Indian Constitution has unique provision to secure diversity which are not found anywhere —

i) Art 25 provides for Indian version of secularism which allows state to interfere for upliftment and aid.

ii) Art 30: provides safeguards to minorities to manage their institutions.

3. For Equality — Even though Art 14 provides only for procedural equality; scope has been widened to include due process by Maneka Gandhi case.

Therefore, Indian Constitution tactfully deals with Indian requirements.

12. Recent developments have brought to light the issue of criminalizing marital rape in India. Analyse the implications of ensuring legal protection for victims of marital rape in the country. (Answer in 250 words) 15

India doesnot recognise marital rape as an offence under IPC and debate around same is ongoing. Marital rape constitutes forced intercourse or assault by husband on his wife.

Implications on criminalizing marital rape includes both positives and challenges. Positive implications are:

1. Protection of women and securing their autonomy and personal liberty according to Art 21.
2. Currently women have no legal recourse and safeguards

against this heinous offence.

3. Uphold equality under Art 14 - even though rape is a severe, cognizable and non-bailable offence under IPC; similar treatment is not accorded to victims of marital rape.

4. Gender equity and empowerment of women as provided by Art 15(3) for special provisions

⇒ challenges to criminalizing -

1. Ground for divorce : according to Hindu Marriage Act, denial of conjugal rights amounts to a ground for divorce.

2. Abuse of provision like
Sec 498A preventing dowry
is amongst the most abused
sections of IPC to stagnate
husband and his family.
3. Lack of evidence and
difficulty in procedure;
defining the offence and
grounds for evidence are
difficult and complicated.
4. Against societal traditions
and marriage practises;
Personal laws are not
uniform and such an act
will require amendments to
various laws.

Therefore, even though multiple
challenges exist it is of
utmost importance that offence be
criminalized.

13. "The Indian model of federalism has been criticized for being too centralized, but it also provides adequate space and autonomy to the states." Analyse. (Answer in 250 words) 15

Indian federalism has two unique aspects of a unitary bias ~~for~~ centre and asymmetrical federalism b/w states.

Allegations of over centralization-

1. Art 246 and VII Schedule provide for distribution of subjects b/w centre and states.
List of centre has 98 subjects whereas states have only 56.
2. Art 248 provides Residuary powers with the centre.
3. Art 368 allows only the parliament to make constitutional amendments.

4. Art 153: Governor - head of executive of the state serves under pleasure of President.
5. President appoints members of higher judiciary.
6. Art 356 provides for President Rule in States upon report of governor.
7. Art 280: Finance Comm. appointed by President.

Adequate space and autonomy:

1. Federalism is secured as Centre is barred from legislating on matters within state list Eg: as agriculture was part of state list, farm laws were revoked.
2. Adequate provisions for securing independence in

Election and function of State Executive and Legislature

3. Art 368 amendments which have significant impact on states must be ratified by 50% of the states. Eg: GST Act was ratified.
4. Art 54: Election of President includes both MLAs and MPs in electoral college.
5. Rajya Sabha functions as Council of states and amendments to provisions like All India Services etc. can be only be initiated in Rajya Sabha.

Therefore, despite the unitary bias, states have autonomy of action & finances in their realm.

14. The recent judgment of the Supreme Court on appointments to the Election Commission of India (ECI) has fundamentally changed the appointment process and can have potentially far-reaching implications. Discuss. (Answer in 250 words)

15

In 2023 SC through Anoop Baranwal v. UOI has radically transformed appointment process of Election Commissioner.

Earlier, ECI was appointed by Central Govt according to Art 324 of Constitution. Problems with erstwhile system -

1. Central bias and overcentralization
2. Lack of transparency & accountability in appointment process.
3. As Constitution does not specify any qualifications for appointment, Centre would appoint (CEC) according to own preference.

This led to doubt about independence of functioning of ECI. However there do exist many constitutional provisions to safeguard autonomy :

1. Security of Tenure : CEC and ECs can only be removed acc to procedure to remove SC judges.
2. Conditions of service cannot be altered to their disadvantage
3. Eligible to appointment after retirement.

However to ensure greater autonomy and independence the following changes have been made -

selection committee for choosing CEC will include PM, leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha & CJI.

Implications —

1. Even though it will ensure independence & impartiality of selection process, it can be questioned on grounds of separation of powers.
2. It amounts to judicial activism as new guidelines should have been initiated by constitutional amendment by Parliament.

Therefore, new process of selection will empower CEC further and will strengthen democracy in India.

15. Integration with the global trends and opening up of the economy has resulted in diversified challenges for the civil services, which require holistic reforms for efficient service delivery. Discuss. (Answer in 250 words) 15

Post 1991 LPG reforms, India has undergone massive economic growth and structural transformations.

Diversified challenges for civil services -

1. Integration with global trends like increased market competition and capitalism have led to jobless growth in India causing biggest challenge of skilling and availability of employment
2. Opening of global economy has caused rapid increase of service sector with

- problem of missing middle.
3. Law and border challenges
due to idle youth &
increased disparities.
 4. Criminalization of politics
due to increased money &
muscle power.

Reforms for Efficient service
delivery by civil services —

1. CPGRAMS is utilized for
grievance redressal.
2. Civil servants need to
go through constant
capacity building and
training ensured by
Karmayogi Yojna.

3. Adoption of Best Practices from Brazil to involve citizens through constant feedback on performance of civil servants.
4. From generalists to experts by transforming both recruitment process and qualifications.
5. Augmenting skills through dynamic training for dealing with diversified challenges.

Therefore, innovation & creativity are required to deal with new challenges.

16. What role can open data play in promoting transparency and accountability in e-governance in India? What are the challenges in ensuring the quality and reliability of open data in the country? (Answer in 250 words) 15

E-governance is conduct of
governance service, formulation
and implementation of policy
using electronic means.

Role of open data in transparency
and accountability :

1. Open data means data
accessible for public scrutiny
and open to all for
information & transparency.
2. Open data on outcomes of
schemes and utilization
of funds can ensure
public accountability and
deterrence of corruption.

3. Enhance citizen participation and role in decision-making through access to information.
4. Regular social audits and accountability enhanced as open data allows increased awareness & knowledge.

Challenges in quality and reliability of open data -

1. Privacy concerns : in absence of data protection framework such open data is susceptible to being misused.
2. Quality of such data is often suboptimal as no provision standardising such data exist.

3. Open data is often outdated and is not updated acc. to changes and hence has low utility.
4. Sec 8 of RTI allows denial of sharing of public data for privacy & security concerns.
5. No mechanism to check the veracity and reliability of such data leading to misrepresentation and false reporting.

Therefore, open data guidelines need to be formulated & implemented to ensure utility balanced with privacy concerns.

17. To reduce the prevalence of 'zero food' children in India, maternal nutrition needs to be made a priority. Comment. (Answer in 250 words) 15

"Zero food" children refer to children suffering from acute intergenerational malnutrition.

According to NFHS 5: 35% children are stunted and 15% children are wasted.

Maternal nutrition needs -

1. Children suffer from malnutrition due to poor maternal health during pregnancy leading to deficiencies and distorted cognitive abilities.
2. Maternal nutrition needs are ignored as women are not adequately

educated and suffer from chronic denial of nutrition needs.

3. Poverty and lack of diversification of PDS foodgrains is another reason why maternal nutrition needs are unmet.

4. Detrimental traditional practices of double burden on women of household chores.

Initiatives to enhance maternal nutrition needs —

1. ASHA and anganwadi services available to all rural pregnant and lactating mothers to spread awareness and ensure basic vitamins and drugs are available.

2. ICDS - flagship prog. of Min of Women ensures delivery of nutritional food.
3. Janani Suraksha Yojna and Matritva Vandana Yojna also focus on maternal nutrition needs.

⇒ Steps to be taken -

1. Diversify PDS distributive grains eg. Karnataka includes pulses.
2. Increased availability of multivitamins through ASHA and increased awareness about importance of maternal nutrition.

Therefore, to tackle the problem of zero children, Indian mothers need focus and priority.

18. Recently, the Central government exempted all foods and drugs for rare diseases imported by people for personal use from customs duty. What are the concerns related to rare diseases as a public health issue in India? How can these be resolved? (Answer in 250 words) 15

Rare diseases are those which bother only a meagre part of population but are extremely fatal and need priority focus eg: sickle cell anaemia, thalassaemia etc.

Concerns :

1. Affordability and availability of treatment - often these diseases require very expensive procedures & medicines thereby being called orphan drugs.
2. Lack of accessibility as very few institutions &

hospitals provide treatment.

3. Lack of awareness about disease and cures.
4. Lack of investment in research and innovations
5. Lack of infrastructure & private investment.

Resolution -

1. Govt has recently passed an Act - Rare Diseases (Prevention & Cure) for making treatment available.
2. It has enlarged the no. of rare diseases.
3. Compulsory licensing under patent regime allows govt to produce

- medication without permission.
4. Awareness about diseases and widespread awareness about prevention. Eg: rare diseases can be prevented if parents undergo genetic check up for diseases like sickle cell anaemia.
 5. Increased public investment in developing infra and increasing no. of hospitals.
 6. PPP model for attracting in private investment for research.

Therefore, increased public expenditure, improved patent regime and increased awareness can help tackle.

19. For realistic and effective collaborations to take place in the Indo-Pacific region, there is a need to acknowledge and recognize the underlining intention of the various countries with stakes in the region. Discuss. (Answer in 250 words) 15

Indo-Pacific region includes
countries on East Coast of Africa
to West Coast of USA, stretching
across both Indian and
Pacific Ocean.

varied divergences in intentions

1. USA has a confrontational
approach to Indo-Pacific &
intends to directly compete
with China's dominance.
2. European and ASEAN
countries on the other
hand have a cooperative
approach and want to
Co-opt China.

3. USA intends to strengthen maritime security with platforms like AIIB & Quad.

4. ASEAN nations do not favour militarization but connectivity and maritime cooperation.

5. India must engage with nations based on their intentions. Eg: it participated in Quad which is not a security alliance unlike AIIB.

⇒ Convergences in intentions:

despite various divergences all nations like USA, Japan, Australia, EU and India, ASEAN agree to certain principles -

1. Connectivity and independent
and free navigation.
2. Diversification of supply chains
through partnerships like
IPEF.
3. Rules-based maritime relations
and upholding provision of
UNCLOS.
4. Maritime cooperation to
increase trade & deter
illicit activities like piracy.

Therefore, Indo-Pacific being the playground for major nations and critical for countering Chinese aggression needs to be tactfully managed by India.

20. There is a need to address the underlying challenges, both internal and external, in the North-Eastern region of India before it can serve as a pivotal connecting space between India and its neighbours. Comment. (Answer in 250 words) 15

North Eastern region includes 8 states and is territorially and historically disconnected with mainland but is very crucial for India's "Act East" and "Neighbourhood first policy."

Internal challenges:

1. Lack of transport and connectivity - Northeast is separated from mainland by narrow Siliguri corridor.
2. Ethno-nationalism and ethnic violence : NE has suffered from extremism

and ethnic clashes. AFSPA is enforced still on Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland, Manipur; Recent ethnic violence & riots b/w Meities & Kuris in Manipur.

3. Susceptibility to natural disasters being located on sensitive tectonic zone of Himalayas & flooding of rivers like Brahmaputra.

⇒ External challenges -

1. All states of NE share international borders & suffer from issues of smuggling and trafficking.

2. Illegal immigration from bordering states Eg: Bangladesh.
3. Proximity to golden crescent and drug abuse in youth from Myanmar, Thailand etc.

⇒ Pivotal role foreign policy —

1. NE is important link connecting India to Southeast Asia through land.
2. Cultural and ethnic ties among people across borders must be fostered.
3. Various agreements like BBIN - MVA and Transmodal Kaladan Connectivity etc.

Therefore, NE has to be holistically integrated to reap benefits.