



Rau's IAS
Study Circle
— Since 1953 —

MAINS TEST SERIES 2022

**Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social
Justice and International Relations**

TEST NO.: FLT-3(GS-2)



SAMPLE ANSWERS

► QUESTION TAGS FOR TESTS

- **DEFINE** - Give the precise meaning of
- **ENUMERATE/ MENTION/ HIGHLIGHT** - List out ALL the relevant points briefly (don't get into details). Note: Width is more important than depth.
- **DESCRIBE/ EXPLAIN / ELUCIDATE/ SUBSTANTIATE / ELABORATE/ ILLUSTRATE / CLARIFY** - Bring clarity by giving relevant details (reasons, illustration, data, facts, examples, etc.)
- **ACCOUNT FOR / GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF** - Provide a detailed narrative about the subject in question
- **DISTINGUISH / DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN** - Bring out the differences between the subjects in question (or relationship if any between them)
- **COMMENT** - Provide view-point or opinion on the subject in question. Conclusion is necessary.
- **ANALYZE/ DISCUSS** - Explore the various dimensions of the subject in detail. State clearly the pros and cons or argue for and against. Authenticate by giving examples or support your argument (or stand point) by giving evidence or reasons. Conclusion is necessary.

Please note:

- Give examples/ data wherever required to authenticate your arguments.
- In Geography, draw diagrams wherever possible.
- Understand the subject and demand of the question and get straight to the point.

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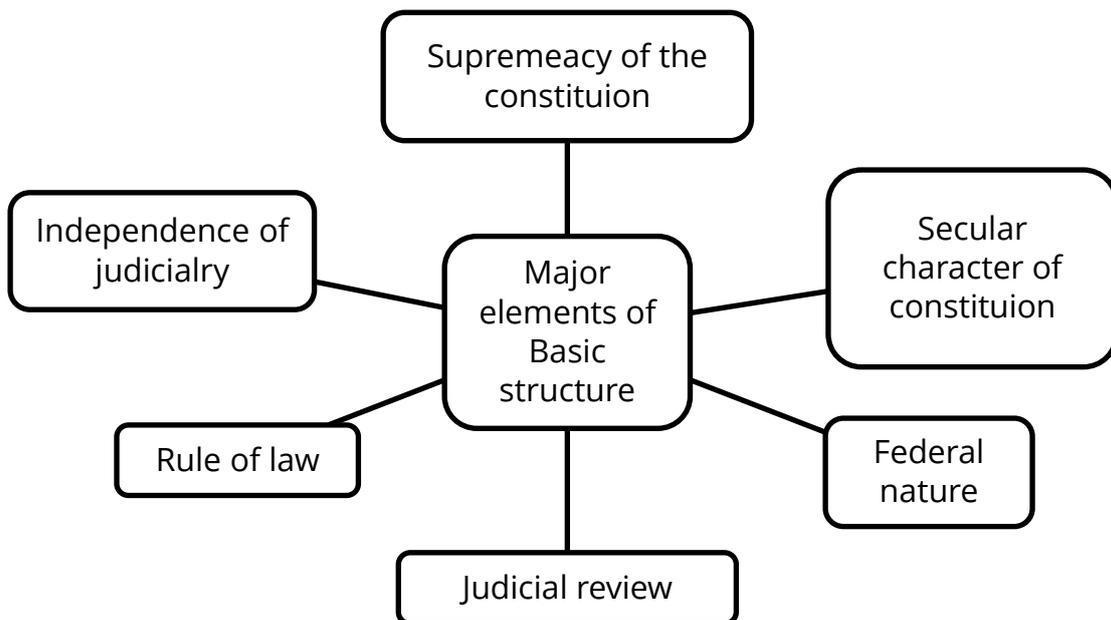
1. **To what extent do you think that the 'Basic Structure Doctrine' has been useful in upholding the essence of the Indian Constitution, as envisaged by its framers? (150 words)**

10

- **Introduction:** About basic structure doctrine and its examples.
- **Body:** Success and concerns associated with the doctrine.
- **Conclusion:** Doctrine holds up essence of the Indian constitution.

Basic structure doctrine as laid down in the famous **Kesavananda Bharati Judgment 1973** can be understood as those parts of the constitution without which the constitution would lose its essence.

The doctrine being evolved over the years through judicial pronouncements, today accepts the following provisions as part of the basic structure:



Success

- Preserves the sanctity of the constitution. Ex: In IR Coelho case, SC declared "Judicial review" as a part of basic structure and prevented parliament from taking shelter under 9th schedule.
- Preserved the secular fabric of multicultural Indian society. Ex: S.R. Bommai case (1994).
- Provides protection to the citizens against excesses of the state.

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- Help maintain the balance between organs of the state.

Concerns

- Has no constitutional or legal basis, amounts to rewriting the constitution.
- Has been ineffective to curb threats to parliamentary democracy and federalism Ex- Imposition of Emergency.
- Gives excessive primacy to the judiciary and disturbs the balance of power.

Keeping in view of these concerns, SC in *Kuldip Nayyar case* argued that application of the doctrine should be limited to constitutional amendments but not ordinary laws. The doctrine, though subject to intense debate, still continues to hold up key constitutional provisions as envisaged by our forefathers.



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2.

The Tribal Sub-Plan approach is followed to integrate the tribes in the development process. In this context, examine the effectiveness of the approach. (150 words)

10

- **Introduction:** Write about the tribal sub-plan.
- **Body:** Write about the effectiveness of the tribal sub-plan approach in addressing the issues of tribals.
- **Conclusion:** Conclude with the relevant statements.

The tribal sub-plan aims to achieve social economic development among scheduled tribes through substantial reduction in poverty, unemployment, by providing health & education services and creation of productive assets.

Effectiveness of the tribal sub-plan approach

- **Better Sex Ratio:** ST at 990, India at 933 per 1000 males.
- **Reduced Mortality:** Infant mortality is reduced by almost 45%.
- **Human Trafficking:** Reporting at just 0.6% in India is commendable progress.
- **Enrollment increased:** In higher education, increased from 6.6%, 2006 to 13.5%, 2015.
- **Women Representation:** Of 43% women in panchayats, ST women accounts for 19%.
- **Unemployment Rate:** It has reduced and stood at 4.3% in 2020

However there are some loopholes that need to be addressed as pointed out by the Public account committee report such as funds not being transferred into a non-lapsable fund, lack of segregation of TSP funds under a separate head, Nodal units were not set up for monitoring the implementation of TSP.

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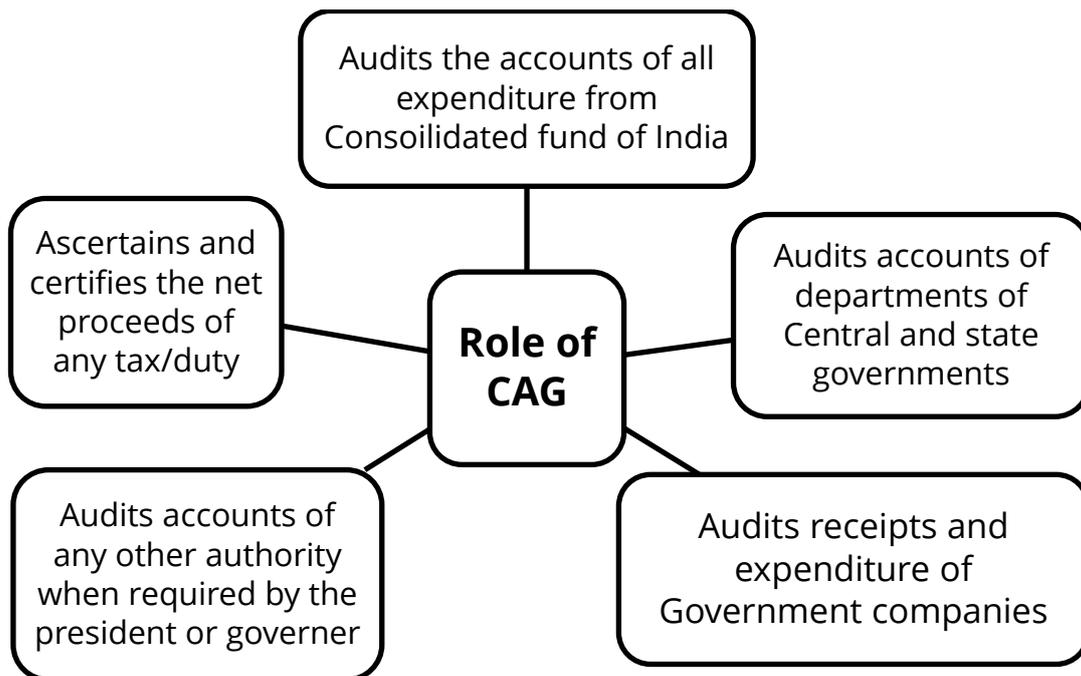
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3. **Discuss the role of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) as the guardian of public finances of the Government of India. What are the concerns affecting its functioning? (150 words)**

10

- **Introduction:** Article 148 and CAG's (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act empowering CAG in its audit functions.
- **Body:** Accounts audited by CAG & Concerns on CAG's functions.
- **Conclusion:** Suggested Reforms.

Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) is regarded as the guardian of public purse. Article 149 and CAG's (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act governs the role and duties of CAG as the Supreme Audit Institution of India.



Concerns

- **Independence:** There are no qualifications or selection criteria mentioned in the constitution and it resulted in lack of transparency in the appointment procedure.
- **Shorter tenure:** Although the Constitution provides for a 6-year term to the CAG, the cap of 65 years of age has recently been reducing the actual durations of succeeding CAGs, which hinders the independent

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and proper operation of the institution by preventing continuity in the leadership and reduced expertise.

- **Access to records:** Though the CAG has the authority to inspect any Government office, often the supply of records is denied or inordinately delayed with the sole objective of obstructing meaningful audit.
- **Limited role:** CAG's role in auditing private companies and NGOs is very limited and its jurisdiction has not been updated to cope with the changes in the Indian economy such as LPG reforms, the increasing role of civil society & NGOs and PPP mode of investments.
- **Post-Mortem Authority:** CAG, In India, has no control over the issue of money from the consolidated fund and considered only at the audit stage when the expenditure has already taken place.

Thus, it is crucial to preserve the CAG's independence and redefine its role with the changing economic conditions to enable it to serve as a key pillar in the framework of the constitution's accountability measures.



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4. **The Indian Parliamentary System is not entirely based on the Westminster Model of Britain. Evaluate. (150 words)**

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- **Introduction:** Westminster form of government adopted by most commonwealth countries.
- **Body:** Salient Features of Westminster form of Government + Difference with India.
- **Conclusion:** Suggested Reforms.

The Westminster form of government was adopted by most commonwealth countries including India. Despite basic similarities in the form and functioning of government, there are still certain vital differences between the two.

Salient Features of Westminster form of Government

- Holding periodic democratic elections
- Head of State holding nominal power
- De facto executive branch usually made up of members of legislature
- Senior members of executive part of the Cabinet
- Presence of formal opposition parties
- Ability of lower house to dismiss the government or Parliament to be dissolved
- Defeat of the government by passing no confidence motion or by non-passing of Budget
- Independent public service

The Difference

- India believes in Constitutional Supremacy as against Parliamentary Supremacy of Britain.
- In India, rights are guaranteed by the Constitution whereas in Britain, rights are statutory in nature.
- In India, the Prime Minister can be a member of either house of Parliament whereas in Britain, the PM must be from the lower house.
- The idea of a shadow cabinet does not exist in India.

Despite the differences, India has been successful in implementing the Westminster form of Government based on constitutional supremacy.

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5. In the light of increasing cases of contempt of court in recent times, analyse its relevance in India. (150 words)

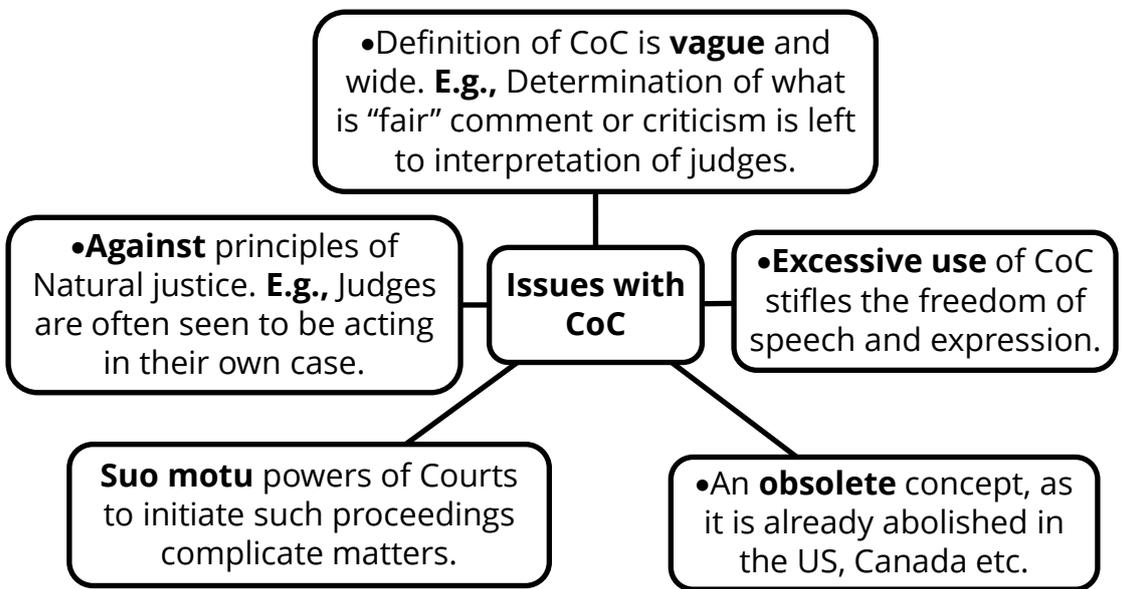
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- **Introduction:** Contempt of Court and Article 19.
- **Body:**
 - Highlight the key issues with Contempt of Court.
 - Mention the arguments against the abolition of the CoC Act, 1971.
- **Conclusion:** Need for the judiciary to achieve public confidence through transparent and accountable mechanisms.

Contempt of Court (CoC) refers to showing disrespect to the dignity and authority of the court. Article 19(2) of the Constitution includes CoC as a reasonable restriction to freedom of speech and expression.

It is regulated under the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 and includes Civil and Criminal contempt.

However, excessive use of the provision is evident from a high number of contempt cases pending in various High Courts and the Supreme Court.



Arguments against the abolition of CoC Act

- Allows independent working of the judiciary.
- High number of civil and criminal contempt of cases warrants its continuation.

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- Powers of contempt of SC (Art. 129) and HCs (Art. 215) are independent of CoC Act 1971. So, abolition of the Act would have no effect.
- Adequate safeguards were introduced through an amendment to the act in 2006, which include:
 - Fair and factual reporting.
 - Honest criticism with no intention to interfere with Judiciary.
 - Good in the larger public interest.

In a democracy, there is no need for any act to vindicate judges' dignity and authority; it comes from public confidence in the judiciary, which depends upon transparency and accountability in judicial proceedings.



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6. **The United Nations (UN) has failed to hold the accountability of the superpowers and to stop wars. In this context, critically discuss the relevance of the multilateral organizations, like the UN, in the 21st century. (150 words)**

10

- **Introduction:** Justify the statement given in the question.
- **Body:**
 - Issues that impacting the relevance of UN.
 - Relevance of multilateral organizations like UN.
- **Conclusion:** Conclude with the relevant statements.

In 2003 and 2022, USA and Russia had launched attacks against Iraq and Ukraine respectively, without consulting the UN.

Issues impacting the relevance of UN

- **Concentration of powers:** Only five members have permanent membership in the UNSC
- **Continuation of wars:** UN's inability to deal with the Afghanistan and Syrian issues raised questions on its relevance.
- **Opaque decision making process:** The five permanent members meet privately and present their resolutions to the UN.
- **Global commons:** Emerging issues such as cyber-crimes, call for effective multilateral negotiations based on consensus.

The relevance of UN

- **Peace and security:** It maintains international peace and security according to the International principles. E.g.: Passed resolution for elimination of nuclear weapons
- **Investigate:** It investigates disputes or situations which might lead to international fiction. E.g.: Established ICJ and ICC
- **Trusteeship function:** It exercises the trusteeship functions in strategic areas.
- **Addressing social issues:** UN is actively engaging with civil society in addressing poverty, pandemic, etc.

Keeping in step with the Decolonising world, restructuring of the UN will make the body to resolve armed conflicts and humanitarian crises.

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7. Discuss why limited presence in Taliban-led Afghanistan is the key for protecting India's long-term interests. (150 words)

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- **Introduction:** Highlight India's stand towards Afghanistan after Taliban takeover.
- **Body:** Mention the factors why India needs a limited presence in Afghanistan including security reasons, trade relations etc.
- **Conclusion:** Suggest a way forward and conclude appropriately.

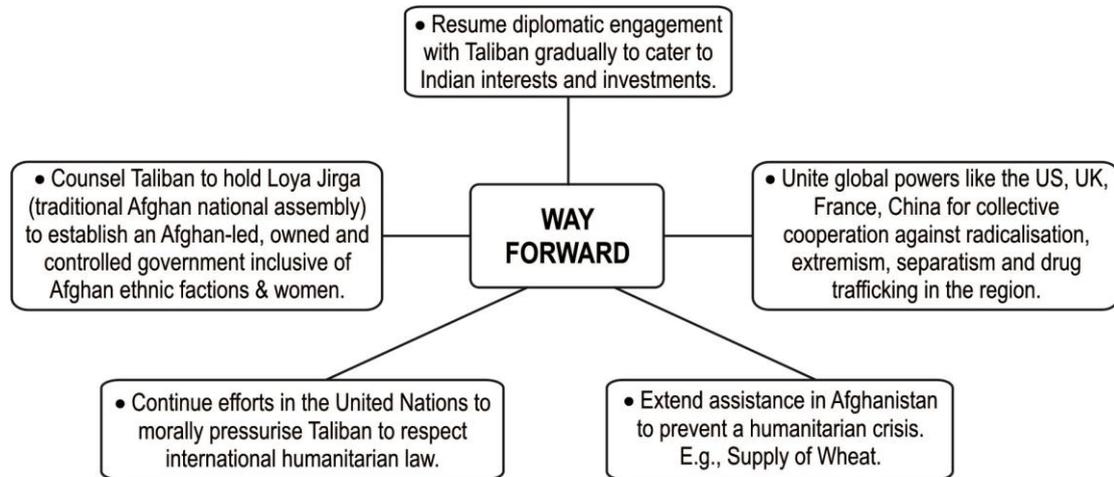
India maintained a strong anti-Taliban stance after Afghanistan's takeover by Taliban, and closed its Kabul embassy. However, now India is thinking to set up a sub-embassy level presence for liaison work.

Setting up a limited presence in Afghanistan is important for India in order to

- **Protect investments:** India has built landmark infrastructure projects like the Afghan Parliament Building and Salma Dam, which need to be protected for goodwill.
- **Regional security:** India needs to ensure Afghanistan is not used for anti-India terror activities by terrorist organisations (Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba) and contain fundamentalism in South Asia.
- **Avoid the formation** of new geopolitical nexus like China-Pakistan-Taliban against Indian interests.
- **Resume trade relations** with Afghanistan owing to its geo-economic importance. **E.g.,** important transit hub for India's trade & access to landlocked Central Asia, TAPI pipeline project.
- **Sustain goodwill** of Afghan citizens by some kind of official presence and humanitarian aid.

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Instability and fundamentalism in Afghanistan will encourage extremist ideologies in the region and beyond. Hence, India must engage for a stable Afghanistan through political negotiations.



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8. **Implementation of welfare schemes in India is fraught with multiple challenges. Discuss. (150 words)**

10

- **Introduction:** Role of India being a Welfare state
- **Body:** Multiple challenges witnessed in implementation of welfare schemes
- **Conclusion:** Briefly mention measures for efficient delivery of welfare benefits

Being a welfare state, Indian government plays a key role in promoting socio-economic wellbeing of its citizens through welfare schemes. However, inefficient implementation of these schemes fails to achieve desired results.

Challenges:

- **Failure to target intended beneficiaries** due to several inclusion & exclusion errors. **E.g.,** Prevalence of ghost BPL cards in PDS; Issue of unidentified households.
- **Corruption and leakages** lead to inefficiency and fail to deliver benefits to intended beneficiaries.
- **Emphasis on outputs rather than outcomes:** **E.g.,** Focus on construction of school, rather than increasing literacy rate.
- **Lack of awareness** and participation of beneficiaries in demand-driven and rights-based welfare schemes like PDS under NFSA or MGNREGA, reduces them to mere beneficiaries rather than partners in development process.
- **Structural issues** like lack of skills and unemployment remain unaddressed as the populist schemes become an end in themselves. **E.g.,** Minimum Support Price given to farmers does not address the structural reasons for agricultural crisis.
- **Hinders capacity building** and makes beneficiaries over-reliant upon government benefits.
- **Heavy burden** on exchequer limits investments and job creation.
- **Infrastructural** issues present the last-mile delivery challenges.

India needs to adopt measures like technological innovations, social audit, and better policy implementation for efficient delivery of welfare benefits.

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9. Account for the reasons for the poor state of foundational literacy and numeracy in India. Suggest some measures in this regard. (150 words)

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- **Introduction:** State of foundational literacy and numeracy in India
- **Body:** Reasons for poor state of foundational literacy and numeracy
- **Conclusion:** Need for strong foundational literacy for universal education in India

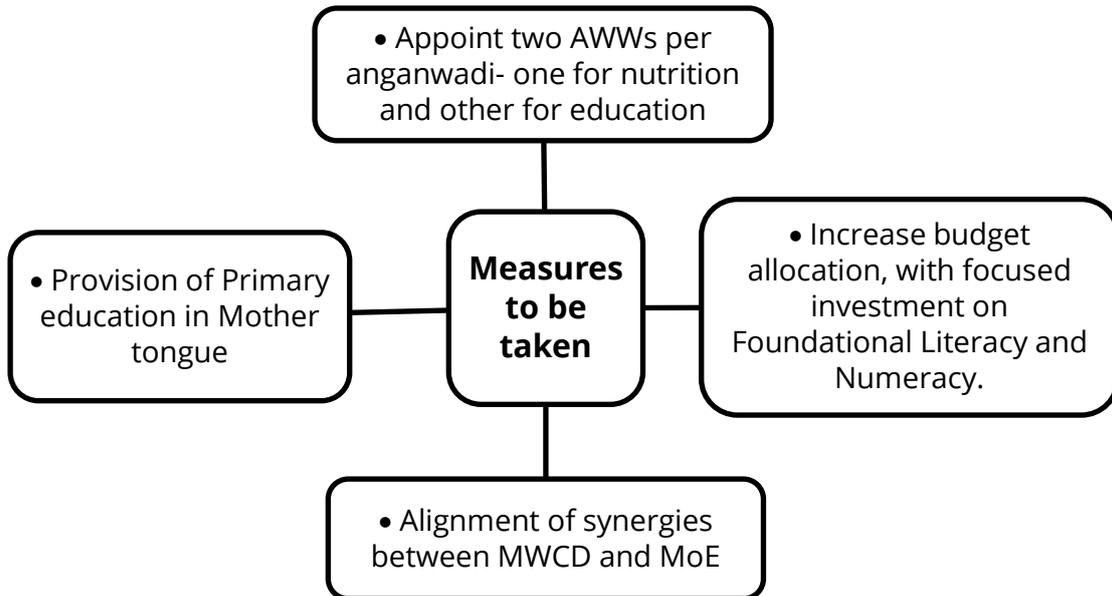
Various governmental and non-governmental surveys indicate that a large proportion of students currently in elementary school are lacking basic foundational literacy and numeracy skills.

Reasons

- **Nutritional deficiencies among children:** The relationship between nutrition, health and learning is undeniably strong. But, as per GHI 2020, India has the highest child wasting rate (17.3%) of all the countries.
- **Lack of Early childcare and education:** Over 85% of a child's cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of 6. Presently, quality ECCE is not available to crores of young children, particularly children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- **Linguistic issues:** The medium of instruction is often different from the mother tongue of children. It negatively impacts the child's motivation to engage in classroom processes.
- **Low pupil to teacher ratio:** As per the Right to Education Act (RTE, 2009) the desired Teacher Pupil ratio (TPR) has been set to 1:35. But, according to NEUPA report, around 42% of government elementary schools have only one or two teachers for all the elementary grades.
- **Poor pedagogic skills:** Dysfunctional teacher educational institutes fail to impart basic teacher training. Justice Verma commission (2012) revealed malpractices in the system of teacher education.

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Focus on the foundational learning is the need of the hour to ensure universal access to quality levels of education for all children and to achieve the real potential of demographic of India.



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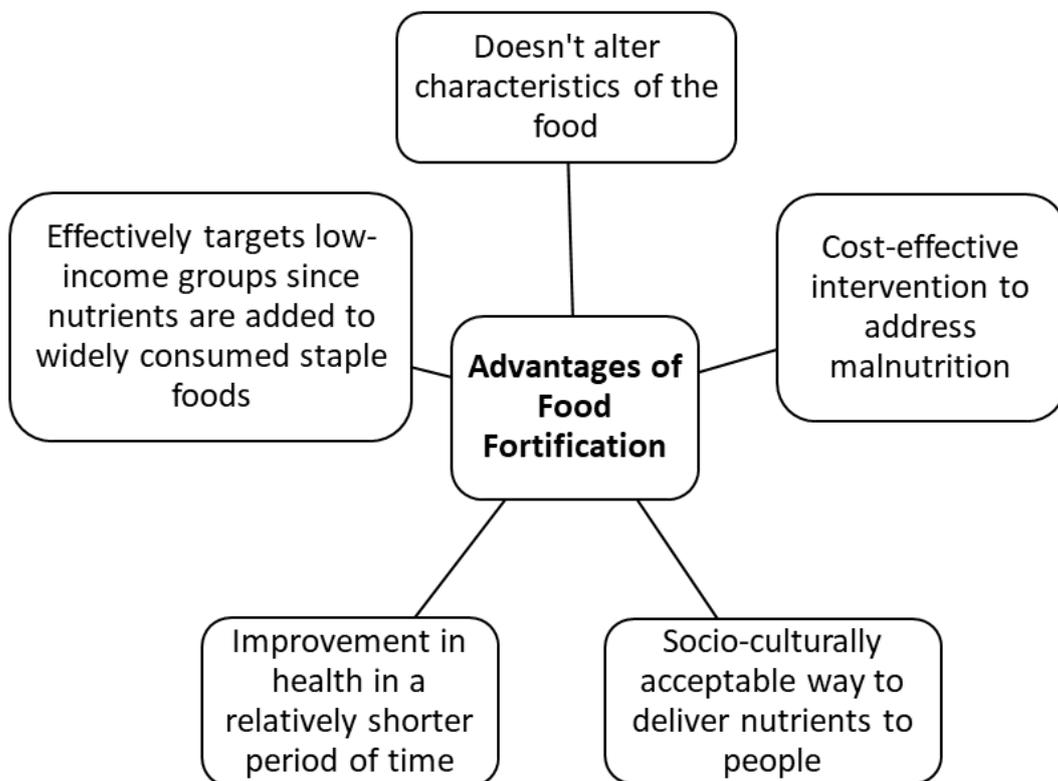
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10. **Fortification of food should be seen as a 'complementary strategy', rather than a replacement of balanced, diversified diets to address malnutrition. Discuss. (150 words)** 10

- **Introduction:** Briefly describe food fortification
- **Body:** Advantages of food fortification and its limitations to address malnutrition in India
- **Conclusion:** Briefly mention steps to be taken to ensure diversified diet and nutritional security to address malnutrition

Food fortification refers to addition of key micronutrients like vitamins and minerals to staple foods such as rice, milk and salt to improve their nutritional content. E.g., Double fortified salt- manufactured with added iron and iodine.

Central government has announced the supply of fortified rice through PDS and PM-Poshan to address the issue of malnutrition among the poor by 2024.



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However, it has some limitations

- Health effects: Excess dosages of vitamins and minerals in some cases can have harmful effects. E.g., Consumption of iron-fortified foods among patients of Thalassemia or sickle cell anaemia can reduce immunity and functionality of organs.
- Not effective in addressing malnutrition in infants and young children from universally fortified staples alone, as they consume relatively small amounts of food.
- Not a sustainable strategy as fortification only bridges the gap of nutrient deficiency but can't replace a balanced and diversified diet.
- Detrimental to informal economy as mandatory fortification would harm the vast informal economy of Indian farmers/food processors and instead benefit a small group of multinational corporations.

The need of the hour is sustainable measures like crop diversification; employment generation to increase purchasing power to consume micronutrients; provision of Nutri-cereals under PDS and diversified diet in Mid-day-meal scheme to combat malnutrition.



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11. Over the last few years, India has witnessed a barrage of corporate governance scams, like that of the NSE-2022. In this context, evaluate why there are repeated governance failures in India's corporate sector. (250 words)

- **Introduction:** write about the recent incident.
- **Body:**
 - List of repeated corporate governance failures.
 - The reasons for repeated governance failures.
- **Conclusion:** conclude with the relevant statements.

Recently the National Stock Exchange scam was a wake-up call for corporate governance when whistle blower informed SEBI about the unfair practices.

There are repeated corporate governance failures such as Satyam computers, Kingfisher airlines, Jet Airways, Bhushan steel, PNB and ILFS.

The reasons for repeated governance failures

Regulatory failures:

- **Non adherence to regulation:** Due to the non-compliance of regulations such as separation of chairman's role from that of the CEO by more than 1/3rd of companies, changed the provision to voluntary.
- **Insider trading:** Family owned business and directors being their relatives, insider trading is more prevalent.
- **BOD failed in its fiduciary duty:** The board of directors was dominated by the CMD. It failed to give a strategic direction to company and failed in its duty of cure.

Operational failures:

- **Lack of transparency:** Independent directors are unable to perform their duties effectively because they are selected by internal committees rather than by extraneous committees.
- **No heed was paid to audit objections:** The management and Audit Committees did not pay attention to audit objections raised by auditors.

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- **Lack of independence of the board** with board members having significant financial linkages with the companies.
- **Disproportionate compensation** paid to executive board members and senior management.

The government should consider the recommendations of Uday Kotak committee on corporate governance such as disclosures pertaining to Related Party Transactions, ensuring independence in spirit of Independent Directors, etc.



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12. "No electoral reforms can be effective without reforms in the political party system". In the light of this statement, highlight the need to regulate the internal functioning of the political parties in India. (250 words)

- **Introduction:** Need to reform internal functioning of Political Parties.
- **Body:** Provisions in RPA + Important Suggestions of Committees.
- **Conclusion:** Political Parties ensure democratic governance, hence needs reforms.

Political parties in India while performing their democratic role externally should not function in a dictatorial manner internally. This increases chances of corruption in the internal functioning of political parties, reduces accountability of the central leadership and increases the distance of key members of political parties from the citizens whom the party wishes to serve.

No Express Regulation

Representation of People Act 1951 (RPA) presently does not expressly regulate internal functioning of registered political parties. RPA provides for only two provisions:

- **Section 29A** provides for registration of political parties with the Election Commission of India.
- **Section 29(5)** mandates every registered political party to add in their memorandum that they shall bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution, principles of socialism, secularism and democracy and would uphold the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India.

Need to Regulate Inner Party Democracy

- **National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC)** in its Report on Electoral Processes and Political Parties suggested for:
 - Structural and organizational reforms within political parties
 - Need for comprehensive legislation to regulate party activities.

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- **The 170th Law Commission's** Report recommended adding new provisions in RPA to govern the internal structures and inner democracy of parties, financial transparency, and accountability.
- **Second ARC on Ethics and Governance** noted that corruption is caused by over-centralisation since *"the more remotely power is exercised from the people, the greater is the distance between authority and accountability."* Hence, suggested for regulating the functioning of Political parties.
- **Dinesh Goswami Committee, the Tarkunde Committee and Indrajit Gupta Committee** strongly argued for more transparent working of the political parties in India.

Political parties control the levers of governance in a democracy. Thus, it is important for the Election Commission to regulate functioning of political parties as it will help in strengthening democratic practice and principles.



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13. Discuss, with suitable illustrations, the efficacy of the Joint Parliamentary Committees in India. (250 words) 15

- **Introduction:** About Joint Parliamentary Committee.
- **Body:** Efficacy of JPCs + Concerns.
- **Conclusion:** Government must submit follow up action report.

Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) is a kind of ad hoc committee constituted to address a specific issue decided on consensus between the ruling party and the opposition. JPCs generally have a wider ambit and go beyond scrutinizing government's finances.

Recently members of JPC have filed their dissent note on Personal Data Protection Bill 2019 citing lack of oversight, absence of state-level data protection authorities among others.

Efficacy of JPCs

- JPCs in the past have helped to investigate cases of corruption such as JPC on Bofors scam, Stock Market Scam, Pesticide issues in soft drinks, 2G Scam etc.
- Recently constituted JPC on Data Protection Bill was looking into the aspects of privacy issues and data localisation issues having cross-border security concerns.
- JPC is authorized to collect evidence in oral or written form or demand documents by experts, public bodies, associations, individuals or interested parties.
- JPC can demand the presence of the person as failure to appear amounts to contempt of the House. In the Stock Market Scam, Minister of Finance - Jaswant Singh, Minister of External Affairs - Yashwant Sinha and the former Finance and External Affairs ministers - P. Chidambaram and Dr. Manmohan Singh testified before the Committee.

Concerns

- Its recommendations have persuasive value and the committee cannot force the government to take action on the basis of the report.

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- The proceedings and findings of the committee are confidential, except in matters of public interest. Thus, it is upto the government whether to release or withhold its report.
- Despite the report of the JPC, the government can still launch fresh investigations on the matter.

Joint Parliamentary Committees constituted so far have helped in investigating cases impacting national interests. However, the government must submit in the Parliament its follow up action taken on the basis of the report submitted by JPC.



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14. In the light of the growing demand for a Uniform Civil Code in India, discuss its merits and challenges. (250 words) 15

- **Introduction:** Private Members Bill on UCC has renewed demand for UCC.
- **Body:** Benefits & Impediments to implement UCC.
- **Conclusion:** Way Forward.

A private members Bill was initiated in Parliament to implement Uniform Civil Code (UCC) as part of Directive Principles under Article 44. Even the Supreme Court has asked the government to explore the possibility to implement UCC to secure gender justice, equality and dignity of women.

Benefits

- Promote nationalistic fervour through uniformity in personal laws across religion.
- Ensure social justice and gender equality in family matters especially for minorities and vulnerable sections.
- Simplify the Indian legal system and make Indian society more homogeneous.
- Strengthen India's secular fabric and promote unity and fraternity.

Impediments to implement UCC

Shah Bano Case:

- The Supreme Court approved maintenance for Shah Bano under Section 125 of Cr.PC for divorce and also asked the government to frame UCC to end disparities caused due to personal laws.
- Despite the Judgment, the government, in 1986, enacted the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, which nullified the Shah Bano judgment. The Act allowed maintenance to women only for 90 days after the divorce".

Law Commission's Suggestion (2018)

- UCC is neither necessary nor desirable in India.
- End discrimination against women within community by amending personal laws.

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- Ensure Equality within Community between men and women.
- Codify personal laws to weed out any inequality without affecting fundamental rights

Other Concerns against UCC

- Against Right to Freedom of Religion as state interference in personal laws may violate Article 25.
- Violates S.R. Bommai Judgment as it warned secular state not to interfere with religion.
- It may impact the cultural practice of some tribal communities in India.
- Considering India's plurality, it is difficult to unify all personal laws in India. .

Thus, there is a need for balance between ensuring the right to freedom of religion and ensuring social justice and gender equality while implementing UCC in India.



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15. "E-voting, as an option for the citizens, ensures easy accessibility and efficiency, which will ultimately help to increase the voter participation". In the light of this statement, give a proper evaluation of the secured remote voting system in India. (250 words)

- **Introduction:** Election Commission exploring possibilities of e-voting.
- **Body:** Steps Taken by Telangana Govt for e-voting experiment + Benefits + Concerns on e-voting.
- **Conclusion:** EC must address security and technical flaws to enhance voters participation.

The Election Commission is exploring the possibility of e-voting on an all-India scale in collaboration with IIT Madras by leveraging artificial intelligence and blockchain technology. E-Voting will allow voters to vote using the internet and recently Telangana Government experimented on e-voting through a dummy election. However, experts and former Election Commissioners have flagged various concerns on the use of e-voting.

Steps taken by Telangana Government to ensure Security

- In a smartphone based e-voting system, voters were asked to register themselves on the app of the State Election Commission for the dummy voting.
- To ensure security, three-factor authentication was done – 1. Name Matching with Aadhaar, 2. Liveness Detection of Individuals, and 3. Image Matching with EPIC Database.
- Further, Blockchain technology secured the de-identified and encrypted votes for maintaining immutable records.
- TSEC e-Vote Android App binds the mobile ID and phone number to the citizen's registration process. This allowed voting to be done only by the registered device.

Benefits of e-voting

- Increase voter' participation – as migrants and NRIs will be able to vote.

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- Allows voters to vote in harsh climatic conditions.
- Enables citizens to vote online in a situation of pandemic like COVID.

Despite the benefits, security concerns have been raised by experts on the following grounds:

- Hacking of Blockchain Technology may result in:
 - Impersonation of voters
 - Transfer of votes for rival candidates
 - Cloning of biometric authentication
 - Denial-of-service attack might disallow citizens to register and vote
 - Disenfranchise a group or community of citizens
 - Decrypting votes casted
- Open to misuse by foreign intelligence & corporates.

Thus, concerns on e-voting regarding verification of voter identification, security concerns on use of technology and secrecy of ballots must be addressed to ensure free, fair and transparent elections in India which is at the heart of democratic process.

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16. "Though the Panchayati Raj System was entrusted with the Constitutional status, it has not been proven to be an effective instrument of governance". Critically examine the statement and suggest measures to improve the situation. (250 words)

- **Introduction:** write about the 73rd Constitutional amendment act.
- **Body:**
 - They are not effective instrument of governance.
 - They are effective instrument of governance.
- **Conclusion:** conclude with the relevant statements.

The 73rd constitutional amendment act provided constitutional status to the Panchayat raj system and added 11th schedule to the Constitution to deal with the Panchayat raj institutions.

They are not effective instrument

- **Delay in completion of projects:** Due to the excessive control by bureaucracy, the gram Panchayat has to spend much time for obtaining approvals.
- **Reluctant to Levy taxes:** The head of the gram Sabha belonging to the same community were reluctant to impose taxes due to fear of losing elections.

Example: Panchayat's own source of revenue is less than 1%

- **Too much centralisation weakening local governance:** A real-time MIS-based implementation left the representatives of the PRIs with no role in implementation of schemes.
- **Fail to achieve desired development:** After 30 years of decentralisation, local expenditure is just 2% of GDP compared with the OECD-14%. This has impacted the development and increased migration.

They are effective instrument

- **Pandemic Management:** PRIs played a crucial role in tracing, organizing health check-up camps, creating awareness etc. Example: Kerala

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- **Empowerment:** Compared to merely 13% representation in Parliament, ~ 49% of elected representatives are women in PRIs.
- **Infrastructure development:** PRIs played a crucial role in implementation of Infrastructure development schemes such as Pradhan Mantri gram Sadak Yojana.
- **Became self-sufficient:** Some PRIs through digitalisation increase their revenues from taxing land sales and ploughing back its own funds into improving the Panchayat.

Example: Bellandur gram Panchayat of Karnataka

- **Social development:** PRIs played a crucial role in eradication of absolute poverty.

Example: Kudumbashree of Kerala is successful due to the PRIs.

The government should work to achieve 'Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday' because PRI's play a vital role in India's transformation.



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17. Sri Lanka is facing an unprecedented economic and political crisis since its independence. Discuss the challenges and opportunities the crisis brings out for India. (250 words)

- **Introduction:** Briefly describe the current economic and political crisis in Sri Lanka.
- **Body:**
 - Highlight the major challenges the crisis presents before India.
 - Mention the opportunities before India to improve India-Sri Lanka ties.
- **Conclusion:** India should help Sri Lanka overcome the crisis and deepen ties within nations.

Sri Lanka is witnessing the worst economic and political crisis, marked by the depreciation of Lankan rupee, high inflation, shortages of essential items due to depletion in foreign reserves, and political instability followed by riots.

The crisis presents following challenges for India

- **Refugee influx:** India could face an influx of refugees through Palk Strait & Gulf of Munnar if the financial situation worsens.
- **Impede Indian exports:** India's own exports will be affected as Colombo port is a trans-shipment hub for about 48% of its global trade. Freight costs will increase due to delays.
- **Impact on trade and investments:** Bilateral trade between nations amounting to nearly 5 billion dollars will be impacted and affect investments of Indian industries.
- **Rise of Rebel Groups:** The crisis may instill Tamil rebels and dissident groups among the ethnic Sinhalese population to fuel up the issue, causing security challenges in South Asia.
- **Chinese Influence:** China may encroach/lease Sri Lankan naval bases or ports to bail out the country, presenting a geostrategic threat to India.

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The crisis presents following opportunities for India

- India can improve its bargaining power, reclaim influence and restore the traditional relationship. **E.g.**, Resolution of longstanding **Palk Bay fisheries dispute**, a major issue in bilateral ties.
- Demonstrating **Neighbourhood First policy** and improving people-to-people ties by humanitarian relief policies like providing foodgrains, medicine, fuel & credit line. **E.g.**, India has extended financial assistance of \$2.4 billion to Sri Lanka.
- **Improve the “big brother” image** of India by not meddling in Colombo’s domestic affairs.

Prolonged instability in Sri Lanka would have a spill-over effect on India too. Hence, India must help the country to overcome the crisis and utilize the opportunities to deepen ties within nations.



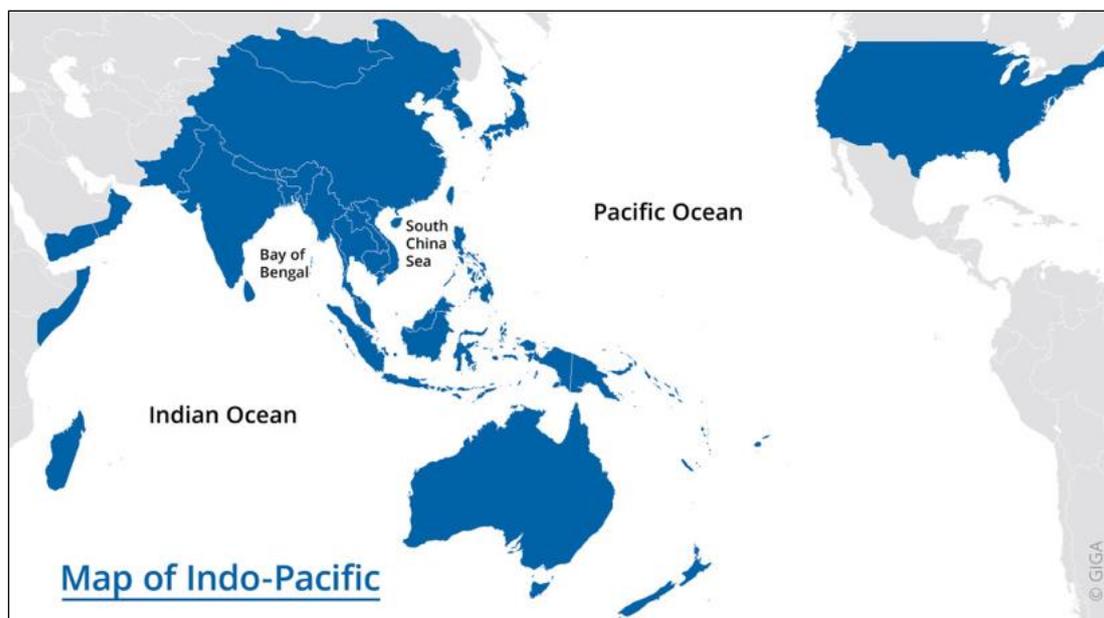
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18. **Examine the relevance of the Indo-Pacific concept for India and the steps taken to strengthen its position in the Indo-Pacific region. (250 words)**

- **Introduction:** Write about Indo Pacific region.
- **Body:**
 - The relevance of the Indo Pacific concept to India.
 - Steps taken to strengthen its position.
- **Conclusion:** Conclude with relevant statements.

Indo-Pacific is an integrated theatre that combines the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, and the land masses that surround them.



The relevance of the Indo-Pacific concept to India

- **Important Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC):** Over 55% of India’s trade passes through South China Sea and Malacca Strait.
- **Richness in Natural resources:** Presences of minerals like Offshore Hydrocarbons, Seabed minerals, rare Metals, fisheries etc.
- **Rise in non-traditional threats in the region:** Like incidents of piracy, illegal fishing, and environmental hazards, among other things.
- **China factor:** Rise in China’s aggressive foreign policy like establishing oversea naval bases in Djibouti and in control of Gwadar port.

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The various steps taken by Indian government to strengthen its position in the region

Foreign Policy and Initiatives:

- **Establishment of Indo-Pacific Division in 2019:** to Give a coherent architecture to the Indo-Pacific policy.
- **Regional summits:** India is collaborating with various regional groups such as QUAD, IOC-ARC, ASEAN, on a multitude of subjects.
- **Initiatives:** Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (increase maritime co-operation), Asia Africa Growth Corridor (for development and cooperation projects) were taken up.

Policies aligning with the vision of Indo Pacific such as:

- **Vision SAGAR:** To promote India's geo-political, strategic and economic interests particularly in the Indian Ocean.
- **Project Mausam:** Aims to the spread of shared knowledge systems, traditions, technologies and ideas along maritime routes.
- **Supply chain resilience initiative:** To create a virtuous cycle of enhancing supply chain re-silience with a view to eventually inclusive growth in the region.

The government should enhance engagements with non-traditional players in Micronesia to address shared interests in the region, and use Island Territories for strategic purposes to extend its reach.



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19. **The Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are India's most powerful channels for empowering the small and rural communities to move from subsistence to sustainability. Critically analyze. (250 words)**

- **Introduction:** Briefly describe Self Help Groups.
- **Body:**
 - Mention the significance of SHGs for empowering small and rural communities.
 - Highlight the constraints associated with the functioning of SHGs.
- **Conclusion:** SHG as a vehicle of change for the poor and marginalized.

Self-help Groups (SHGs) are informal groups of people who come together to address their common problems like rural poverty, lack of formal credit, etc.

Significance of SHGs for empowering small and rural communities

- **Financial Inclusion** as they provide a collateral-free loan with terms decided by the group at market-driven rates.
- **Build financial capacity** of the poor and marginalized in the field of employment and income-generating activities.
- **Skill empowerments** as members who actively participate in various SHG programs develop their leadership abilities.
- **Underutilized** community resources can be efficiently mobilized for **disaster risk reduction**.
- **Resolve conflicts** through collective leadership and mutual discussion.
- **Political Empowerment** of female SHG leaders. Data suggest they are frequently selected as candidates for Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Constraints associated with the functioning of SHGs

- **Lack of SHG outreach:** SHGs are not yet extended to the poorest families in many parts of India.
- **Lack of technological awareness:** Activities undertaken by SHGs are still based on primitive skills mostly related to primary sector

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enterprises. With poor value-added, such activities often do not lead to any substantial increase in the income of group members.

- **Patriarchal mindset:** Prevents many women from coming forward.
- **Poor accounting practices** and incidents of misappropriation of funds. Moreover, there is a lack of resources and means to market their goods.
- **Lack of rural banking facilities:** There are about 1.2 lakh branches of banks in rural areas as opposed to 6 lakh villages in the country.

SHG can become a vehicle of change for the poor and marginalized. The Covid-19 pandemic has amplified their social and economic resilience and shown how they can effectively articulate a meaningful grassroots response to such a crisis.



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20. Explain the main provisions of the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (2006) and suggest some measures to achieve full accessibility, inclusion and empowerment for the persons with disabilities. (250 words)

- **Introduction:** Briefly introduce the objective of National policy for persons with disabilities
- **Body:** Major features of the policy and measures needed to achieve full accessibility and empowerment of PwDs.
- **Conclusion:** Persons with disabilities are a valuable human resource for the country

The Government of India formulated the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (PWD) in 2006 which deals with Physical, Educational & Economic Rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. The policy majorly focuses on following:

- **Prevention of Disabilities:** The policy lays strong emphasis on prevention of disabilities through routine immunization, awareness measures and appropriate mother and child care.
- **Rehabilitation measures:** Physical rehabilitation, which includes early detection and intervention, counselling & medical interventions and provision of aids & appliances.
 - ✓ Educational rehabilitation including vocational education.
 - ✓ Economic rehabilitation by providing reservation in public employment and promoting wage employment in private sector and self-employment.
 - ✓ Barrier-free environment: Make buildings, transportation systems and other public facilities barrier free to enable PwDs to participate in everyday activities without assistance.
- **Identity:** Ensure that the PwDs obtain the disability certificates in the shortest possible time by adoption of simple, transparent and client-friendly procedures.
- **Social Security:** Governments will be encouraged to develop a comprehensive social security policy for disabled.

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Apart from the above, government also increased the number of recognised disabilities through Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD). Despite the strong policy support, people with disabilities frequently encounter discrimination from various walks of life.

Measures needed:

- The Government should insert a provision regarding compliance of the provisions of RPwD Act, 2016 by educational institutions while recognizing/granting permission to them.
- Accessible e-content of all course curriculums should be developed.
- Ensuring inter-operability of disability certificates for availing the benefits meant for PwDs across all States.
- Providing assistive devices and appliances at low cost to increase their accessibility.
- The Ayushman Bharat should be aligned with the policy objectives to aim at universal coverage of PwDs including provision of therapeutic services for PwDs.
- Involving PwDs in the decision-making process at various levels for better policy formulation, monitoring and implementation.

Persons with disabilities are a valuable human resource for the country and seek to create an environment that provides them equal opportunities, protection of their rights and full participation in society.

