



APTI PLUS

Academy for Civil Services Pvt. Ltd.

CREATING CIVIL SERVANTS FOR THE NATION

OPSC OAS MAINS EXAMINATION ANSWERS 2024

GS-II

GS II- 2024

GROUP A

Q1. Discuss the nature and problems of coalition Governments in India. Analyse the challenges of coalition politics in the Indian federal system. (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

A **coalition government** is formed when multiple political parties jointly govern because no single party secures a legislative majority. Since 1989, coalition politics has become a significant feature of India's parliamentary democracy and federal polity.

Body

Nature of Coalition Governments in India

- **Multi-party governance:** Arises from fragmented electoral mandates and the rise of regional parties.
- **Consensus-based decision-making:** Policies are often framed through negotiation and compromise.
- **Federal character:** Regional parties gain influence in national policymaking, strengthening cooperative federalism.
- **Shared responsibility:** Coalition partners participate in governance through power-sharing arrangements.
- Examples include **NDA, UPA**, and the current coalition arrangements at the Centre.

Problems of Coalition Governments

Political Instability

- Withdrawal of support by allies may lead to government collapse.
- Examples: Janata Government (1979), United Front Governments (1996–98).

Policy Paralysis

- Divergent ideological positions delay reforms and decision-making.
- Governments often adopt the lowest-common-denominator approach.

Opportunistic Alliances

- Coalitions may prioritize political survival over governance and public interest.

Accountability Deficit

- Diffused responsibility makes it difficult to fix accountability for policy failures.

Challenges of Coalition Politics in the Indian Federal System

- **Regional pressures:** Allies often seek state-specific concessions and special packages.
- **Fiscal federal tensions:** Resource allocation may become politically driven.
- **Centre-State bargaining:** National priorities may conflict with regional aspirations.
- **Frequent negotiations:** Governance may suffer due to continuous coalition management.
- **Delay in major reforms:** Consensus-building can slow constitutional, economic, and administrative reforms.

Conclusion

Coalition politics reflects India's social and regional diversity and strengthens democratic representation. However, stable governance requires ideological coherence, a Common Minimum Programme, and institutional mechanisms that balance federal aspirations with national priorities.

Q2. "Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of Electoral rolls is a strategic exercise by the Election Commission of India." Examine this statement in the context of its significance and challenges. (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls is a comprehensive verification exercise conducted by the Election Commission of India (ECI) under Article 324 and the Representation of the People Act, 1950 to ensure accurate, inclusive, and error-free voter lists.

Body

Significance of SIR

1. Ensures Electoral Integrity

- Removes **duplicate, shifted, deceased, and ineligible voters** from electoral rolls.
- Strengthens the principle of "**one person, one vote.**"

2. Enhances Democratic Legitimacy

- Accurate voter lists improve the credibility of elections and public trust in democratic institutions.
- Facilitates **free and fair elections**, a basic feature of the Constitution.

3. Promotes Inclusive Participation

- Identifies eligible but unregistered citizens, especially:
 - Youth attaining 18 years,
 - Women,
 - Migrant populations,
 - Marginalized communities.

4. Addresses Demographic Changes

- Accounts for rapid urbanization, migration, and population mobility.
- Updates electoral rolls to reflect ground realities.

5. Strengthens Election Management

- Provides reliable data for polling station planning, voter awareness campaigns, and electoral logistics.

Challenges Associated with SIR

Administrative Challenges

- Door-to-door verification requires extensive manpower and resources.
- Booth Level Officers (BLOs) face workload and time constraints.

Risk of Exclusion

- Genuine voters may be omitted due to:
 - Documentation gaps,
 - Migration,
 - Absence during verification visits,
 - Data-entry errors.

Political Controversies

- Political parties often allege selective deletions or voter suppression.
- Such disputes may reduce public confidence in the process.

Digital and Awareness Gaps

- Limited digital literacy and lack of awareness may hinder participation, particularly in rural and vulnerable sections.

Legal Challenges

- Large-scale deletions can trigger litigation regarding voting rights and procedural fairness.
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Conclusion

SIR is a strategic instrument for maintaining the purity and credibility of electoral rolls. Its success depends on transparency, adequate safeguards against exclusion, technological support, and active citizen participation to uphold India's democratic foundations.

Q3. What is a Presidential Reference? What are its nature and objectives? Discuss the views of the Supreme Court on recent Presidential References. (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

A **Presidential Reference** is the advisory jurisdiction of the Supreme Court under **Article 143** of the Constitution, whereby the President seeks the Court's opinion on questions of law or fact of public importance.

Body

Nature of Presidential Reference

- **Advisory, not adjudicatory** in character.
- Invoked by the President on the aid and advice of the Union Council of Ministers.
- The Supreme Court may give or decline its opinion under Article 143(1).
- The opinion is generally **not binding**, though it carries high persuasive value.
- Heard by a Constitution Bench due to its constitutional significance.

Objectives

- Obtain constitutional clarification on complex legal issues.
- Prevent constitutional deadlocks between institutions.
- Strengthen cooperative federalism and constitutional governance.
- Facilitate informed executive decision-making.
- Ensure uniform interpretation of constitutional provisions.

Supreme Court's Views on Recent Presidential References

The most recent Presidential Reference (2025) arose from the **Tamil Nadu Governor case**, where the President referred 14 questions regarding the powers of Governors and the President in granting assent to State Bills under Articles 200 and 201.

The Supreme Court opined that:

- **Governors and the President cannot indefinitely delay Bills**, as such inaction frustrates the legislative process.
- Courts **cannot ordinarily prescribe rigid timelines** for assent because the Constitution itself does not specify them.
- The President is **not required to seek a Presidential Reference in every case** of reserved Bills; Article 143 remains a discretionary mechanism.
- Judicial review is limited and must respect the **separation of powers**.

Conclusion

Presidential References serve as an important constitutional dialogue mechanism. Their effective use promotes institutional harmony, constitutional clarity, and balanced federal governance while preserving the supremacy of the Constitution.

Q4. "The Government of India's initiative is to democratise the training process and address the issues in the existing civil service system." Discuss this statement in the light of the Karmayogi Mission. (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

Introduction

Mission Karmayogi, launched in 2020 as the **National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB)**, seeks to transform India's civil services through a **competency-driven, role-based, and technology-enabled training ecosystem**. It aims to democratise training and address systemic shortcomings in the traditional civil service framework.

Body

Issues in the Existing Civil Service System

- **Rule-based approach** rather than competency-based functioning.
- Limited access to quality training, especially for lower-level officials.
- Fragmented training across departments with lack of standardisation.
- Emphasis on seniority over continuous learning and performance.
- Inadequate focus on emerging areas such as AI, data analytics, and digital governance.

How Mission Karmayogi Democratizes Training

1. Universal Access through iGOT Karmayogi

- Provides **anytime-anywhere learning** through a digital platform.
- Makes high-quality courses accessible to officials across ranks and locations.

2. Competency-Based Capacity Building

- Shifts from **rule-based to role-based governance**.
- Aligns training with behavioural, functional, and domain competencies.

3. Continuous Learning Culture

- Promotes lifelong upskilling rather than one-time induction training.
- Encourages future-ready civil servants capable of addressing complex governance challenges.

4. Institutional Reforms

- Establishment of the **Capacity Building Commission (CBC)** for standardisation and quality assurance.
- Enhances collaboration among training institutions.

Significance

- Promotes **citizen-centric governance**, accountability, and efficiency.
- Supports Digital India and good governance initiatives.
- Builds a professional, innovative, and responsive bureaucracy.

Conclusion

Mission Karmayogi marks a paradigm shift from hierarchy-driven administration to a **learning-oriented and citizen-focused civil service**. Effective implementation and digital inclusivity can make India's bureaucracy more competent, transparent, and future-ready.

Q5. "Environmental justice in India is feasible through the National Green Tribunal." Examine this statement in the framework of the National Green Tribunal Act. (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

Environmental justice implies equitable access to a clean environment and effective remedies against environmental harm. The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)**, established under the **National Green Tribunal Act, 2010**, seeks to advance this objective through specialized environmental adjudication.

Body

How the NGT Promotes Environmental Justice

Speedy and Specialized Justice

- The NGT was created for the **effective and expeditious disposal** of environmental cases.
- It aims to dispose of cases within **six months**, reducing delays in environmental litigation.

Wider Jurisdiction

- Under Sections 14 and 15, it hears civil cases involving substantial environmental questions.
- It provides **relief, compensation, and restitution** for environmental damage.

Application of Environmental Principles

The Act mandates application of:

- **Sustainable Development**
- **Precautionary Principle**
- **Polluter Pays Principle**

These principles strengthen environmental accountability.

Accessibility and Expertise

- NGT benches comprise **Judicial Members and Expert Members**, ensuring scientific and legal scrutiny.
- Regional benches improve access to justice across India.

Landmark Interventions

- Orders on pollution control, illegal mining, waste management, and industrial violations have strengthened environmental governance.
- Recent penalties on polluting industries demonstrate effective enforcement.

Limitations

- Vacancies and inadequate infrastructure affect efficiency.
- Jurisdiction excludes certain laws such as the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.
- Enforcement of orders often depends on executive agencies.
- Limited awareness and litigation costs restrict access for vulnerable communities.

Conclusion

The NGT Act, 2010 has significantly advanced environmental justice by providing speedy, expert-driven adjudication. However, stronger enforcement mechanisms, adequate staffing, and wider accessibility are essential for realizing comprehensive environmental justice in India.

Q6. What structural challenges are required to be addressed to achieve Viksit Odisha for Viksit Bharat as per the vision document of the Government? (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

Viksit Odisha for Viksit Bharat envisions transforming Odisha into a developed state by 2036 and a major contributor to India's developed-nation goal by 2047. Achieving this requires addressing deep-rooted structural challenges.

Body

1. Human Capital Deficit

- Learning outcomes and skill levels remain below industry requirements.
- High prevalence of malnutrition, anaemia, and healthcare disparities, particularly in tribal regions.
- Need for quality education, skilling, and universal healthcare.

2. Regional Imbalances

- Development remains concentrated in coastal districts.
 - KBK (Koraput-Bolangir-Kalahandi) and tribal areas lag in income, infrastructure, and social indicators.
 - Balanced regional growth is essential for inclusive development.
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3. Agricultural Constraints

- Dependence on monsoon-driven agriculture.
- Low productivity, fragmented landholdings, and inadequate value addition.
- Expansion of irrigation, agri-processing, and market linkages is required.

4. Infrastructure and Urbanisation Gaps

- Insufficient logistics, industrial corridors, urban infrastructure, and connectivity.
- Odisha aims to accelerate planned urbanisation and develop growth hubs.
- World-class transport, ports, and economic zones are necessary.

5. Employment and Industrial Diversification

- Overdependence on mining and primary sectors.
- Need to generate large-scale non-farm employment through MSMEs, manufacturing, tourism, IT, and services.

6. Governance and Climate Challenges

- Administrative inefficiencies, implementation gaps, and disaster vulnerability.
- Strengthening digital governance, transparency, climate resilience, and environmental sustainability is crucial.

Conclusion

Addressing these structural bottlenecks through **people-centric development, technology-driven governance, sustainable infrastructure, and inclusive growth** will enable Odisha to realize its vision of becoming a developed state and a key pillar of **Viksit Bharat 2047**.

Q7. "The role of the Finance Commission in upholding Fiscal Federalism is important." Critically analyse. Discuss briefly the terms of reference of the 16th Finance Commission. (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

Fiscal federalism refers to the financial relationship between different levels of government. Under **Article 280**, the Finance Commission (FC) acts as a constitutional mechanism to ensure equitable distribution of resources between the Union and States.

Body

Role of Finance Commission in Upholding Fiscal Federalism

Promotes Vertical Fiscal Balance

- Recommends distribution of divisible tax proceeds between the Centre and States.
- The **15th Finance Commission** recommended **41% tax devolution** to States, strengthening fiscal autonomy.

Ensures Horizontal Equity

- Allocates resources among States using criteria such as income distance, population, area, and forest cover.
- Helps reduce regional disparities.

Strengthens Local Governance

- Recommends measures to augment State Consolidated Funds for **Panchayats and Municipalities**, deepening decentralization.

Provides Grants-in-Aid

- Supports fiscally weaker States through revenue deficit and sector-specific grants under **Article 275**.

Critical Analysis

Positive Contributions

- Institutionalizes **cooperative federalism**.
 - Reduces fiscal imbalances.
 - Enhances accountability through performance-linked transfers.
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Limitations

- Increasing use of **cesses and surcharges** by the Centre reduces the divisible pool available to States.
- States often demand greater fiscal autonomy and flexibility.
- Recommendations are advisory, not binding.

Terms of Reference of the 16th Finance Commission

Constituted under the chairmanship of **Dr. Arvind Panagariya** for the period **2026-31**, the Commission has been tasked to:

- Recommend distribution of net tax proceeds between the Union and States.
- Determine inter-State allocation of tax devolution.
- Recommend principles governing **grants-in-aid** under Article 275.
- Suggest measures to augment State funds for **Panchayats and Municipalities** based on State Finance Commission recommendations.
- Review financing arrangements for disaster management and other matters relating to sound public finance.

Conclusion

The Finance Commission remains the cornerstone of India's fiscal federal architecture. Strengthening tax devolution, reducing dependence on cesses, and ensuring greater State participation can further reinforce cooperative and competitive federalism.

Q8. "Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated." What is constitutional morality vis-a-vis social morality in the Indian context? Discuss its scope and purpose. Discuss a few landmark judgements of the Supreme Court on constitutional morality. (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar observed that **constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment; it must be cultivated**. It denotes adherence to constitutional values such as justice, liberty, equality, fraternity, and the rule of law.

Body

Constitutional Morality vis-à-vis Social Morality

Constitutional Morality	Social Morality
Derived from constitutional values and Fundamental Rights	Derived from customs, traditions and societal beliefs
Protects individual dignity and minority rights	Reflects majority opinion and social norms
Dynamic and transformative	Often conservative and tradition-bound
Promotes equality and liberty	May perpetuate discrimination

In India's diverse society, conflicts often arise between social practices and constitutional principles, requiring constitutional morality to prevail.

Scope and Purpose

- Upholds **Fundamental Rights** and human dignity.
- Protects minorities from majoritarian excesses.
- Guides constitutional interpretation by courts.
- Promotes **transformative constitutionalism** and social reform.
- Ensures accountability, rule of law, and institutional restraint.
- Strengthens democracy, secularism, and gender justice.

Landmark Supreme Court Judgements

1. *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India* (2018)

- Decriminalised consensual same-sex relations under Section 377 IPC.
- Held that **constitutional morality prevails over social morality**.

2. *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India* (2017)

- Recognised privacy as a Fundamental Right under Article 21.
- Upheld dignity, autonomy, and individual choice.

3. *Indian Young Lawyers Association v. State of Kerala* (2018)

- Allowed women's entry into Sabarimala Temple.
- Prioritised equality over exclusionary customs.

4. *Joseph Shine v. Union of India* (2018)

- Struck down adultery law as violative of gender equality and dignity.

Conclusion

Constitutional morality acts as the moral compass of Indian democracy. Its cultivation is essential to harmonise social change with constitutional values and realize the vision of an inclusive, just, and egalitarian society.

Q9. Why is the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) considered vital for ensuring effective governance? What are the constitutional safeguards the CAG enjoys? (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

The **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)**, established under **Article 148**, is the guardian of the public purse. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar described it as one of the most important constitutional offices for ensuring financial accountability and good governance.

Body

Why is the CAG Vital for Effective Governance?

1. Ensures Financial Accountability

- Audits receipts and expenditures of Union and State Governments.
- Prevents misuse, wasteful expenditure, and financial irregularities.

2. Promotes Transparency

- Places audit findings before Parliament and State Legislatures.
- Enables informed legislative scrutiny through the **Public Accounts Committee (PAC)**.

3. Strengthens Rule of Law

- Verifies whether public expenditure conforms to constitutional and statutory provisions.
- Upholds financial discipline in public administration.

4. Enhances Efficiency and Economy

- Conducts **performance audits** to assess economy, efficiency, and effectiveness of government programmes.
- Improves outcomes of welfare schemes and public projects.

5. Acts as an Anti-Corruption Instrument

- Exposed irregularities in cases such as the **2G Spectrum Allocation** and **Commonwealth Games**, reinforcing public trust.

Constitutional Safeguards Enjoyed by the CAG

- **Security of Tenure:** Removed only in the same manner and on the same grounds as a Supreme Court Judge.
 - **Independent Appointment:** Appointed by the President under Article 148.
 - **Service Conditions Protected:** Salary and service conditions cannot be altered to his disadvantage after appointment.
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- **Charged Expenditure:** Office expenses are charged on the **Consolidated Fund of India**, beyond parliamentary vote.
- **No Further Government Office:** Ineligible for any office under Union or State Governments after retirement.

Conclusion

The CAG is a cornerstone of democratic governance. Its constitutional independence and auditing powers ensure transparency, accountability, and prudent use of public resources, thereby strengthening citizens' trust in government institutions.

Q10. What has been the development index of women in Odisha? What have been the most successful schemes implemented in recent years for the welfare of women in the State? (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

Women's Development Index reflects women's status in education, health, economic participation, and decision-making. Odisha has recorded significant improvements in gender development through targeted welfare and empowerment initiatives.

Body

Status of Women's Development in Odisha

Odisha has shown notable progress in key indicators:

- **Literacy Rate:** Around 79% overall literacy, with a narrowing gender gap in education.
- **Sex Ratio:** Odisha's sex ratio of **979 females per 1000 males** is above the national average, indicating relatively better gender balance.
- **Maternal and Child Health:** Institutional deliveries, maternal healthcare, and nutritional outcomes have improved through targeted interventions.
- **Economic Participation:** Large-scale participation of women in Self-Help Groups (SHGs) has strengthened financial inclusion and entrepreneurship.

Successful Schemes for Women's Welfare

1. Mission Shakti (2001)

- Flagship programme for women empowerment through **Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs)**.
- Provides credit linkage, livelihood opportunities, marketing support, and entrepreneurship promotion.
- Has transformed millions of rural women into economic stakeholders.

2. MAMATA Scheme

- Conditional cash transfer scheme for pregnant and lactating mothers.
- Promotes maternal nutrition, institutional delivery, and health-seeking behaviour.

3. SUBHADRA Scheme

- Launched in 2024 as Odisha's largest women-centric welfare programme.
- Aims to cover more than **1 crore women** through direct financial assistance and economic empowerment.

4. Lakshpati Didi Initiative

- Promotes women-led enterprises and income generation through SHGs.
- Odisha has emerged as a leading state under the programme.

Conclusion

Odisha's women-centric policies have improved social and economic indicators substantially. Sustained investment in education, health, digital inclusion, and entrepreneurship can accelerate gender-equitable development in the state.

Q11. Discuss the causes and consequences of bonded labour in Odisha. Discuss the steps taken by the Odisha Government in tackling the problem. What are the bottlenecks in implementation? (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

Bonded labour is a system in which a person is forced to work to repay a debt under exploitative conditions. Despite the **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976** and Article 23 of the Constitution, it persists in parts of Odisha, particularly among vulnerable migrant workers.

Body

Causes of Bonded Labour in Odisha

- **Chronic poverty and indebtedness**, especially in western districts such as Balangir, Nuapada and Kalahandi.
- **Seasonal migration** to brick kilns, construction sites and farms in other states.
- **Landlessness and unemployment**, forcing workers to accept advance payments.
- **Illiteracy and lack of awareness** about labour rights.
- **Social marginalization** of SCs, STs and other vulnerable groups.
- Weak access to institutional credit, leading to dependence on labour contractors.

Consequences

- Violation of **human dignity and fundamental rights**.
- Inter-generational poverty and debt traps.
- Child labour, school dropouts and poor health outcomes.
- Human trafficking and exploitation of migrant workers.
- Reduced human capital formation and social exclusion.

Steps Taken by Odisha Government

- Enforcement of the **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976**.
- Rescue, release certificates and rehabilitation of bonded labourers.
- Implementation of the **Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers**, providing financial assistance and livelihood support.
- Vigilance committees, migrant worker registration and labour helplines.
- Recent initiatives such as labour cards and migration-free village programmes in vulnerable districts.

Bottlenecks in Implementation

- Delays in identification, rescue and rehabilitation.
- Poor inter-state coordination for migrant workers.
- Low conviction rates and weak enforcement.
- Inadequate awareness among beneficiaries.
- Delayed disbursement of rehabilitation assistance, causing many rescued workers to relapse into bondage.

Conclusion

Eliminating bonded labour requires a combination of **livelihood generation, effective rehabilitation, labour-rights awareness, and strict enforcement**. Odisha must focus on preventive measures alongside rescue and rehabilitation to break the cycle permanently.

Q12. Discuss the structure and function of the State Election Commission. Suggest measures for its reform. (Marks: 15)

Answer:

Introduction

The **State Election Commission (SEC)** is an autonomous constitutional body established by the **73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments** to ensure free, fair, and regular elections to Panchayats and Municipalities. Articles **243K** and **243ZA** provide its constitutional foundation.

Body

Structure of the State Election Commission

- Headed by a **State Election Commissioner** appointed by the Governor.
- The Commissioner enjoys security of tenure and can be removed only in the manner prescribed for a **High Court Judge**, ensuring independence.
- The Governor provides necessary staff and logistical support to the SEC.
- Separate SECs exist in every State and Union Territory for local body elections.

Functions of the SEC

Conduct of Local Body Elections

- Supervises, directs and controls elections to:
 - Panchayats
 - Municipalities
 - Municipal Corporations

Electoral Roll Management

- Prepares and updates electoral rolls for local body elections.

Delimitation and Reservation

- Oversees delimitation of wards and implementation of reservation provisions for SCs, STs and women in local bodies.

Ensuring Free and Fair Elections

- Enforces Model Code of Conduct.
- Monitors polling, counting and declaration of results.

Need for Reforms

Institutional Independence

- Appointment should be through a **collegium system** comprising the Chief Minister, Leader of Opposition and Chief Justice of the High Court, similar to demands for ECI reforms.

Financial Autonomy

- Create an independent charged expenditure mechanism to reduce dependence on state governments.

Uniform Electoral Framework

- Standardize election procedures, electoral rolls and technology across states.

Strengthen Capacity

- Dedicated professional staff, digital electoral databases and GIS-based delimitation.

Timely Elections

- Implement the spirit of the Supreme Court's emphasis on regular local body elections to strengthen grassroots democracy.

Conclusion

A robust and independent SEC is indispensable for democratic decentralization envisaged under the Constitution. Strengthening its autonomy, resources and professionalism will deepen grassroots democracy and improve local governance.

GROUP B

Q13. Explain the relevant constitutional provisions which underline the strong-centre framework adopted by the Constituent Assembly. What were the factors which led the Assembly members to have such a federal design? (Marks: 20)

Answer:

Introduction

India is constitutionally described as a “**Union of States**” (**Article 1**). While adopting a federal structure, the Constituent Assembly consciously created a **strong Centre** to preserve national unity, security, and socio-economic transformation in a newly independent nation.

Body

Constitutional Provisions Reflecting a Strong-Centre Framework

1. Legislative Supremacy of the Union

- **Union List** contains subjects of national importance such as defence, foreign affairs, currency, and railways.
- **Article 248** grants residuary powers to Parliament.
- **Articles 249 and 250** empower Parliament to legislate on State List subjects in national interest or during emergencies.

2. Administrative Control

- **Articles 256–257** enable the Union to issue directions to states.
- Governors are appointed by the President (**Article 155**), strengthening Centre-State coordination.

3. Financial Dominance

- Major taxation powers rest with the Union.
- States depend significantly on **Finance Commission transfers (Article 280)** and central grants.

4. Emergency Provisions

- **Article 352** (National Emergency), **Article 356** (President’s Rule), and **Article 360** (Financial Emergency) can substantially transform the federal structure into a unitary one.

5. Integrated Institutions

- Single Constitution (except historical exceptions).
- Single citizenship.
- Integrated judiciary headed by the Supreme Court.
- All India Services (**Article 312**) ensure administrative uniformity.

Factors Behind Adoption of a Strong Centre

Partition and National Integration

- Partition violence and communal tensions created fears of fragmentation.
- Integration of over **560 princely states** required a powerful Union.

Security Concerns

- External threats from neighbouring countries and internal disturbances necessitated centralized authority.

Socio-Economic Development

- Leaders like **B.R. Ambedkar** and **Jawaharlal Nehru** viewed a strong Centre as essential for planned economic development and social justice.

Legacy of Government of India Act, 1935

- The Act provided an administrative blueprint with significant central powers, influencing constitutional design.

Diversity Management

- India's linguistic, ethnic, religious, and regional diversity demanded a coordinating national authority to maintain unity while accommodating diversity.
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Conclusion

The Constituent Assembly crafted a **federal system with a unitary bias**, balancing regional autonomy with national cohesion. As highlighted by the **Sarkaria and Punchhi Commissions**, cooperative federalism remains the key to harmonizing a strong Centre with empowered states in contemporary India.

Q14. Why is a Democratic Government called a limited and responsible Government?

Explain the doctrine of checks and balances while mentioning the relevant constitutional provisions as applicable to India's constitutional democracy. (Marks: 20)

Answer:

Introduction

A **democratic government** is called a **limited and responsible government** because its powers are restricted by the Constitution, rule of law, and accountability mechanisms. In India, constitutional democracy prevents concentration of power through the doctrine of **checks and balances**.

Body

Why is a Democratic Government a Limited Government?

A democratic government is limited because:

- **Constitutional Supremacy:** All organs function within constitutional boundaries.
- **Fundamental Rights (Part III):** State actions are subject to judicial scrutiny.
- **Federal Structure:** Powers are divided between the Union and States through the Seventh Schedule.
- **Judicial Review:** Courts can invalidate unconstitutional laws and executive actions.
- **Rule of Law (Article 14):** No person or authority is above the law.

The Supreme Court in **Kesavananda Bharati (1973)** recognized constitutional limitations through the **Basic Structure Doctrine**.

Why is it a Responsible Government?

India follows the **Parliamentary System** wherein the executive remains accountable to the legislature.

- **Article 75(3):** Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha.
- Question Hour, Zero Hour, Calling Attention Motion and No-Confidence Motion ensure accountability.
- Parliamentary Committees scrutinize executive actions.
- CAG audits public expenditure and reports to Parliament.

Thus, government authority is exercised under continuous public and parliamentary oversight.

Doctrine of Checks and Balances in India

India does not adopt a rigid separation of powers; instead, it follows a system of **functional separation with checks and balances**.

Organ	Checks on Others
Legislature	Impeaches President (Art. 61), removes judges, controls executive through motions and budget approval
Executive	Summons, prorogues Parliament (Art. 85), promulgates Ordinances (Art. 123), appoints judges and constitutional authorities
Judiciary	Exercises judicial review under Articles 13, 32, 136 and 226; protects Fundamental Rights

Relevant Constitutional Provisions

- **Article 50** – Separation of Judiciary from Executive.
- **Articles 121 & 211** – Restrict discussion on judges' conduct.

- **Articles 122 & 212** – Courts cannot ordinarily inquire into legislative proceedings.
- **Articles 32 & 226** – Judicial review and constitutional remedies.
- **Article 75(3)** – Collective responsibility of the executive.

Conclusion

India's constitutional democracy balances liberty with accountability through limited government, responsible executive, and institutional checks. This framework safeguards constitutionalism, prevents authoritarianism, and strengthens democratic governance.

Q15. Discuss the challenges Panchayati Raj Institutions continue to face in India despite the implementation of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, with special reference to Gram Panchayats in Odisha. Suggest doable reforms in both general terms and in the specific context of Odisha. (Marks: 20)

Answer:

Introduction

The **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992** (Part IX; Articles 243–243O) transformed Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) into constitutional bodies and envisaged **Gram Swaraj** through democratic decentralization. Despite three decades of implementation, several structural challenges persist.

Body

Challenges Faced by PRIs in India

1. Incomplete Devolution of the 3Fs

- **Functions, Funds and Functionaries** remain inadequately transferred.
- Many states have not fully devolved the **29 subjects** listed in the Eleventh Schedule.

2. Financial Dependence

- PRIs rely heavily on Central and State grants.
- Weak own-source revenue generation limits local autonomy.

3. Capacity Deficits

- Lack of trained personnel, technical expertise and digital literacy.
- Poor planning and project execution at the grassroots level.

4. Weak Gram Sabhas

- Low public participation reduces accountability and social audit effectiveness.

5. Elite Capture and Proxy Representation

- Local elites influence decision-making.
- In several areas, elected women representatives face the problem of "**Sarpanch Pati/Proxy Leadership**."

Specific Challenges of Gram Panchayats in Odisha

- Large tribal and geographically remote areas hinder service delivery.
- Delayed and incomplete implementation of **PESA** in Scheduled Areas affects tribal self-governance.
- Dependence on grants despite substantial Finance Commission support. Around **6,085 Gram Panchayats** receive rural local body grants.
- Shortage of trained staff and digital infrastructure in backward districts.
- Limited convergence among MGNREGA, Mission Shakti, rural housing and livelihood programmes.
- Social audits and Gram Sabha participation remain uneven.

Doable Reforms

General Reforms

- Implement genuine devolution of the **3Fs** as recommended by the **Second Administrative Reforms Commission**.
 - Strengthen **State Finance Commissions** and local taxation powers.
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- Institutionalize continuous capacity-building through digital platforms.
- Strengthen Gram Sabhas, social audits and participatory budgeting.
- Promote e-Panchayat and data-driven governance.

Odisha-Specific Reforms

- Notify and operationalize **PESA Rules** at the earliest.
- Strengthen tribal Gram Sabhas for natural resource governance.
- Expand digital connectivity and Panchayat-level technical support teams.
- Integrate Mission Shakti SHGs into Panchayat planning.
- Enhance untied funds and performance-linked grants for Gram Panchayats.

Conclusion

PRIs can become true institutions of self-government only when constitutional devolution is matched by administrative and fiscal empowerment. Odisha's success will depend on deepening tribal self-governance, strengthening Gram Sabhas, and ensuring accountable local development.

Q16. Examine the significance of Cash Transfer Schemes in India. Bring out their positive and negative effects. (Marks: 20)

Answer:

Introduction

Cash Transfer Schemes (CTS) involve direct transfer of money to beneficiaries through bank accounts, primarily via the **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** mechanism. They aim to improve welfare delivery, reduce leakages, and promote inclusive development. India has increasingly adopted CTS through schemes such as **PM-KISAN**, **PM Ujjwala Yojana**, **National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)** and maternity benefits.

Body

Significance of Cash Transfer Schemes

Enhancing Welfare Efficiency

- Eliminates intermediaries and reduces corruption.
- Ensures timely delivery of benefits directly to beneficiaries.

Promoting Financial Inclusion

- Strengthens the **JAM Trinity (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile)** ecosystem.
- Encourages banking habits among vulnerable groups.

Supporting Inclusive Growth

- Provides income support to farmers, women, elderly persons, and vulnerable households.
- Helps reduce extreme poverty and consumption shocks.

Improving Governance

- Enhances transparency, accountability, and real-time monitoring.
- DBT has generated cumulative savings of about **Rs.3.48 lakh crore** by eliminating leakages and ghost beneficiaries.

Positive Effects

Poverty Reduction

- **PM-KISAN** provides assured income support to farmer families.
- Cash transfers improve food security and household consumption.

Women Empowerment

- Direct transfers to women enhance financial autonomy.
- Schemes such as maternity benefits improve maternal and child welfare.

Administrative Efficiency

- Reduced duplication and exclusion errors.
 - Beneficiary coverage under DBT has expanded nearly **16-fold** since its inception.
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Crisis Response

- During COVID-19, direct transfers provided immediate relief to vulnerable households.

Negative Effects

Exclusion Errors

- Lack of Aadhaar linkage, banking access, or digital literacy may exclude genuine beneficiaries.

Inadequacy Against Inflation

- Fixed cash amounts may lose value due to rising prices.

Misuse of Funds

- Unconditional transfers may not always be used for intended welfare purposes.

Fiscal and Political Concerns

- Excessive cash-transfer promises can strain state finances and encourage populism.

Data and Verification Issues

- CAG has highlighted gaps in beneficiary verification and data integration in some DBT programmes.

Conclusion

Cash Transfer Schemes have transformed welfare delivery by improving efficiency, transparency, and inclusion. However, robust beneficiary identification, periodic revision of transfer amounts, and stronger digital infrastructure are essential to maximize their developmental impact and ensure equitable social protection.

Q17. "Despite many e-governance practices, digital exclusion is a reality depriving many from the fruits of governance." Explain the causes and consequences of digital exclusion and the people affected by it. What remedial measures are required to address the problem? (Marks: 20)

Answer:

Introduction

Digital exclusion refers to the inability of individuals or groups to access, afford, or effectively use digital technologies and online services. Despite the success of **Digital India**, exclusion continues to deny many citizens access to governance, welfare, and economic opportunities.

Body

Causes of Digital Exclusion

1. Infrastructure Deficits

- Poor internet connectivity in remote, tribal, hilly, and border regions.
- High-speed broadband remains concentrated in urban areas; only **3.8% of rural households have optical-fibre internet access**.

2. Digital Literacy Gap

- Lack of skills to use smartphones, digital payments, and e-governance platforms.
- Low awareness remains a major barrier, especially among rural households.

3. Socio-Economic Inequalities

- Poverty limits access to devices and internet services.
- Marginalized communities face greater exclusion due to educational and income disadvantages.

4. Gender Divide

- NFHS data indicates significant disparities in internet usage between men and women. Rural women remain particularly disadvantaged.

People Most Affected

- Rural populations
 - Women and girls
 - SCs, STs, and PVTGs
 - Elderly citizens
-

- Persons with disabilities
- Urban poor and migrant workers
- Small farmers and informal workers

Consequences of Digital Exclusion

Governance Impact

- Exclusion from DBT, e-KYC, telemedicine, online grievance redressal, and digital public services.

Educational Impact

- Learning losses due to lack of access to online education, highlighted during COVID-19.

Economic Impact

- Reduced access to digital payments, e-commerce, employment portals, and skill-development opportunities.

Social Impact

- Deepens existing inequalities and creates a "new digital underclass."

Remedial Measures

- Accelerate **BharatNet** and universal broadband connectivity; over **2.15 lakh Gram Panchayats** are already connected.
- Expand **PMGDISHA** and digital literacy programmes.
- Promote affordable devices through targeted subsidies.
- Develop multilingual and accessible platforms for persons with disabilities.
- Strengthen community service centres and digital volunteers.
- Implement recommendations of the **B.N. Srikrishna Committee** on digital inclusion and data protection.
- Promote gender-responsive digital policies through SHGs and Mission Shakti-type initiatives.

Conclusion

Digital governance can become truly transformative only when it is **inclusive by design**. Bridging the digital divide is essential for realizing the constitutional vision of equality, social justice, and citizen-centric governance in the digital age.
