

1. Examine the need for electoral reforms as suggested by various committees, with particular reference to the “one nation – one election” principle. (10 M)

APPROACH

Introduction:

Introduce the pressing need for **electoral reforms** in India, highlighting recommendations from various expert committees aimed at improving the electoral process.

Body:

- Examine key **issues and suggestions** from committees regarding electoral reforms, such as transparency, funding, voter registration, and conduct of elections.
- Discuss the challenges and concerns related to the **One Nation-One Election** principle, including logistical difficulties, constitutional hurdles, and political complexities.

Conclusion:

Suggest a **pragmatic way forward** that balances electoral efficiency with constitutional safeguards, ensuring reforms are inclusive, transparent, and strengthen democracy.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

Electoral reforms are vital to enhancing India’s democratic integrity and election efficiency. The “One Nation, One Election” proposal, backed by the Ram Nath Kovind Committee, advocates holding simultaneous Lok Sabha and state assembly elections to reduce costs, improve governance, and promote political stability by synchronizing electoral cycles.

Need for Electoral Reforms

- **Boosting Voter Participation:** Simplifying voter registration and encouraging turnout are key to inclusive democracy. The Goswami Committee recommended such measures.
- **Tackling Political Corruption:** Addressing criminal-politician nexus builds voter trust and candidate accountability, as highlighted by the Vohra Committee.
- **Controlling Election Expenditure:** Limiting soaring election costs ensures a level playing field. The 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission emphasized curbing these expenses.
- **Enhancing Election Integrity:** Strengthening transparency, especially in funding (e.g., electoral bonds), is critical. Both the Election Commission and Law Commission support reforms in this area.
- **Ensuring Voting Inclusivity:** Equal voting access for marginalized communities is essential, advocated by the National Commission to Review the Constitution.

Significance of One Nation-One Election

- **Economic Growth:** Simultaneous elections can boost India’s GDP by about 5 percentage points in the following year (Kovind Committee).

- **Increased Capital Spending:** Government expenditure rises by 67% post simultaneous polls, mainly on capital projects, promoting long-term growth.
- **Investment Stability:** Reduced election frequency lowers uncertainty, increasing Gross Fixed Capital Formation by 5 percentage points of GDP during synchronized elections.
- **Cost Savings:** Combining elections cuts recurring election expenses—over Rs 4,500 crore currently spent—freeing resources for development.
- **Smoother Governance:** Frequent Model Code of Conduct impositions disrupt governance, as seen in 2024. Simultaneous polls reduce such interruptions.
- **Reduced Money Influence:** Less frequent elections mean fewer campaign expenses, improving monitoring of election spending (estimated Rs 1.35 lakh crore for 2024).
- **Mitigating Divisive Politics:** Simultaneous elections can shift focus from regional, caste, and communal divides to national issues, promoting unity. For example, caste mobilization heavily influenced Karnataka's 2023 polls.

Conclusion

The One Nation-One Election model promises to strengthen India's democracy by fostering political stability, lowering costs, enhancing governance, and promoting inclusivity. This reform aligns with India's broader goals of sustainable development and national unity.

2. Explain and distinguish between Lok Adalats and Arbitration Tribunals. Whether they entertain civil as well as criminal cases? (10 M)

APPROACH

Introduction:

Introduce the concepts of **Lok Adalats** and **Arbitration Tribunals** as alternative dispute resolution mechanisms with distinct roles in India's justice system.

Body:

Divide the discussion into two parts: first, distinguish between Lok Adalats and Arbitration Tribunals in terms of their nature, jurisdiction, procedures, and participation. Then, examine their scope regarding the types of cases they entertain—Lok Adalats handle minor civil and compoundable criminal cases, while Arbitration Tribunals focus solely on civil commercial disputes.

Conclusion:

Conclude by highlighting that both Lok Adalats and Arbitration Tribunals play complementary roles in ensuring speedy, cost-effective justice, catering to different dispute resolution needs and reducing the burden on regular courts.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

Lok Adalats and Arbitration Tribunals are alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods that settle disputes outside courts. Lok Adalats focus on quick, low-cost justice for minor civil and compoundable criminal cases, while Arbitration Tribunals handle complex commercial and contractual disputes.

Body

- **Types of Disputes**
 - Lok Adalats: Minor civil, family, and petty criminal cases (e.g., land disputes, cheque bounce).
 - Arbitration: Commercial and corporate disputes (e.g., Vodafone tax case, Tata-Mistry dispute).
- **Legal Framework**
 - Lok Adalats: Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.
 - Arbitration: Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.
- **Voluntary Nature**
 - Lok Adalats: Consent of both parties required.
 - Arbitration: Based on prior agreement.
- **Composition**
 - Lok Adalats: Presided by retired or sitting judges.
 - Arbitration: Arbitrators chosen by parties.
- **Cost**
 - Lok Adalats: Minimal or no fees.
 - Arbitration: Higher fees for arbitrators and lawyers.
- **Appeal**
 - Lok Adalats: No appeal; parties can litigate if unsatisfied.
 - Arbitration: Awards can be challenged on limited grounds.
- **Legal Representation**
 - Lok Adalats: Lawyers optional.
 - Arbitration: Lawyers usually involved.
- **Speed**
 - Lok Adalats: Settled quickly, often in one session.
 - Arbitration: Takes longer depending on complexity.

Conclusion

Lok Adalats ensure accessible, fast justice for minor disputes, while Arbitration Tribunals resolve complex commercial cases. Both reduce court burden and promote efficient dispute resolution.

3. The growth of the cabinet system has practically resulted in the marginalisation of parliamentary supremacy." Elucidate. (10 M)

APPROACH:

Introduction

Introduce how the growth of the cabinet system has influenced the traditional concept of parliamentary supremacy.

Body

- Discuss how the rise of the **cabinet system**—with collective responsibility and strong executive leadership—has practically led to the **marginalisation of parliamentary supremacy**, concentrating power within the executive.
- Explain how despite this, the **role of Parliament remains significant** through its lawmaking powers, control over finances and mechanisms like questioning and committees that ensure executive accountability.

Conclusion

Conclude by affirming that while the cabinet system shifts real power towards the executive, Parliament continues to play a crucial role in democracy as the representative body and legislative authority.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

The rise of the cabinet system in India has shifted power from Parliament to the executive, raising concerns about weakening parliamentary supremacy and democratic accountability.

Body

Executive Dominance Over Parliament

- **Centralised Power:** Cabinet controls key decisions, sidelining Parliament (e.g., 2015 Land Acquisition Ordinance).
- **Limited Debate:** Bills often passed with minimal discussion (e.g., National Dental Commission Act, 2023).
- **Restricted Legislation:** Few private members' bills succeed due to executive control.
- **Bypassing Committees:** Important bills avoid scrutiny (e.g., Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2019).
- **Excessive Ordinances:** Frequent ordinances undermine Parliament's law-making role (e.g., GNCTD Ordinance, 2023).
- **Fewer Parliamentary Sessions:** Reduced sittings limit oversight (only 33 days in 2020).
- **Budget Control:** Executive dominates budget with limited parliamentary review (e.g., 2024 interim budget).

Parliament's Continued Importance

- Retains supreme legislative power (e.g., RTI 2005, GST 2017).
- Approves budgets and tax measures (Article 265).
- Holds executive accountable through Question Hour (e.g., Pegasus scandal).
- Parliamentary committees scrutinise bills (e.g., Consumer Protection Bill, 2019).
- Powers to impeach judges and President ensure checks.
- No Confidence Motions ensure government accountability.
- Oversees foreign policy debates (e.g., India-China border dispute, 2020).

Conclusion

While the cabinet system centralises power, a strong Parliament remains vital to uphold democratic checks, accountability and India's constitutional balance.

4. The duty of the Comptroller and Auditor General is not merely to ensure the legality of expenditure but also its propriety.” Comment. (10 M)

APPROACH

Introduction:

Introduce the role of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) under Article 148 as the constitutional authority responsible for ensuring both the **legality** and **propriety** of government expenditure.

Body:

First, explain the **legality aspect**—CAG audits government spending to ensure compliance with laws and financial rules, detects irregularities, and supports accountability through reports reviewed by the Public Accounts Committee.

Next, cover the **propriety aspect**—CAG assesses value-for-money, ethical use of funds, transparency, and advises government bodies, following international auditing standards.

Conclusion:

Conclude that the CAG safeguards public resources by enforcing lawful and prudent spending, enhancing transparency and trust in government finances, as emphasized by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

The **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India** holds a constitutional mandate under **Article 148** that extends beyond verifying the legality of government expenditure. The CAG is also responsible for examining the **propriety** of expenditure, ensuring that public funds are spent not only **legally** but also **appropriately, prudently, and for their intended purpose**. This dual responsibility safeguards the financial integrity and ethical use of public resources.

Body

Ensuring Legality of Expenditure

- **Constitutional and Statutory Mandate:**
The CAG audits expenditures from the Consolidated Fund of India, verifying compliance with legal provisions under **Article 266**.
- **Audit Reports:**
Publishes annual reports evaluating the financial and operational integrity of government schemes.

Example: The CAG's audit of **MGNREGA** revealed implementation gaps and resource utilization issues.

- **Compliance with Laws and Regulations:**

Ensures government transactions comply with statutory laws, including tax regulations such as the **Goods and Services Tax (GST)**.

Example: Audits on GST compliance within various government departments.

- **Financial Oversight:**

Conducts regular financial assessments, particularly in sensitive sectors like defence, to detect mismanagement and corruption.

Example: The CAG's audit of the **2010 Commonwealth Games** exposed procurement irregularities, prompting investigations.

- **Public Accountability:**

CAG findings are reviewed by the **Public Accounts Committee (PAC)**, holding government agencies accountable.

Example: CAG's report on the **2G spectrum case** triggered PAC deliberations and legal actions.

Ensuring Propriety of Expenditure

- **Value for Money Audits:**

Evaluates if government programs provide efficient and effective use of funds.

Example: Audit of the **Clean Ganga Mission** assessed fund utilization and environmental outcomes.

- **Ethical Standards:**

Monitors discretionary expenditures, especially by ministers, to ensure ethical use of public money.

Example: Audits of ministers' discretionary spending.

- **Transparency in Spending:**

Promotes public access to audit reports for greater transparency.

Example: Audit findings of the **Delhi Metro Rail Corporation** were made publicly available online.

- **Advisory Role:**

Provides recommendations to government bodies for improved policy decisions.

Example: Suggestions to the **Railway Board** on fare pricing.

- **Safeguarding Public Interest:**

Ensures efficient management of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) to prevent resource wastage.

Example: Audit of **Air India** revealed financial mismanagement and recommended corrective actions.

- **International Standards:**

Adheres to **INTOSAI** (International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions) to align with global best practices in auditing.

Conclusion

The CAG plays a **vital role** in maintaining financial accountability and ensuring the lawful, prudent, and transparent use of public funds. As **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** emphasized, the CAG is among the most important constitutional officers, entrusted with safeguarding public resources through rigorous legal scrutiny.

5. Analyse the role of local bodies in providing good governance at the local level and bring out the pros and cons of merging the rural local bodies with the urban local bodies. (10 M)

APPROACH

Introduction:

Local bodies ensure **grassroots governance**, promoting **participation, accountability** and **efficient service delivery**.

Body:

Highlight that Local bodies strengthen good governance through decentralization, local planning and quick redressal. Merging rural-urban bodies aids unified development but may dilute rural focus and create administrative challenges.

Conclusion:

Merger needs **careful balancing** to protect local identities while promoting **integrated development**.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

Local bodies are the foundation of decentralized governance in India, empowered by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (Articles 243–243Z). These reforms have strengthened grassroots democracy. The Supreme Court's 2022 order on timely local elections reaffirmed their democratic importance.

Body

Decentralized Decision-Making:

Article 243G empowers Panchayats to plan local development, seen in Maharashtra's water conservation initiative, *Jalyukt Shivar Abhiyan*.

Community Engagement:

Gram Sabhas and Ward Committees enable citizen participation and transparency, as in Bengaluru and Kerala.

Accountability:

Social audits under MGNREGA, supported by RTI, expose governance flaws, like fund misuse in Andhra Pradesh.

Local Economic Development:

Municipalities run urban schemes under Article 243W, such as Gujarat's micro-enterprise programs (NULM).

Inclusion:

Reserved seats for women and SC/STs ensure political representation; women make up 6% of PRI reps nationally (RBI, 2024).

Resource Management:

Local bodies manage resources effectively, e.g., groundwater conservation in Rajasthan's Alwar district.

Service Delivery:

Municipalities provide essential services like health and education, with Kerala showing notable success.

Pros of Merging Rural and Urban Bodies

- Enables integrated regional development.
- Cuts administrative costs by reducing redundancies.
- Promotes equitable resource distribution.
- Extends urban services to rural areas.
- Simplifies governance; improves efficiency (e.g., Gurgaon's single-window system).

Cons of Merging Rural and Urban Bodies

- May overlook rural-specific needs like agriculture.
- Raises complexity managing diverse populations.
- Risks diluting rural political representation.
- Could favor urban centers in resource allocation.
- Threatens rural identity and heritage.
- Faces legal and regulatory challenges.

Conclusion

Local bodies are key to grassroots democracy and development. Merging rural and urban bodies can improve efficiency and equity but must respect local needs and identities to ensure inclusive, sustainable growth.

6. Public charitable trusts have the potential to make India's development more inclusive as they relate to certain vital public issues. Comment. (10 M)

APPROACH

Introduction

Briefly introduce public charitable trusts and their role in promoting inclusive development in India.

Body

Explain how these trusts support marginalized groups and complement government efforts. Highlight key challenges they face like poor transparency, weak regulation, funding issues, and governance lapses.

Conclusion

Conclude by stressing the need to resolve these challenges to enhance the impact of charitable trusts on inclusive development.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

Public charitable trusts significantly contribute to India's inclusive development by addressing education, healthcare, poverty, and environmental challenges. Operating under legal frameworks like the Indian Trusts Act, 1882, trusts such as Tata Trusts, SEWA, and PM CARES complement government efforts to uplift marginalized communities.

Body

Role of Public Charitable Trusts in Inclusive Development

- They improve access and quality of education in underserved areas, supporting schools, scholarships, and vocational training, as seen in initiatives by the Azim Premji Foundation and Tata Trusts.
- Trusts enhance healthcare availability by running hospitals, mobile clinics, and affordable care units, with organizations like Narayana Health Foundation and Tata Trusts playing key roles.
- Marginalized groups gain empowerment through skill development and microfinance programs, such as those run by SEWA Trust, fostering gender equality and economic inclusion.
- During disasters, trusts provide rapid relief, medical aid, and rehabilitation, exemplified by the PM CARES Fund's COVID-19 response.
- Legal aid and advocacy support vulnerable populations, protecting fundamental rights, as practiced by Bachpan Bachao Andolan.
- Environmental conservation and sustainability efforts by trusts contribute to biodiversity protection and sustainable livelihoods, reflected in the work of BNHS and WWF India.
- Community development is fostered through investments in sanitation, housing, and grassroots innovations, aiding progress toward Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Challenges Faced

- Funding instability due to reliance on fluctuating donations affects program sustainability.
- Limited reach in rural and remote areas restricts impact.
- Governance issues cause transparency and accountability concerns.
- Complex regulatory environments hinder smooth operations across states.
- Overlapping efforts among multiple trusts waste resources and reduce efficiency.
- Measuring impact remains difficult due to a lack of standardized evaluation tools.
- Political and corporate influences can dilute trusts' core objectives.

Conclusion

Public charitable trusts are vital in bridging development gaps and promoting equitable growth. Enhanced transparency, wider rural outreach, stronger coordination, and sustained funding will enable them to maximize their transformative impact on India's inclusive development.

7. Poverty and malnutrition create a vicious cycle, adversely affecting human capital formation. What steps can be taken to break the cycle? (10 M)

APPROACH

Introduction

Introduce the **vicious cycle of poverty and malnutrition** and its adverse impact on **human capital formation**, highlighting how these interlinked issues hinder individual and national development.

Body

Analyze how **poverty limits access to adequate nutrition**, leading to **malnutrition**, which in turn impairs physical and cognitive development, reducing productivity and perpetuating poverty. Explain the long-term effects on **education, health, and workforce quality**. Suggest **steps to break this cycle**, such as improving **nutrition programs, enhancing access to education and healthcare, social safety nets, and targeted poverty alleviation schemes**.

Conclusion

Emphasize the need for an integrated approach addressing both **poverty and malnutrition** to strengthen **human capital formation** and promote sustainable development.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

Poverty and malnutrition form a vicious cycle where lack of nutritious food reduces productivity and sustains deprivation. India's 111th rank in the 2023 Global Hunger Index reflects severe nutritional challenges linked to economic inequality.

Body

- **Economic Barriers:** Poverty limits access to nutritious food, especially in rural and marginalized communities. (FAO: 690 million people hungry globally)
- **Child Development:** Malnutrition stunts physical and cognitive growth, lowering lifetime productivity. (Poshan Tracker 2024: 35% of children under 6 are stunted)
- **Healthcare Costs:** Malnutrition raises disease risk, increasing medical expenses and financial strain. (PHFI study: higher TB risk in malnourished)
- **Education & Employment:** Cognitive delays reduce schooling and job opportunities, deepening poverty cycles.
- **Economic Impact:** Undernourishment lowers national productivity, costing India 2-3% of GDP annually. (World Bank 2014)
- **Social Exclusion:** Marginalized groups face greater nutritional gaps, limiting social mobility.

Key Solutions:

- Strengthen Poshan Abhiyan to cut child malnutrition by 2% yearly.
- Enhance PDS for steady food access; COVID-19 PDS fed 800 million people monthly.
- Expand Mid-Day Meals to improve child nutrition and school attendance.
- Empower women through education and employment (e.g., Kerala's Kudumbashree).
- Boost public-private partnerships to reduce food waste and improve farmer incomes (e.g., Amul).
- Promote community nutrition education for sustainable dietary habits (e.g., Brazil's Fome Zero).

Conclusion

Addressing poverty and malnutrition needs immediate nutrition support plus long-term reforms. Aligning with SDGs 2 and 3 will strengthen human capital, ensuring inclusive growth and lasting prosperity for India.

8. The Doctrine of Democratic Governance makes it necessary that the public perception of the integrity and commitment of civil servants becomes absolutely positive. Discuss. (10 M)

APPROACH

Introduction

Explain that the **Doctrine of Democratic Governance** depends on a **positive public perception of civil servants** for trust and effective governance.

Body

- Why positive perception matters: ensures accountability and citizen trust.
- Challenges: corruption, inefficiency, poor communication, mistrust.
- Way forward: transparency, ethics training, citizen engagement, performance review.

Conclusion

Stress that a good public image of civil servants is **key to democratic governance** and public confidence.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

Democratic governance fundamentally depends on the integrity and dedication of civil servants. Article 311 of the Indian Constitution protects these officials, reflecting their crucial role in ensuring trust, accountability, and effective administration.

Body

Essential Features of Democratic Governance:

- **Participation and Representation:** Inclusive decision-making and free, fair elections legitimize governance.
- **Responsiveness:** Timely actions address citizens' needs and ensure quality public service delivery.
- **Efficiency and Effectiveness:** Optimal use of resources ensures that government policies achieve intended outcomes.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** Open governance enables citizens to monitor government actions, promoting trust.
- **Rule of Law:** Consistent enforcement of laws holds all, including officials, accountable.
- **Ethical Conduct:** Officials must prioritize public welfare over personal interests to maintain moral governance.
- **Competence and Capacity:** Skilled civil servants are vital for informed policymaking and implementation.

- **Innovation and Adaptability:** Openness to change keeps governance relevant amid evolving challenges.
- **Sustainability:** Policies should balance present needs with future generations' welfare.
- **Financial Prudence:** Transparent, accountable management of public funds prevents corruption.
- **Respect for Rights and Diversity:** Democratic governance protects human rights, promotes inclusivity, and fosters social cohesion.

Impact of Public Perception on Civil Servants and Governance:

- **Trust Builds Legitimacy and Compliance:** Citizens' trust in civil servants ensures acceptance of election outcomes and adherence to laws, especially in crises like the 2024 General Elections and COVID-19 response.
- **Enhanced Cooperation for Policy Success:** Public confidence motivates active participation in initiatives like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, driving collective progress.
- **Corruption Prevention:** The integrity of civil servants deters corruption, a point emphasized by the 2nd Administrative Reform Commission's call for ethical reforms.
- **Elevating Bureaucratic Reputation:** Role models like Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam inspire pride and trust in government institutions.
- **International Standing and Economic Growth:** Transparent and effective civil services improve India's global ranking in ease of doing business, attracting investment and strengthening diplomatic ties.

Conclusion

A positive public perception of their integrity and commitment is vital for democratic stability. Strengthening transparency, capacity building, and ethical standards will cultivate a trusted, accountable bureaucracy essential for India's democratic success.

9. 'The West is fostering India as an alternative to reduce dependence on China's supply chain and as a strategic ally to counter China's political and economic dominance.' Explain this statement with examples. (10 M)

APPROACH:

Introduction

Introduce how the West is promoting India to **reduce reliance on China's supply chains**.

Body

- Highlight efforts to boost India's **manufacturing and tech sectors** as an alternative.
- Discuss India's role as a **strategically** ally to counter China's political and economic dominance.

Conclusion

Emphasize the need for deepening **India-West ties** to build a balanced global order.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

Amid rising geopolitical tensions, the West is adopting a **China+1 strategy** to reduce dependence on China's supply chains. India is being actively promoted as a **strategically and alternative** due to its economic potential, strategic location, skilled workforce, and growing global influence. Initiatives like the **Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)** highlight this shift.

Body

Economic Diversification and Supply Chain Resilience

- **Mineral Security Partnership:** U.S. and India collaborate to secure critical minerals for technology and renewable energy, reducing reliance on China's rare earth processing dominance.
- **Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF):** Launched in 2022, includes India among 14 countries, aiming to strengthen trade, supply chain resilience, and fair trade.
- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** Western firms such as Apple and Microsoft expand manufacturing in India to diversify supply sources.
- **Technology Collaboration:** U.S.-India's iCET initiative focuses on building India's semiconductor and AI capabilities, promoting technological independence.
- **Infrastructure Investment:** U.S.-led **Build Back Better World (B3W)** invests in Indian infrastructure to support manufacturing and logistics, providing an alternative to China's BRI.

Strategic Alliances and Defense Cooperation

- **Quad:** India, U.S., Japan, Australia cooperate on Indo-Pacific maritime security and economic partnership; conduct joint naval exercises like Malabar.
- **India-South Korea-U.S. Trilateral Alliance:** Enhances defense, technology, and trade cooperation to counter China's regional assertiveness.
- **Bilateral Diplomacy:** High-level U.S. visits (e.g., Secretary Blinken) strengthen ties and collaboration on global issues.
- **Global Governance:** Western support for India's permanent UN Security Council seat aims to balance China's international influence.
- **Defense Cooperation:** The Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) boosts military technology collaboration.
- **Space Collaboration:** NASA-ISRO joint NISAR mission strengthens India's space capabilities as a counterbalance to China.

Economic and Technological Engagement

- **Trade Diversification:** US-India bilateral trade hit \$128 billion in 2023, showing growing economic ties.
- **Tech Investment:** Western support in AI, 5G, and clean energy positions India as a key alternative to China's tech dominance.
- **Renewable Energy Cooperation:** India leads the International Solar Alliance, reducing dependence on Chinese solar tech.
- **Multilateral Trade Engagement:** India's active role in IPEF supports open, fair trade frameworks challenging China's economic dominance.

Conclusion

The West's strategic focus on India aims to reduce China dependency by building resilient supply chains, strengthening defense and diplomatic alliances, and fostering technological and economic partnerships. This

multifaceted approach positions India as a vital partner for a stable, balanced, and multipolar global order, reflecting India's emergence as a **responsible global power**.

10. Critically analyse India's evolving diplomatic, economic and strategic relations with the Central Asian Republics (CARs), highlighting their increasing significance in regional and global geopolitics. (10 M)

APPROACH

Introduction

Introduce India's growing **diplomatic, economic, and strategic ties** with the Central Asian Republics (CARs).

Body

- Analyze the **key areas of cooperation** such as energy, connectivity, security, and trade.
- Discuss the **challenges** like geopolitical competition, connectivity issues, and limited infrastructure impacting India-CAR relations.

Conclusion

Suggest the way forward focusing on **strengthening partnerships, improving connectivity, and navigating regional dynamics** for enhanced cooperation.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

India's ties with the Central Asian Republics (CARs) are growing due to their strategic location, energy resources, and regional connectivity potential. India aims to strengthen diplomatic, economic, and security relations, supported by projects like the TAPI pipeline and INSTC.

Body

Diplomatic Relations

- Strategic defense partnerships, e.g., India's military base in Tajikistan.
- Cultural diplomacy via exchanges and education to build long-term ties.
- Engagement in multilateral forums like SCO and SCO-RATS for regional security.

Economic Relations

- Energy security: uranium imports from Kazakhstan, interest in TAPI pipeline gas.
- Trade around \$2 billion annually; focus on pharmaceuticals, IT investments.
- Connectivity via INSTC and Chabahar port, though some projects face delays.

Strategic Considerations

- Afghanistan's instability raises CARs' security importance for India.
- Countering China's influence through alternative development and defense ties.
- Joint military exercises like Dustlik with Uzbekistan strengthen defense cooperation.

Challenges

- Poor direct connectivity, reliance on third-country routes.
- Terrorism threats from ISIS and Al-Qaeda affiliates.
- Trade barriers and competition: China's trade with CARs hit \$89.4 billion in 2023.

- Energy rivalry with China and Russia delays projects like TAPI.
- Political instability in CARs (e.g., Kazakhstan 2022) complicates diplomacy.

Way Forward

- Speed up energy projects like TAPI for energy diversification.
- Expand Indian Cultural Centers to enhance people-to-people ties.
- Increase joint defense drills and counterterrorism cooperation.
- Maintain active SCO participation to boost regional influence.
- Strengthen intelligence-sharing and joint security efforts against terrorism.

Conclusion

India's growing engagement with CARs is vital for strategic, economic, and security goals. Despite challenges, India's focused diplomacy and cooperation underline its vision for a stable, integrated Central Asia at the heart of its extended neighborhood.

11. What are the aims and objectives of the recently passed and enforced Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024? Whether University/State Education Board examinations are covered under the Act? (15 M)

APPROACH

Introduction

Briefly introduce The Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, outlining its purpose to prevent malpractice and ensure the integrity of public examinations.

Body

Discuss the aims and objectives of the Act, focusing on curbing unfair means during examinations, establishing clear penalties, and promoting a fair assessment system. Then examine whether University and State Education Board examinations fall within the scope of this Act.

Conclusion

Conclude by highlighting the significance of the Act in maintaining examination credibility and clarifying its applicability to various educational bodies to ensure uniform enforcement.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

The Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, was enacted to protect exam integrity amid rising cheating and paper leaks in 2024, ensuring fairness, transparency, and accountability in public exams across India.

Body

- **Preserving Academic Integrity:**
The Act aims to protect the sanctity of exams by deterring unfair practices that compromise their

credibility. All offences under the Act are made **cognizable, non-bailable, and non-compoundable**, reflecting the severity of such violations.

- **Standardising Examination Procedures:**
Uniform guidelines are established to maintain consistency across institutions and examination boards. Section 3 of the Act specifies over 15 actions that qualify as unfair means, including cheating for monetary or wrongful advantage.
- **Robust Legal Framework for Enforcement:**
The Act provides clear legal authority to investigate and penalize offenders. Investigations are to be conducted by police officers of ranks not lower than Deputy Superintendent or Assistant Commissioner, ensuring seriousness in enforcement.
- **Transparent and Fair Exam Environment:**
Provisions such as random invigilation and spot checks are introduced to promote fairness and reduce opportunities for malpractice during examinations.
- **Empowering Examination Authorities:**
Boards and universities are granted power to take strong action against offenders. Punishments include imprisonment for at least three years and fines up to ₹10 lakh, providing a strong deterrent.
- **Educational Outreach and Awareness:**
Schools and institutions are required to conduct orientation programs that educate students and educators about the consequences and legal risks of using unfair means.
- **Definition and Scope of Public Examinations:**
The Act applies to examinations conducted by designated public examination authorities listed in the Schedule, including UPSC, SSC, Railway Recruitment Boards, Institute of Banking Personnel Selection, and National Testing Agency. The Central Government can notify additional authorities as needed. Although the Act does not explicitly mention university or state education board exams, its flexible definition allows for potential extension to these bodies.

Conclusion

The Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, boosts exam integrity by empowering authorities to curb cheating, ensuring fairness and transparency in India's public exams.

12. Right to privacy is intrinsic to life and personal liberty and is inherently protected under Article 21 of the Constitution. Explain. In this reference, discuss the law relating to DNA testing of a child in the womb to establish its paternity. (15 M)

APPROACH

Introduction:

State that the **Right to Privacy is inherent in Article 21**, forming a core part of the right to life and personal liberty.

Body:

Outline the **legal provisions and judicial views on DNA testing of an unborn child** to establish paternity. Examine the **conflict between privacy rights and the need for truth in paternity cases**. Discuss how **the child's right to know parentage** may override or coexist with the mother's privacy.

Conclusion:

Suggest a **balanced approach**—DNA testing only under **judicial scrutiny**, with **privacy safeguards**, ensuring **minimal intrusion** and protecting the **child's welfare**.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

The *right to privacy* was accorded the status of a **fundamental right under Article 21** by the **Supreme Court in the landmark Justice K.S. Puttaswamy (2017) judgement**. This recognition has spurred complex debates in areas such as **DNA testing for paternity determination**, where individual privacy often clashes with the **child's right to know their biological parentage**. Balancing these competing rights requires a sensitive and constitutional approach.

Body

Privacy under Article 21: A Multi-Dimensional Right

- **Intrinsic to personal liberty and human dignity**, encompassing decisions on body, health and family life.
- **Interlinked with other fundamental rights** such as **freedom of expression (Art. 19)** and **freedom of religion (Art. 25)**.
- Acts as a **check on arbitrary state action**, ensuring any intrusion is **reasonable, legal and proportionate**.
- Extends to the **digital domain**, including protection of personal data and information.
- Ensures **reproductive autonomy** and private decision-making without coercion.

Legal Framework on DNA Testing and Paternity

- **Section 112 of the Indian Evidence Act**: Presumes legitimacy if the child is born during a valid marriage.
 - *Goutam Kundu v. State of West Bengal*: DNA tests should not be ordered routinely.
- **DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019**: Provides a legal structure for DNA use, with privacy safeguards.
- **Consent and Judicial Oversight**: DNA tests require **informed consent** and **judicial approval**, ensuring privacy is not arbitrarily overridden.
- Courts emphasize **minimum interference in family life** and uphold the **right to dignity**, particularly of the mother.

Conflict Between Privacy and Paternity Testing

- **Privacy vs. Truth**: Tension arises between an individual's privacy and the legal need to determine biological parentage.
 - *Rohit Shekhar v. Narayan Dutt Tiwari*: DNA testing allowed despite privacy concerns.
- **Right to Know Parentage**: The child's right may **override parental privacy** in certain cases.
 - *ABC v. State (NCT of Delhi)*: Balanced the mother's privacy and the child's right.
- Courts avoid testing where **privacy outweighs legal necessity**.
 - *Banarsi Dass v. Teeku Dutta*: DNA test denied to preserve family harmony.

Need for Judicial Balance and Ethical Safeguards

- **Case-by-case adjudication** ensures sensitive handling of paternity disputes.
- **Voluntary consent** and **informed decision-making** are key.
- **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)** should be promoted to resolve issues privately and amicably.
- The **Kerala High Court** aptly noted: "*Privacy is the ultimate expression of the sanctity of the individual.*"

Conclusion

While **DNA testing in paternity disputes** serves a legitimate purpose, it must be **weighed carefully against the fundamental right to privacy**. Courts must adopt a **calibrated, case-specific approach** that upholds **individual dignity**, respects **family privacy** and ensures **legal justice** through **minimum necessary intrusion**. A balanced framework—**legal, ethical and humane**—is essential to reconcile truth with liberty in such sensitive matters.

13. What changes has the Union Government recently introduced in the domain of Centre-State relations? Suggest measures to be adopted to build trust between the Centre and the States and for strengthening federalism. (15 M)

APPROACH

Introduction:

Briefly introduce recent changes by the Union Government affecting **Centre-State relations**, highlighting evolving federal dynamics.

Body:

- Discuss key changes like **central schemes' restructuring**, **use of governors and administrators** and **financial reforms impacting states**.
- Outline measures to **build trust**, such as **enhancing cooperative federalism**, strengthening the **GST Council**, ensuring **consultative policy-making** and respecting **state autonomy**.

Conclusion:

Conclude that balanced Centre-State relations require **mutual respect and collaboration** to preserve and strengthen India's federal structure.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

Centre-State relations have evolved significantly amid debates on cooperative federalism and fiscal devolution. The 15th Finance Commission's recommendations, GST implementation and farm laws controversies highlight ongoing tensions and the need for reform.

Body

Recent Changes by the Union Government

- **15th Finance Commission:** Reduced states' share in central taxes from 42% to 41%, balancing fiscal challenges with the special status of Jammu & Kashmir.
- **GST Implementation:** Unified India's market but caused financial stress and compensation delays for states.
- **Farm Laws:** Sparked protests (e.g., Punjab, Haryana), with states claiming agriculture is their constitutional domain.
- **NITI Aayog:** Replaced Planning Commission to promote cooperative federalism, but decision-making is still perceived as centralized.
- **Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS):** Increased number restricts states' financial autonomy, as states must co-fund programs like PMAY.
- **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT):** Centralized welfare disbursements reduce state control over social programs such as MGNREGA.
- **One Nation, One Election Proposal:** Faces criticism from states fearing erosion of federal principles.
- **Amendments to All India Services:** Increased Centre's control over IAS, IPS, IFoS officers' deputation and transfers, impacting state autonomy.
- **Restructuring CSS:** Changed funding and implementation, affecting state development priorities.

Measures to Strengthen Federalism and Build Trust

- **Revitalizing the Inter-State Council (ISC):** Encourages policy dialogue and dispute resolution (Sarkaria Commission recommendation).
- **Timely GST Compensation:** Ensures fiscal stability and trust between Centre and states.
- **More Autonomy in CSS:** Allows states to adapt schemes to local needs for better implementation.
- **Inclusive Cooperative Federalism via NITI Aayog:** Greater state involvement in decision-making, e.g., Aspirational Districts Program.
- **Consensus-Based Dispute Resolution:** Promotes dialogue in conflicts like Cauvery water sharing.
- **Clear Constitutional Powers:** Explicitly define state responsibilities, especially in agriculture, to reduce conflicts.
- **Fiscal Empowerment:** Review Finance Commission recommendations to enhance states' fiscal autonomy.
- **Collaborative Policy Making:** Engage states early to ensure ownership and effective execution.

Key Commission Recommendations

- **Sarkaria Commission (1983):**
 - Strengthen All-India Services.
 - Centre should limit its role in concurrent subjects where uniformity is necessary, leaving rest to states.
- **M.M. Punchhi Commission (2007):**
 - Constitutionally define powers for local self-government.
 - Fixed five-year tenure for Governors, removal only by impeachment similar to the President.
- **NCRWC (2000):**
 - Establish Inter-State Trade and Commerce Commission as a legislative body.
 - Include emergency and disaster management in the Concurrent List.

Conclusion

India's federalism demands ongoing nurturing through **mutual trust, cooperation and constitutional clarity.**

14. Explain the reasons for the growth of public interest litigation in India. As a result of it, has the Indian Supreme Court emerged as the world's most powerful judiciary? (15 M)

APPROACH

Introduction:

Explain the reasons behind the growth of **Public Interest Litigation (PIL)** in India, including increased public awareness, judicial activism, and the need to address gaps in access to justice.

Body:

Discuss how PILs have propelled the **Supreme Court of India to become one of the world's most powerful judiciaries**, expanding its role beyond traditional adjudication to enforcing social justice and protecting fundamental rights.

Conclusion:

Suggest the way forward by advocating a **balanced approach** that encourages judicial activism for social good but also implements safeguards to prevent misuse and uphold judicial discipline.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has transformed India's judiciary by enabling courts to protect the rights of marginalized groups. Based on Articles 32 and 226, PIL allows individuals and organizations to approach courts on behalf of those unable to represent themselves, expanding access to justice.

Body

- **Judicial Activism:** The Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice P.N. Bhagwati, relaxed locus standi, empowering courts to address social issues.
Example: Hussainara Khatoon vs. State of Bihar (1979) safeguarded undertrial prisoners' rights.
- **Compelling Government Action:** PILs push the executive to act when it fails to address public concerns.
Example: Vishaka vs. State of Rajasthan (1997) established anti-sexual harassment guidelines.
- **Protecting Vulnerable Groups and Environment:** PILs defend marginalized communities and environmental rights.
Example: Bandhua Mukti Morcha vs. Union of India (1984) ended bonded labor.
- **Simplified Court Access:** NGOs and activists can file PILs on behalf of those unable to approach courts.
Example: PUCL vs. Union of India (2001) led to the Right to Food campaign.
- **Media Influence:** Media coverage increases public awareness and support for PILs.
Example: Narmada Bachao Andolan (2000) highlighted displacement issues.
- **Legal Aid and Technology:** Free legal aid and e-filing systems have improved access to justice.
Example: Legal Services Authorities Act (1987) and Supreme Court's e-filing system.
- **Expansive Judicial Powers:** The Court uses PIL to interpret rights broadly and intervene in governance.
Example: MC Mehta vs. Union of India (1986) broadened the right to a healthy environment.

- **Global Recognition:** Indian PILs are internationally admired for advancing social reforms.
Example: Decriminalization of homosexuality (2018).

Enhancing PIL Effectiveness

- Apply stricter filters to prevent frivolous PILs.
- Set up specialized benches for key issues like environment and education.
- Define clearer legal guidelines for admissibility.
- Promote ethical conduct among lawyers.
- Increase public awareness about responsible PIL use.

Conclusion

PIL has empowered Indian courts to champion social justice and hold the government accountable. To maintain its impact, reforms must balance wider access with safeguards against misuse, ensuring PIL remains a tool for genuine public welfare.

15. Discuss India as a secular state and compare it with the secular principles of the US Constitution. (15 M)

APPROACH:

Introduction

Briefly define **India as a secular state**, highlighting the constitutional commitment to equal respect for all religions without favoring any.

Body

- Discuss the **similarities** between Indian secularism and the US secular principles, such as the separation of religion and state and protection of religious freedom.
- Explain the **differences**, focusing on India's concept of **equal respect to all religions** (positive secularism) versus the US model of strict **church-state separation** (negative secularism). Also mention India's allowance for religious laws in personal matters, unlike the US.

Conclusion

Summarize that while both countries uphold secularism, their approaches reflect their unique historical and social contexts, shaping their distinct models of religious neutrality and freedom.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

- Secularism is essential to modern democratic governance.

- Ensures separation of religion and state.
- Promotes equal respect for all religions and safeguards individual rights.
- In India, secularism is constitutionally guaranteed.
- The 42nd Amendment (1976) explicitly added the word 'secular' to the Constitution.

Body

India as a Secular State

- The Indian Constitution ensures religious freedom, equality and state neutrality (Articles 25-28).
- Reflects India's pluralistic society by embracing diverse religious communities.
- Allows separate personal laws based on religion for civil matters (e.g., Hindu Marriage Act 1955, Muslim Personal Law 1937).
- Judiciary balances religious customs with constitutional rights (e.g., Shah Bano case 1985, Sabarimala judgment 2018).
- Government programs (Midday Meal Scheme 1995, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan 2001) provide equal benefits to all religions.

Comparison with the United States

- Both countries constitutionally separate religion and state: India through Articles 25-28, US through First Amendment.
- Both guarantee freedom of religion to citizens.
- Judiciary protects secular values (India's Kesavananda Bharati 1973, US Engel v. Vitale 1962).
- Both have legal safeguards against religious discrimination (India's Articles 14 & 15, US Civil Rights Act).
- Differences:
 - India explicitly mentions secularism; US does not use the term explicitly.
 - India allows flexible state involvement in religious festivals; US enforces strict separation.
 - Religious symbols are common in Indian public spaces; restricted in US public institutions.
 - Religious education permitted in Indian private/minority schools; banned in US public schools.
 - Religion influences Indian politics visibly; US limits religious influence in politics.

Conclusion

- India's secularism emphasizes **Sarva Dharma Bhava**—equal respect for all religions.
- Focuses on inclusivity by accommodating religious diversity within democracy.
- The US model stresses strict separation of religion and state.
- Both models illustrate diverse but effective ways to balance religion and governance while ensuring constitutional harmony.

16. The Citizens' Charter has been a landmark initiative in ensuring citizen-centric administration. But it is yet to reach its full potential. Identify the factors hindering the realisation of its promise and suggest measures to overcome them. (15 M)

APPROACH

Introduction

Introduce the **Citizens' Charter** as a landmark initiative enhancing transparency and accountability in public service.

centric administration and

Body

Discuss how the Citizens' Charter has contributed to ensuring a **citizen-focused approach** in governance. Identify the **factors hindering** the realization of its full potential, such as lack of awareness, weak implementation, and limited monitoring. Suggest **measures to overcome** these challenges, including increased public awareness, stronger enforcement mechanisms, and regular evaluation.

Conclusion

Write a relevant conclusion emphasizing the need to strengthen the Citizens' Charter to fully realize its role in fostering efficient and responsive administration.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

The Citizen's Charter is a formal document outlining the services a public organisation promises, aiming to enhance accountability and citizen-focused governance by ensuring transparency, efficiency, and timeliness.

Body

Significance of the Citizen's Charter in Promoting Citizen-Centric Administration

- **Quality of Service:** Ensures high-quality services to build trust, exemplified by Indian Railways' punctual trains and clean facilities.
- **Transparency:** Provides clear information on service standards and costs, as seen in the transparent Passport Seva Project.
- **Accessibility:** Guarantees easy access for all citizens, such as the Income Tax Department's user-friendly online services.
- **Timeliness:** Commits to prompt delivery, like Indian Railways' 'Tatkal' system for urgent bookings.
- **Grievance Redressal:** Establishes complaint mechanisms, exemplified by Consumer Courts handling service deficiencies.
- **Citizen Feedback:** Encourages feedback to improve services, with online platforms gathering citizen input on government policies.

Challenges Limiting the Effectiveness of the Citizen's Charter

- **Low Awareness:** Many citizens are unaware of their rights under the Charter, limiting its reach.
- **Implementation Gaps:** Actual service often falls short of promises, reducing public trust.
- **Lack of Legal Authority:** Without legal backing, enforcing accountability is difficult.
- **Inefficient Grievance Systems:** Slow complaint resolution discourages confidence, as seen with long-pending cases on CPGRAMS.
- **Resource Limitations:** Shortages in staff and infrastructure affect quality, especially in rural healthcare.
- **Outdated Information:** Failure to update details confuses users, common in government websites.

Measures to Strengthen the Citizen's Charter

- **Legal Backing:** Laws like the Right to Services Act provide enforceability.
- **Periodic Review:** Regular updates, such as the Karnataka Sakala Mission's timely service guarantee.
- **Incentives and Penalties:** Rewarding efficiency and penalizing lapses, inspired by performance-linked pay proposals.
- **Public Awareness:** Campaigns like 'Jago Grahak Jago' educate citizens on their rights.
- **Citizen Participation:** Involving the public in Charter drafting, as in Pune's participatory budgeting.
- **Quality Management Systems:** Implementing standards like Delhi Metro's ISO 9001 certification for improved service.

Conclusion

The Citizen's Charter has advanced citizen-centric governance by promoting transparency and accountability. Overcoming challenges with legal enforcement, awareness, participation, and quality management is vital for it to meet the evolving needs of India's citizens effectively.

17. In a crucial domain like the public healthcare system, the Indian State should play a vital role in containing the adverse impact of marketization of the system. Suggest some measures through which the State can enhance the reach of public healthcare at the grassroots level. (15 M)

APPROACH

Introduction

State plays a vital role in providing accessible and affordable public healthcare in India.

Body

The state improves healthcare through policies, funding, infrastructure, and schemes like Ayushman Bharat. Marketisation leads to exclusion of the poor, higher costs, and profit-driven care. To counter this, increased public spending, strict regulation of private providers, stronger primary care, and accountable public-private partnerships are essential.

Conclusion

A strong state-run healthcare system is crucial to ensure equitable health access and protect vulnerable populations.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

Recognizing healthcare as a fundamental right is vital for ensuring a just and inclusive society. The Indian Constitution, through **Article 47**, mandates the State to improve public health. Recently, the **Supreme Court**

reaffirmed this duty, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, underscoring the urgency of building resilient and equitable healthcare systems.

Body

Adverse Impact of Marketisation on Public Healthcare

- **High Out-of-Pocket Expenditure:** A profit-oriented system pushes treatment costs beyond the reach of the poor, denying equitable access to essential care.
- **Urban-Rural Divide in Access:** Healthcare infrastructure is disproportionately urban-centric, with over **80% of doctors and 75% of dispensaries** located in urban areas, leaving rural regions underserved.
- **Skewed Resource Allocation:** Focus on profit leads to neglect of rural health infrastructure, concentrating advanced facilities in cities while basic services remain inaccessible in villages.
- **Regulatory Loopholes:** Weak oversight enables private providers to indulge in overcharging and unethical practices, compromising care quality and patient safety.

State's Role in Strengthening Public Healthcare

- **Revamping Primary Healthcare:** Upgrading PHCs, as envisioned in the **Bhore Committee Report**, ensures last-mile delivery of healthcare in rural India.
- **Public-Private Collaboration:** Schemes like **Rajiv Aarogya**sri in Andhra Pradesh have enhanced access to specialised treatments for the poor through strategic partnerships.
- **Expanding Telemedicine:** Initiatives by the **National Telemedicine Taskforce** are bridging the urban-rural divide by enabling remote medical consultations.
- **Training and Capacity Building:** Programs under the **National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)** regularly update skills of healthcare workers to maintain quality standards.
- **Empowering ASHAs:** Community health workers have played a pivotal role in rural outreach — notably during the pandemic, conducting awareness and screening campaigns.
- **Increased Public Health Spending:** Fulfilling the **National Health Policy 2017** target of 5% of GDP can bolster infrastructure, affordability, and preparedness.

Mitigating the Impact of Marketisation

- **Capping Treatment Costs:** Imposing price ceilings on critical procedures can prevent exploitation and ensure affordability for all.
- **Subsidised Drug Availability:** Expansion of **Jan Aushadhi Kendras** makes essential medicines accessible at lower prices, reducing financial burden.
- **Strict Quality Regulations:** Regular audits of private hospitals can ensure ethical practices and prevent the over-commercialization of care.
- **Health Literacy Campaigns:** Promoting awareness about schemes like **Ayushman Bharat** empowers citizens to utilize public facilities over expensive private options.
- **Promotion of Generic Drugs:** Widening access to affordable generics helps mitigate the cost impact on vulnerable populations.

Conclusion

To safeguard the health rights of all citizens, especially the marginalised, the State must reinforce public healthcare and regulate private sector excesses. Aligning with **SDG 3** on universal health coverage, **SDG 10** on reducing inequalities, and **SDG 9** on resilient infrastructure, India must prioritise equitable, affordable, and accessible healthcare as a cornerstone of its welfare agenda.

18. E-governance is not just about the routine application of digital technology in the service delivery process. It is as much about multifarious interactions for ensuring transparency and accountability. In this context, evaluate the role of the 'Interactive Service Model' of e-governance. (15 M)

APPROACH

Introduction

Introduce **e-governance** as a tool for enhancing **transparency and accountability** beyond simple digital service delivery.

Body

Discuss the **Interactive Service Model of e-governance**, which enables direct citizen engagement and real-time feedback. Analyze key issues like the **digital divide**, **privacy risks**, and **limited accessibility**. Suggest the way forward with improved digital access, stronger data protection, and capacity building.

Conclusion

Conclude by stressing that addressing these challenges will unlock the full potential of e-governance for transparent and accountable governance.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

E-governance initiatives like UPI and DigiLocker are reshaping government-citizen interactions by enabling seamless, two-way communication through ICT. The Interactive Service Model further boosts access, participation, and accountability in governance.

Body

- **Transparency & Accountability:** Open data policies (NSDAP) and real-time project tracking (IGOD for Swachh Bharat) empower citizens to monitor government work.
- **Anti-Corruption:** Online public auctions (MSTC E-Commerce) and e-procurement (GeM) ensure transparent tendering and purchasing.
- **Grievance Redressal:** Platforms like CPGRAMS and RailMadad let citizens lodge and track complaints efficiently.
- **Social Audits & Financial Tracking:** MGNREGA social audits and PFMS tracking funds ensure proper use of resources.
- **Enhanced Citizen Engagement:** MyGov and Digital India Portal streamline service delivery and foster feedback.
- **Digital Inclusion:** CSCs provide rural access to key services; campaigns like PMGDISHA boost digital literacy.

Challenges: Digital divide limits reach; privacy concerns (e.g., Pegasus); cybersecurity risks; bureaucratic resistance; and exclusion of non-tech-savvy citizens remain hurdles.

Way Forward: Expand digital infrastructure (BharatNet); strengthen cybersecurity; implement robust data protection laws (Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023); promote digital literacy (DISHA); encourage public-private partnerships (TCS with GeM); and establish continuous feedback and strong legislative support.

Conclusion

E-governance is revolutionizing transparency, accountability, and citizen participation. Bridging digital gaps and reinforcing security and legal frameworks will ensure its sustainable success and deeper democratic engagement.

19. 'Terrorism has become a significant threat to global peace and security.' Evaluate the effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) and its associated bodies in addressing and mitigating this threat at the international level. (15 M)

APPROACH

Introduction

Introduce terrorism as a major threat to **global peace and security** in today's world.

Body

- Discuss the **role and effectiveness** of the UN Security Council's **Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC)** and related bodies in combating terrorism.
- Analyse the **challenges** faced in counter-terrorism efforts, such as sovereignty issues, funding, and coordination gaps.

Conclusion

Suggest the way forward focusing on **international cooperation, intelligence sharing, capacity building, and addressing root causes** of terrorism.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

Terrorism threatens global peace by destabilizing nations, economies, and societies, requiring coordinated international action for lasting stability.

Body

Terrorism as a Global Security Threat

- **Regional Destabilization:** Terrorism disrupts peace and order, e.g., ISIS destabilized Syria and Iraq.
- **Economic Damage:** Causes financial losses and investor fear, e.g., 2008 Mumbai attacks hit India's economy.
- **Political Instability:** Weakens governance, prolongs conflict.
- **Social Division:** Fuels fear and ethnic tensions, e.g., 2015 Paris attacks increased xenophobia.
- **Radicalization Online:** Terrorists recruit via social media, e.g., encrypted platforms spread extremism.
- **Human Rights Abuses:** Target vulnerable groups, e.g., Boko Haram kidnapped Nigerian schoolgirls.

- **Security Overreach:** Governments expand surveillance, e.g., NSA's post-9/11 privacy concerns.

UN Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) Effectiveness

- **Legal Frameworks:** Supports anti-terror laws, e.g., UN Resolution 1373 on terrorist financing.
- **International Cooperation:** Promotes intelligence sharing, e.g., Interpol-EU efforts disrupted terror plots.
- **Capacity Building:** Trains forces in resource-poor areas, e.g., Sahel region counter-extremism programs.
- **Sanctions:** Freezes assets of terror groups, e.g., targeting Al-Qaeda's finances.
- **Compliance Monitoring:** Reviews member states' adherence regularly.
- **Adapting Strategies:** Updates for new threats like drones and cyberattacks.
- **Financing Disruption:** Works with FATF, e.g., asset freezes on Hamas and Hezbollah.

Challenges in Counter-Terrorism

- **Political Rivalries:** Geopolitical conflicts slow action, e.g., UNSC divisions over Syria intervention.
- **Limited Resources:** Developing countries struggle, e.g., Niger and Mali's funding issues.
- **Rights vs Security:** Civil liberties at risk, e.g., NSA surveillance debates.
- **Decentralized Networks:** Hard to track, e.g., ISIS's global cells.
- **Tech Adaptation:** Terrorists use encrypted apps to evade detection.
- **Uneven Implementation:** Some countries delay sanctions, allowing terror groups freedom.
- **Ignoring Root Causes:** Poverty fuels recruitment, e.g., Al-Qaeda in Yemen.

Way Forward

- **Strengthen Laws:** Enable extradition and prosecution globally.
- **Build Resilience:** Education and reintegration, e.g., Denmark's Aarhus Model.
- **Use Technology:** AI to monitor extremist content online.
- **Holistic Strategy:** Combine development and security, e.g., UNDP in fragile states.
- **Update Policies:** Regular revisions to meet new threats, e.g., EU counter-terrorism updates.
- **Global Partnerships:** UN-AU-NGO collaboration in Sahel.
- **Address Root Causes:** Reduce inequalities, e.g., Saudi Arabia's de-radicalization program.

Conclusion

Combating terrorism demands a blend of strong security, global cooperation, and addressing socio-economic roots, ensuring a safer and more stable world.

20. Discuss the geopolitical and geostrategic importance of the Maldives for India, with a focus on global trade and energy flows. Further, also discuss how this relationship affects India's maritime security and regional stability amidst international competition. (15 M)

APPROACH

Introduction

Highlight Maldives' **geostrategic importance** to India, focusing on **trade routes and energy flows** in the Indian Ocean.

Body

- Discuss its impact on **India's maritime security** and **regional stability** amid global rivalry.

- Note challenges from **international competition**.

Conclusion

Recommend **enhanced cooperation and strategic partnerships** to safeguard India's interests and ensure regional peace.

FODDER POINTS

Introduction

The Maldives' strategic location along vital Indian Ocean maritime routes makes it crucial for India's trade and energy security. The recent UPI agreement signed during India's External Affairs Minister visit highlights growing economic and strategic ties between the two nations.

Body

Geopolitical Importance

- About 70% of India's oil imports pass near the Maldives, making maritime route security critical.
- India collaborates with the Maldives National Defence Force to strengthen maritime surveillance and protect energy shipments from the Middle East.
- Stability in the Maldives supports favourable regional trade policies and economic integration, boosting India's influence in South Asia.

Geostrategic Importance

- India's engagement counters China's expanding presence through the Belt and Road Initiative.
- Investments like the Greater Male Connectivity Project enhance India's infrastructure footprint and strategic influence.
- Coastal Surveillance Radar Systems installed in Maldives improve India's maritime monitoring across the Southern Indian Ocean.
- Cooperation opens access to underexplored deep-sea resources, such as fisheries and ocean minerals.

Maritime Security and Regional Stability

- Annual joint naval exercises (Ekuverin) strengthen defence cooperation.
- Intelligence sharing and joint drills enhance quick response to maritime threats.
- Integration of Maldivian coastal surveillance data boosts Maritime Domain Awareness for real-time threat detection.
- Joint patrols deter piracy, smuggling, and terrorism, securing trade routes.
- India's diplomatic role during the 2021 Maldivian political crisis reinforced regional stability and democratic governance.
- Economic projects like the Addu Tourism Project aid Maldives' tourism and fisheries, fostering regional economic resilience.

Strengthening Bilateral Ties

- Enhancing multilateral platforms like IORA promotes collective maritime security and growth.
- Joint sustainable development efforts address climate and energy challenges for long-term stability.
- Expanding cultural and educational exchanges strengthens people-to-people relations.
- India's \$1.4 billion infrastructure aid boosts connectivity through airports, roads, and ports, benefiting economic and defence sectors.

Conclusion

India's partnership with the Maldives is vital for securing maritime trade, energy routes, and regional stability. Through strategic, economic, and infrastructural cooperation, India aims to ensure a stable, prosperous Indian Ocean region. A strong Maldives aligns with India's vision of collective growth and security in the region.

APTI PLUS