

Total Marks : 250

Time : 3 Hours

Candidates should attempt all questions of Group A with word limit of 300 words and all questions of Group B with word limit of 250 words.

Question 1 to Question 5
20 marks each (answer in 300 words)

Question 6 to Question 15
15 marks each (answer in 250 words)

GROUP A

- Q.1 (a) Do you agree that the Indian Constitution strikes a balance between individual rights & collective welfare?
(b) Mention some amendments to the Constitution that have enabled the maintenance of this balance.
(କ) ଆପଣ କ'ଣ ସହମତ ଯେ ଭାରତୀୟ ସମ୍ବିଧାନ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗତ ଅଧିକାର ଏବଂ ସାମୂହିକ କଲ୍ୟାଣ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସନ୍ତୁଳନ ରକ୍ଷା କରେ?
(ଖ) ସମ୍ବିଧାନରେ କିଛି ସଂଶୋଧନ ଉଲ୍ଲେଖ କରନ୍ତୁ ଯାହା ଏହି ସନ୍ତୁଳନକୁ ବଜାୟ ରଖିବାରେ ସକ୍ଷମ ହୋଇଛି।
- Q.2 The Representation of the People Act (RPA) plays a crucial role in ensuring free and fair elections in India.
(a) Critically examine the key provisions of the RPA, 1951, that aim to uphold electoral integrity and democratic principles.
(b) Analyse the challenges in the implementation of the Act and suggest reforms to strengthen the electoral process.
ଭାରତରେ ମୁକ୍ତ ଏବଂ ନିରପେକ୍ଷ ନିର୍ବାଚନ ସୁନିଶ୍ଚିତ କରିବାରେ ଜନପ୍ରତିନିଧିତ୍ୱ ଆଇନ (RPA) ଏକ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଭୂମିକା ଗ୍ରହଣ କରେ।
(କ) ନିର୍ବାଚନୀ ଅଖଣ୍ଡତା ଏବଂ ଗଣତାନ୍ତ୍ରିକ ନୀତିଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ବଜାୟ ରଖିବା ପାଇଁ RPA, 1951 ର ପ୍ରମୁଖ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ସମୀକ୍ଷାକୃତ ଭାବରେ ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରନ୍ତୁ।
(ଖ) ଆଇନର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାନୁଷ୍ଠାନରେ ଥିବା ଆହ୍ୱାନଗୁଡ଼ିକର ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ କରନ୍ତୁ ଏବଂ ନିର୍ବାଚନ ପ୍ରକ୍ରିୟାକୁ ସୁଦୃଢ଼ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସଂସ୍କାର ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ।
- Q.3 Poverty estimation in India has been a subject of debate due to varying methodologies and definitions used over time.
(a) Critically analyse the different approaches adopted for poverty estimation in India and their effectiveness in capturing the true extent of poverty.
(b) Discuss the challenges in measuring poverty accurately and suggest measures to improve poverty estimation in the country.
ସମୟ ସହିତ ବ୍ୟବହୃତ ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପଦ୍ଧତି ଏବଂ ପରିଭାଷା ଯୋଗୁଁ ଭାରତରେ ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟ ଆକଳନ ବିତର୍କର ବିଷୟ ହୋଇଛି।
(କ) ଭାରତରେ ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟ ଆକଳନ ପାଇଁ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରାଯାଇଥିବା ବିଭିନ୍ନ ପଦ୍ଧତି ଏବଂ ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟର ପ୍ରକୃତ ପରିମାଣକୁ ଧରିବାରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ପ୍ରଭାବଶାଳୀତାକୁ ସମୀକ୍ଷାକୃତ ଭାବରେ ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ କରନ୍ତୁ।
(ଖ) ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟ ମାପ କରିବାରେ ଆହ୍ୱାନଗୁଡ଼ିକ ବିଷୟରେ ସଠିକ୍ ଭାବରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରନ୍ତୁ ଏବଂ ଦେଶରେ ଦାରିଦ୍ର୍ୟ ଆକଳନକୁ ଉନ୍ନତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ।

- Q.4 (a) Explain the concept of a committed bureaucracy and analyse its advantages and disadvantages in the Indian administrative system.
(b) Discuss the measures needed to ensure a balance between bureaucratic commitment to development goals and the principles of political neutrality and accountability.
(କ) ଏକ ପ୍ରତିବଦ୍ଧ ଅମଳାତନ୍ତ୍ରର ଧାରଣା ବ୍ୟାଖ୍ୟା କରନ୍ତୁ ଏବଂ ଭାରତୀୟ ପ୍ରଶାସନିକ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାରେ ଏହାର ସୁବିଧା ଏବଂ ଅସୁବିଧା ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ କରନ୍ତୁ।
(ଖ) ବିକାଶ ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟ ପ୍ରତି ଅମଳାତନ୍ତ୍ରିକ ପ୍ରତିବଦ୍ଧତା ଏବଂ ରାଜନୈତିକ ନିରପେକ୍ଷତା ଏବଂ ଉତ୍ତରଦାୟିତ୍ବର ନୀତି ମଧ୍ୟରେ ସନ୍ତୁଳନ ସୁନିଶ୍ଚିତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ପଦକ୍ଷେପଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଆଲୋଚନା କରନ୍ତୁ।
- Q.5 (a) Examine the key maritime security challenges Odisha faces, including threats related to smuggling, illegal fishing, and natural disasters.
(b) Evaluate the existing coastal security mechanisms and suggest measures to enhance Odisha's maritime security framework.
(କ) ଚୋରା ଚାଲାଣ, ଅବୈଧ ମାଛ ଧରିବା ଏବଂ ପ୍ରାକୃତିକ ବିପର୍ଯ୍ୟୟ ସହିତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସମୁଦ୍ରୀୟ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ସମ୍ବନ୍ଧିତ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ସାମୁଦ୍ରିକ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ଚ୍ୟାଲେଞ୍ଜଗୁଡ଼ିକର ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରନ୍ତୁ।
(ଖ) ବିଦ୍ୟମାନ ଉପକୂଳ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାର ମୂଲ୍ୟାଙ୍କନ କରନ୍ତୁ ଏବଂ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସାମୁଦ୍ରିକ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ଢାଞ୍ଚାକୁ ବୃଦ୍ଧି କରିବା ପାଇଁ ପଦକ୍ଷେପଗୁଡ଼ିକ ପରାମର୍ଶ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ।

GROUP B

- Q.6 National political parties tend to favor centralization, while state political parties advocate for greater autonomy. Analyze this dynamic in the context of Indian federalism with suitable examples.
ଜାତୀୟ ରାଜନୈତିକ ଦଳଗୁଡ଼ିକ କେନ୍ଦ୍ରୀକରଣକୁ ସମର୍ଥନ କରନ୍ତି, ଯେତେବେଳେ ରାଜ୍ୟ ରାଜନୈତିକ ଦଳଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଅଧିକ ସ୍ୱାୟତ୍ତତା ପାଇଁ ସମର୍ଥନ କରନ୍ତି। ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ଉଦାହରଣ ସହିତ ଭାରତୀୟ ସଂଘୀୟତା ପରିପ୍ରେକ୍ଷୀରେ ଏହି ଗତିଶୀଳତାକୁ ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ କରନ୍ତୁ।
- Q.7 Critically analyse how Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) protects citizen rights, handles security issues, and promotes inclusive governance.
ଭାରତୀୟ ନାଗରିକ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ସଂହିତା (BNSS) କିପରି ନାଗରିକ ଅଧିକାରକୁ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ଦିଏ, ସୁରକ୍ଷା ସମସ୍ୟାଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ପରିଚାଳନା କରେ ଏବଂ ଅନ୍ତର୍ଭୁକ୍ତ ଶାସନକୁ ପ୍ରୋତ୍ସାହିତ କରେ ତାହାର ସମାଲୋଚନାମୂଳକ ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ କରନ୍ତୁ।
- Q.8 Discuss the challenges of debt management in India in the context of balancing inflation control with the implementation of welfare-oriented policies. How can fiscal prudence and social justice be ensured simultaneously?
କଲ୍ୟାଣମୂଳକ ନୀତି କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ କରିବା ସହିତ ମୁଦ୍ରାସ୍ଫୀତି ନିୟନ୍ତ୍ରଣକୁ ସନ୍ତୁଳିତ କରିବା ପରିପ୍ରେକ୍ଷୀରେ ଭାରତରେ ରଣ ପରିଚାଳନାର ଚ୍ୟାଲେଞ୍ଜଗୁଡ଼ିକ ବିଷୟରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରନ୍ତୁ। କିପରି ଏକକାଳୀନ ଆର୍ଥିକ ବିଚକ୍ଷଣତା ଏବଂ ସାମାଜିକ ନ୍ୟାୟ ସୁନିଶ୍ଚିତ କରାଯାଇପାରିବ?
- Q.9 Examine the implications of the Judicial ruling on the effectiveness of tribunals in adjudicating disputes involving administrative actions and decision-making.
ପ୍ରଶାସନିକ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ଏବଂ ନିଷ୍ପତ୍ତି ଗ୍ରହଣ ସହିତ ଜଡ଼ିତ ବିବାଦଗୁଡ଼ିକର ବିଚାର କରିବାରେ ଟ୍ରିବ୍ୟୁନାଲଗୁଡ଼ିକର ପ୍ରଭାବ ଉପରେ ନ୍ୟାୟିକ ରାୟର ପ୍ରଭାବ ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରନ୍ତୁ।

- Q.10 Considering the recent interstate relations and centre-state tussle, how do you think the state of Odisha should go for cooperative or competitive relations with its neighbourhood?
ସାମ୍ପ୍ରତିକ ଆନ୍ତରାଜ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ଏବଂ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର-ରାଜ୍ୟ ବିବାଦକୁ ବିଚାର କରି, ଆପଣ କିପରି ଭାବନ୍ତି ଯେ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ ଏହାର ପଡୋଶୀ ରାଜ୍ୟ ସହିତ ସହଯୋଗମୂଳକ କିମ୍ବା ପ୍ରତିଯୋଗିତାମୂଳକ ସମ୍ପର୍କ ସ୍ଥାପନ କରିବା ଉଚିତ
- Q.11 Recently, NITI Aayog has completed 10 years on January 1, 2025. In this context, highlight the objectives of NITI Aayog. Assess its achievements and shortcomings in the last 10 years.
ସମ୍ପ୍ରତି, ନୀତି ଆୟୋଗ ଜାନୁଆରୀ ୧, ୨୦୨୫ ରେ ୧୦ ବର୍ଷ ପୂରଣ କରିଛି। ଏହି ପରିପ୍ରେକ୍ଷୀରେ, ନୀତି ଆୟୋଗର ଉଦ୍ଦେଶ୍ୟ ଉପରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରନ୍ତୁ। ଗତ ୧୦ ବର୍ଷରେ ଏହାର ସଫଳତା ଏବଂ ତ୍ରୁଟି ମୂଲ୍ୟାଙ୍କନ କରନ୍ତୁ।
- Q.12 What do you understand by the delimitation commission? Why do the southern states raise concerns about it? How can India solve this problem?
ସୀମା ନିର୍ଦ୍ଧାରଣ ଆୟୋଗ ବିଷୟରେ ଆପଣ କ'ଣ ବୁଝନ୍ତି? ଦକ୍ଷିଣ ରାଜ୍ୟଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଏହା ବିଷୟରେ କାହିଁକି ଚିନ୍ତା କରନ୍ତି? ଭାରତ ଏହି ସମସ୍ୟାର ସମାଧାନ କିପରି କରିପାରିବ
- Q.13 Discuss the future of SAARC in light of India's increased focus on other regional groupings like ASEAN and BIMSTEC.
ASEAN ଏବଂ **BIMSTEC** ପରି ଅନ୍ୟାନ୍ୟ ଆଞ୍ଚଳିକ ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀଗୁଡ଼ିକ ଉପରେ ଭାରତର ବର୍ଦ୍ଧିତ ଧ୍ୟାନକୁ ଦୃଷ୍ଟିରେ ରଖି ସାଙ୍କର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ବିଷୟରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରନ୍ତୁ।
- Q.14 Analyse the potential impact of reforming the judges' appointment system on the transparency and meritocracy of the judiciary. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current collegium system, and how could proposed reforms improve judicial appointments?
ବିଚାରପତିଙ୍କ ନିଯୁକ୍ତି ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାରେ ସଂସ୍କାରର ନ୍ୟାୟପାଳିକାର ସ୍ପଷ୍ଟତା ଏବଂ ଯୋଗ୍ୟତା ଉପରେ ସମ୍ଭାବ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଭାବ ବିଶ୍ଳେଷଣ କରନ୍ତୁ। ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନର କଲେଜିୟମ୍ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥାର ଶକ୍ତି ଏବଂ ଦୁର୍ବଳତା କ'ଣ, ଏବଂ ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବିତ ସଂସ୍କାରଗୁଡ଼ିକ ନ୍ୟାୟପାଳିକା ନିଯୁକ୍ତିକୁ କିପରି ଉନ୍ନତ କରିପାରିବ?
- Q.15 Discuss the social and legal challenges faced by homosexuals in heterosexual marriages in India. By what means has the decriminalisation of Section 377 impacted these challenges, and what further legal reforms are necessary to address their needs?
ଭାରତରେ ବିଷମଲିଙ୍ଗୀ ବିବାହରେ ସମଲିଙ୍ଗୀମାନେ ସମ୍ମୁଖୀନ ହେଉଥିବା ସାମାଜିକ ଏବଂ ଆଇନଗତ ଚ୍ୟାଲେଞ୍ଜଗୁଡ଼ିକ ବିଷୟରେ ଆଲୋଚନା କରନ୍ତୁ। ଧାରା ୩୭୭କୁ ଅପରାଧମୁକ୍ତ କରିବା କେଉଁ ଉପାୟରେ ଏହି ଚ୍ୟାଲେଞ୍ଜଗୁଡ଼ିକୁ ପ୍ରଭାବିତ କରିଛି, ଏବଂ ସେମାନଙ୍କର ଆବଶ୍ୟକତାକୁ ପୂରଣ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଆହୁରି କେଉଁ ଆଇନଗତ ସଂସ୍କାର ଆବଶ୍ୟକ?

(GS PAPER II: FULL SYLLABUS)**GROUP A****Q.1 Answer****Approach:****Introduction:**

Briefly introduce by mentioning your opinion.

Body:

Discuss how the Constitution of India addresses the relationship between individual rights and collective welfare, supported by examples from constitutional amendments and Judicial Interpretations.

Conclusion:

Conclude with the way forward.

Introduction

The Indian Constitution is commonly referred to as a "living document" since it evolves with the changing needs of society while ensuring a balance between individual liberty and public good. In recent years, controversies surrounding the right to protest (Shaheen Bagh protests, 2019-20), online privacy (Data Protection Act, 2023), and same-sex marriage (2023 Supreme Court ruling) have brought attention to the conflict between fundamental rights and social responsibility. The judiciary and constitutional amendments have been instrumental in ensuring this balance by making sure that individual rights do not jeopardise national security, social harmony, or economic stability.

The Indian Constitution Balances Individual Rights and Collective Welfare

- **Fundamental Rights vs. Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP):** The Constitution bestows Fundamental Rights (Part III) on people along with stresses on Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV), which act as a pointer to the state towards social justice and the collective good. Though Fundamental Rights are for individual liberties, DPSPs aim for objectives such as poverty elimination, education promotion, and equal pay. The Supreme Court has held that the two have to be harmonised in the *Minerva mill case*.
- **Reasonable Restrictions on Fundamental Rights:** Freedom of speech (Article 19) is not an absolute right but is subject to reasonable restrictions for the sake of security, public order, and morality. In *Romesh Thapar v. State of Madras (1950)*, the Supreme Court held that restrictions on free speech can be made by the government for the purpose of maintaining public order. The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) restricts free speech in order to deal with terrorism, pointing to the balance between security and freedom.
- **Right to Property and Social Justice:** Originally a Fundamental Right (Article 31), the right to property was transformed into a legal right by the 44th Amendment (1978) to avoid private property hindering land reforms. This allowed the state to introduce agrarian reforms and eradicate feudalism, proving how individual rights are altered for social justice.
- **Right to Religion and Social Reforms:** Although Articles 25-28 provide religious liberty, the state can interfere where the practice abridges social justice. For example, the Supreme Court ruled in the *Shah Bano Case (1985)* to uphold women's maintenance rights within Muslim marriages, stressing that gender justice comes before religious norms. Likewise, in *Sabarimala Temple Entry Case (2018)*, the court gave the verdict that the woman's right to worship cannot be disallowed as per tradition while making sure basic rights take supremacy over backward moves.

- **Reservation and Affirmative Action Policies:** For the sake of social justice and empowerment of marginalised groups, the Constitution permits reservations in employment and education (Articles 15 & 16). Although meritocracy is restricted by quotas in some views, the judiciary has ruled in favour of reservations, considering it necessary for equity. In the Indra Sawhney Case (1992), the Supreme Court upheld the 50% limit for reservations so that there is a proper balance between general merit selection and affirmative action.
- **Emergency Measures and Suspension of Rights:** Fundamental rights could be suspended briefly to safeguard national security during a national emergency (Article 352). For instance, civil liberties were restricted during the 1975 Emergency. Subsequent Emergency amends, such as the 44th Amendment of 1978, ensured that even such powers weren't abused at the cost of constitutional democracy.
- **Balance between Free Market Economy and Socialism:** The 1991 economic reforms focused on liberalisation, privatisation, and globalisation (LPG), encouraging individual economic freedom. Yet, the state has persisted with welfare schemes such as MNREGA, NFSA, and PMJAY to provide collective well-being, upholding a mixed economy model that balances capitalist growth with social justice.

Major Constitutional Amendments That Assisted in Sustaining This Balance

- **First Amendment (1951) - Consolidating Restrictions on Free Speech and Land Reforms:** This amendment restrained absolute freedom of speech by instituting checks regarding public order, defamation, and national security. It also shielded land reform legislation from judicial scrutiny so that land redistribution policy could be put in place for the social good.
- **Seventh Amendment (1956) - States' Reorganization for Federal Stability:** To achieve linguistic and administrative effectiveness, this amendment rearranged Indian states along the lines of language and culture while ensuring a balance between regional ambition and national unity.
- **Twenty-Fourth and Twenty-Fifth Amendments (1971) - Restraining Property Rights for Social Equality:** These amendments gave the government the power to take away private property for public benefit, allowing land redistribution and urban development schemes.
- **Forty-Second Amendment (1976) - Consolidation of Socialism and DPSPs:** Popularly referred to as the "Mini Constitution", this amendment enshrined socialist values and prioritised social justice over absolute individual rights.
- **Forty-Fourth Amendment (1978) - Restoring Civil Liberties after the Emergency:** Following the 1975 Emergency, this amendment diluted the power of the government to suspend Fundamental Rights and made sure that Article 21 (Right to Life and Liberty) would never be suspended safeguarding democratic rights.
- **Seventy-Third and Seventy-Fourth Amendments (1992) - Consolidation of Local Governance:** By enshrining Panchayati Raj institutions and urban local bodies, these amendments decentralised governance, making sure that people's participation in decision-making would occur, thus balancing local collective welfare with democratic rights.
- **One Hundred and First Amendment (2016) - The Introduction of GST for Economic Uniformity:** Goods and Services Tax (GST) substituted several indirect taxes, advocating economic uniformity among states. Although it instilled fiscal discipline, state fiscal autonomy remains an issue, showcasing the dilemma between national economic policy and federal prerogatives.
- **One Hundred and Third Amendments (2019) - The Introduction of EWS Reservation:** This amendment brought 10% reservation for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), broadening

affirmative action from caste-based reservations to economically weaker sections. It preserved social justice without upsetting the prevailing 50% quota cap.

Conclusion

The Indian Constitution maintains a balance between personal freedoms and collective well-being by means of Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles, judicial pronouncements, and constitutional amendments. Though it safeguards individual freedoms, it is also permissive of state interference in matters such as affirmative action, economic regulation, and social reform. The judiciary and legislature have always adjusted this balance, making the Constitution dynamic and flexible. In the future, issues such as digital privacy, AI regulations, climate justice, and changing socio-political dynamics will necessitate further adjustments to protect both individual rights and the broader common good.

Q.2 Answer

Approach:**Introduction:**

In the introduction, some objectives of the RPA Act are mentioned, and some current issues with the RPA Act are highlighted.

Body:

Examine the key highlights of the RPA Acts and discuss how it upheld electoral integrity and democratic principles. In the second part, analyse the roadblocks in its implementations and suggest some measures.

Conclusion:

Conclude by suggesting some innovative ideas for strengthening our electoral process.

Introduction:

The Representation of the People Act of 1951 (RPA, 1951) is the backbone of India's free and fair elections. It lays down eligibility, rules of election behaviour, resolution of disputes and punishment for corrupt practices. However, problems like the criminalisation of politics, election funding, and social media manipulation need ongoing reforms. Recent developments, such as the Supreme Court judgment on electoral bonds and EVM-VVPAT verification row controversies, have once again placed the RPA in the limelight.

(a) Major Provisions of the RPA, 1951 for Electoral Integrity

The RPA, 1951 lays down certain provisions to govern elections, prohibit malpractice, and maintain electoral fairness. Its success, however, depends on rigorous enforcement and periodic reform to counter emerging issues.

Qualifications and Disqualifications of Candidates: The Act lays down eligibility conditions for candidates to stand for election in Parliament and State Legislatures. It also lays down disqualifications based on criminal offences, corruption, or anti-national activities under Sections 8, 8A, 9, 10, and 11. For instance, Section 8(3) disqualifies candidates convicted for two years or more, a provision to prevent criminalisation of politics. Despite this, the majority of candidates with serious charges continue to contest elections because of judicial proceeding delays.

Regulation of Political Parties and Election Expenditure: The Act mandates the registration of political parties under Section 29A so that only genuine parties can contest elections. Section 77 also regulates election spending by candidates so that disproportionate money power does not determine outcomes. However, the absence of transparency in political contributions, including the issue generated by electoral bonds, remains a concern. The recent Supreme Court judgment quashing the electoral bond scheme has also brought the issue of financial transparency in elections into focus.

Conduct of Elections and Model Code of Conduct: The RPA grants the Election Commission of India (ECI) election conducting powers, polling management, and Model Code of Conduct (MCC) implementation powers. Though the MCC encourages moral campaigns, its enforcement remains limited

as it is not statutorily endorsed. The problem of the use of social media for the dissemination of fake news and the manipulation of votes is a new concern that demands regulatory reform.

Provisions Against Corrupt Practices and Electoral Offences: The Act defines and criminalises corrupt electoral practices under Section 123, such as bribery, undue influence, and booth capturing. Section 125-136 also enunciates offences such as impersonation and false affidavits with penalty or imprisonment. The measures notwithstanding, issues such as paid news and fake propaganda on the Internet continue to remain largely unresolved due to the absence of an effective monitoring mechanism.

Election Dispute Resolution and Judicial Review: Disputes in elections can be challenged through election petitions under Sections 80-84 so that the judiciary is able to secure electoral integrity. The landmark judgments of *Indira Gandhi v. Raj Narain* (1975) and *Lily Thomas v. Union of India* (2013) have empowered judicial intervention in elections. However, the slow process in judicial cases also has the consequence of delay in justice, which undermines electoral credibility.

Representation and Anti-Defection Provisions: The Anti-Defection Law under the 10th Schedule, enacted by the 52nd Amendment (1985), aims to ensure political stability by disqualifying defectors. Loopholes in mass defections and Speaker's ruling delays (like the Maharashtra political crisis, 2022) indicate the necessity of independent judicial supervision.

(b) Implementation Challenges of the RPA, 1951

Despite its advanced framework, the RPA 1951 has several implementation challenges which undermine its effectiveness.

Criminalization of Politics and Ineffective Disqualification: Despite strict disqualification provisions, political parties still field candidates with criminal charges. According to the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), 43% of MPs elected in 2019 had pending criminal cases. However, the Supreme Court in *Public Interest Foundation v. Union of India* (2018) ordered the disclosure of criminal records, voter indifference, and party impunity, which have facilitated this problem to continue.

Money Power and Electoral Finance Lack of Transparency: The use of unaccounted money in elections, particularly in the form of clandestine political donations, is a concern. The withdrawn electoral bond scheme, which facilitated anonymous corporate funding, increased the stakes for influence-peddling in policymaking. The demand for real-time political donation disclosure and state-funded elections is gaining momentum to prevent financial malpractice in electoral processes.

EVM and VVPAT Transparency Issues: Although the Supreme Court in *Subramanian Swamy v. ECI* (2013) upheld the integrity of EVMs, demands for 100% VVPAT verification have again arisen. Only 5% of VVPAT slips are currently cross-verified, and hence, electoral transparency is in doubt. To build confidence in electronic voting, VVPAT verification must be raised to 30-50% of polling stations.

Defection and Political Instability: Defection cases have resulted in political instability in Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra states, where governments fell due to mass defections. The lack of time-bound Speaker's judgments on disqualification has been used for political opportunism. Having an independent tribunal under the ECI or judiciary to address defection cases can avoid delays in partisan judgments.

Delays in Electoral Dispute Resolution: Election petitions remain pending for years to be adjudicated upon, affecting the integrity of electoral outcomes. In the *Rajbala v. State of Haryana* (2015) case, the Supreme Court emphasised the need for speeded-up election tribunals. Yet, no meaningful reforms have been carried out to hasten legal processes regarding electoral disputes.

Misinformation and Digital Election Manipulation: Virtual space and social media have turned into new battlefields for electoral propaganda, AI-based deepfakes, and disinformation. The lack of robust legislation controlling digital election campaigns has facilitated mass voter manipulation. The Election Commission has to cooperate with technology companies to avoid disinformation and conduct clean digital campaigning.

Reforms to Strengthen the Electoral Process:

A series of reforms are necessary to enhance electoral transparency, prevent financial malpractice, and prevent political instability.

Decriminalisation of Politics: Instituting fast-track courts to try political corruption cases and banning candidates with serious criminal charges from election contests will strengthen public faith in democracy. Political parties should also be compulsorily required to nominate candidates with criminal backgrounds.

Electoral Finance Reforms: To stop money power during elections, India can consider state funding of elections and mandating real-time declaration of political contributions. Transparent crowdfunding platforms for political funding can restore public trust.

Strengthening EVM and VVPAT Verification: VVPAT verification should be mandated in all polling stations to create public confidence in electronic voting machines. Additionally, blockchain-based voting systems can be piloted to ensure tamper-proof election processes.

Fast-Tracking Election Disputes and Defection Cases: Election tribunals should be instituted to dispose of election disputes within six months to deliver justice in time. Similarly, an independent tribunal under the judiciary should be entrusted with the task of addressing defection cases to prevent political instability.

Regulating Digital Election Campaigns and Misinformation: Tough laws against AI-based deepfakes, misinformation, and fake political advertisements should be enacted. Social media platforms should be made accountable for labelling misleading political posts and preventing voter manipulation.

Conclusion

The RPA, 1951 remains an essential pillar of India's democratic edifice, ensuring electoral integrity and transparency. Yet, challenges like the criminalisation of politics, unregulated political funding, delay in dispute redressal, and digital misinformation necessitate reforms as soon as possible. Consolidation of electoral finance laws, EVM transparency, legal frameworks for digital elections, and defection laws is the key to securing India's electoral democracy and maintaining constitutional values.

3. Answer

Approach:

Introduction:

Briefly introduce some data and stats related to poverty. Mention various committees related to poverty estimation in India.

Body:

In the first part, analyse various poverty estimation methods from the pre-independence period to the present and briefly discuss their shortcomings. In the second part, assess why it is difficult to measure poverty accurately. Suggest measures for the improvement in poverty estimation.

Conclusion:

Conclude in a suggestive way by adopting technologies like AI, Big data, blockchain, etc.

Introduction

Estimation of poverty in India has been a dynamic process with changing economic circumstances, policy reform, and international standards. According to the National Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2023, 135 million individuals moved out of multidimensional poverty between 2015-16 and 2019-21. However, various approaches, including the Tendulkar Committee (2009), Rangarajan Committee (2014), and NITI Aayog's MPI (2021), provide disparate estimates, causing controversy regarding the actual size of poverty in the nation.

(a) Methods of Poverty Estimation in India and Their Success

Pre-Independence and Early Post-Independence Methods:

- Dadabhai Naoroji was one of the first to estimate poverty in India using the "Jail Cost of Living" method, which calculated a subsistence-level expenditure. The British-period National Planning Committee (1938-39) also made an effort to define systematic poverty. These early methods,

however, were not statistically accurate and did not take into account social indicators other than mere subsistence.

- The Working Group Method (1962) was the first formal attempt by India at determining a poverty line, using minimum calorie consumption (2,400 in rural and 2,100 in urban regions). Although this method was easy to apply, it excluded non-food expenditures such as medical care, education, and housing, which is a partial indicator of poverty.

Calorie-Based Estimation (Alagh and Lakdawala Committees):

- The Alagh Committee (1979) attributed poverty to calorie intake and set a benchmark expenditure for the minimum requirements of food. This, which was used by the Planning Commission, classified rural and urban poverty as two distinct categories. It failed to account for inflation and shifts in consumption, resulting in the underestimation of poverty rates in the long term.
- The Lakdawala Committee of 1993 refined this by using inflation-adjusted figures of 1973-74 expenditure levels from CPI-Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) and CPI-Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL). Although a better approach, it still did not include critical services such as education, health, and sanitation.

Transition to a Comprehensive Approach (Tendulkar and Rangarajan Committees):

- The Tendulkar Committee (2009) departed from calorie-based poverty estimation, using a mixed reference period that covered necessary expenditures on healthcare, education, and clothing. It fixed the poverty line at ₹33 per day (urban) and ₹27 per day (rural) in 2011-12 but was faulted for fixing a low line that underestimated actual deprivation.
- To counter this, the Rangarajan Committee (2014) suggested a more elevated poverty line of ₹47 per day (urban) and ₹32 per day (rural), using a wider consumption basket that accounted for healthcare, education, transport, and rent. This was a more realistic method but still attracted criticism for not being able to reflect regional and caste-based poverty differentials.

Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) and New Approaches:

- India embraced the NITI Aayog-governed Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in 2021, modelled on the UNDP model, which captures poverty in three dimensions: Living Standards, Education, and Health. MPI 2023 indicated widespread poverty decline, representing a gain in sanitation, electricity, nutrition, and education. Though this measure offers a comprehensive view of deprivation, challenges in data collection and implementation at the state level persist.

(b) Issues in Measuring Poverty Accurately

Variability in Methodologies and Benchmarks: Various committees and international agencies employ disparate poverty lines, resulting in inconsistent estimates. India's official poverty lines, for example, diverge considerably from the World Bank's international poverty line of \$2.15 per day, leaving one puzzled about the actual prevalence of poverty.

Outdated and Infrequent Data Collection: The NSSO Household Consumption Survey, which is a main data source for poverty estimates, was last done in 2011-12, rendering present-day poverty estimates unreliable. Further, the retardation of Census 2021 and the patchy collection of socioeconomic statistics hamper proper poverty measurement.

Exclusion of Informal Sector and Migrant Workers: India's large informal economy, which employs more than 80% of all workers, is largely absent from surveys on poverty. The COVID-19 pandemic went further to show the gap with millions of migrant workers excluded from estimates of poverty, leading to ineffective targeting of welfare.

Regional and Caste-Based Disparities: National poverty estimates hide intra-state disparities, as there are some states and groups within states with more poverty. Traditionally, disadvantaged communities like Scheduled Tribes (STs), Scheduled Castes (SCs), and religious minorities continue to bear a disproportionate burden and necessitate specialised methods for assessing poverty.

Obstacles in Estimating Multidimensional Poverty: While MPI offers a complete snapshot of poverty, it is based on several indicators that might not be consistently available in all states. Additionally, gaps in data on health, education, and living standards hinder the ability to measure progress.

Steps to Enhance Poverty Estimation in India

Strengthening Data Collection and Frequency: Regular surveys, such as the NSSO consumption expenditure survey, should be conducted every five years to ensure real-time poverty tracking. Additionally, conducting Census 2021 as soon as possible will provide updated demographic and socio-economic data for better poverty estimation.

Adopting a Hybrid Approach for Measurement: A mixed strategy of blending income-based methods (Tendulkar, Rangarajan) with multidimensional indices (MPI) can provide a more realistic representation of poverty. Implementing AI and Big Data analytics poverty mapping can also enhance precision in policy interventions.

Reaching Regional and Social Disparities: Poverty estimation needs to account for caste, gender, and rural-urban gaps to present true levels of deprivation. State-specific poverty lines must be formulated to facilitate localised policy interventions that adequately respond to distinctive challenges.

Harnessing Technology for Improved Estimation: Digital databases linked to Aadhaar can facilitate tracking of individual welfare benefits, enhancing effective poverty alleviation. Further, the application of satellite imagery and remote sensing can make poverty heatmaps at district levels more accurate, enhancing estimation.

Conclusion

Precise estimation of poverty is essential for effective policymaking and welfare targeting. Though previous approaches were income-focused, the transition to multidimensional poverty estimation offers a broader picture of deprivation. Nonetheless problems like data shortcomings, ageing methodologies and omission of informal labourers continue. To enhance the estimation of poverty India has to consolidate data collection mechanisms, incorporate AI-based analytics and employ a hybrid measurement framework that reflects the actual depth of poverty.

4. Answer

Approach:

Introduction:

Briefly define committed bureaucracy and its background during the emergency period.

Body:

Analyse the advantages and disadvantages of committed bureaucracy. Discuss how a balance can be maintained between bureaucratic commitment to development goals and the principles of political neutrality and accountability.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, mention that a commitment to the constitution and law of the land is welcomed but not towards political parties.

Introduction

Bureaucracy plays a critical role in governance, and the concept of a "committed bureaucracy" has sparked significant debate in India. The term gained prominence after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's call for a "committed bureaucracy" in the 1970s, aiming to align the administrative system with the government's developmental goals. Over the past few years, debates concerning bureaucratic commitment over neutrality have emerged once again, particularly with regard to bureaucratic transfers, the politicisation of the civil services, and matters such as the 2023 Delhi Services Bill controversy.

(a) Meaning of Committed Bureaucracy and Its Merits & Demerits

Meaning of Committed Bureaucracy: A committed bureaucracy is a system of administration that is loyal to the policies and ideological goals of the ruling government. Yet operates within the bounds of the Constitution. As opposed to a politically neutral bureaucracy that operates autonomously of political ideologies, a committed bureaucracy should actively cooperate with government programs towards effective implementation.

Strengths of a Committed Bureaucracy

Effective Policy Implementation: A bureaucracy devoted to the development agenda of the ruling government facilitates effective implementation of policies and avoids administrative procrastination. For example, bureaucratic commitment was the key to the success of Aadhaar-linked welfare programs such as PM-KISAN and Ayushman Bharat.

Increased Administrative Efficiency: Adherence to a well-defined objective curtails bureaucratic sluggishness and induces an active approach to governance. The Mission Karmayogi reform program stresses capacity building and commitment towards the attainment of developmental objectives.

Political Stability and Continuity of Governance:

A dedicated bureaucracy prevents large government initiatives—like Digital India, Make in India, and PM Gati Shakti—from being stalled because of differences in ideology among bureaucrats. This gives long-term stability to governance.

Facilitates Crisis Management: During national emergencies, pandemics, and disaster relief, a committed bureaucracy in line with government orders guarantees a swift and coordinated response. The effective management of the COVID-19 vaccination drive by bureaucrats at district levels proved the advantages of dedication to national objectives.

Disadvantages of a Committed Bureaucracy

Risk of Politicization of Bureaucracy: Excessive dedication has the potential to transform bureaucrats into political agents as opposed to objective administrators. It undermines meritocratic values in civil services since politicians frequently reshuffle officers who decline to give their allegiance. e.g., 2023 Punjab civil servant reshuffle row.

Threat to Political Neutrality and Objectivity: A bureaucracy that becomes too aligned with the ruling party can become prejudiced in policy implementation and lose fairness. This is evident when officers provide special treatment to specific political interests, influencing public trust in governance.

Undermines Accountability and Rule of Law: Fidelity towards a ruling administration can make the bureaucrats neglect constitutional values, judicial instructions, and parliamentary watchdogs. Issues such as using investigative bodies for political adversaries clearly indicate the potential risks of having an overly dedicated bureaucracy.

Barring Policy Shifts by Successor Governments: Overly government-allegiant bureaucracies could resist shifts during the emergence of new governmental leadership, promoting policy stumbles and time lost in implementing governmental reforms.

(b) Balancing Bureaucratic Commitment with Neutrality and Accountability

Strengthening Constitutional Safeguards for Bureaucratic Independence: The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) has stressed the importance of a non-partisan bureaucracy, which ensures

officers act within the constitutional framework and not political loyalties. Effective enforcement of Article 311 of the Constitution can avoid arbitrary removal or transfers of bureaucrats.

Implementing Civil Service Reforms for Merit-Based Appointments: The Hota Committee Report (2004) suggested merit-based and transparent promotions to make bureaucracy efficient. The Lateral Entry System can also be extended to bring in professionals with technical skills in governance, minimising political patronage.

Providing Fixed Tenure to Civil Servants: Regular transfers and postings erode bureaucratic impartiality. The Supreme Court's 2013 ruling in *TSR Subramanian v. Union of India* suggested a fixed term for civil servants to shield them from political interference and undue pressure.

Creating a Stronger Civil Services Board: A strong Civil Services Board (CSB) must be made responsible for governing bureaucratic transfers, promotions, and postings on the basis of performance and administrative effectiveness and not on political grounds.

Enhancing Parliamentary and Judicial Oversight: Parliamentary Standing Committees must be accorded additional powers to enhance bureaucratic accountability without affecting efficiency. Courts should uphold the political neutrality principle, as reiterated in *Prakash Singh v. Union of India* (2006), which proposed police reforms to ensure administrative machinery is not misused politically.

Fostering Public Accountability and Citizens' Participation: Bureaucratic decisions need to be made more transparent by involving public accountability instruments like Right to Information (RTI) and citizen charters. A committed bureaucracy needs to be accountable for the public good instead of political ends.

Training and Sensitization through Ethical Governance Models: Training programs like Mission Karmyogi need to include ethics training, constitutional ethos, and principles of professional integrity so that bureaucrats are committed to governance and impartial in decision-making.

Conclusion

A balanced bureaucracy is necessary for good governance, where national development objectives do not have an adverse effect on neutrality, accountability, or constitutional values. While some commitment is required for effective governance, over-alignment with political agendas can erode democratic values. Judicial review, security of tenure, civil service reforms, and ethical orientation training are important to ensure that India's administrative system is committed to progress and also committed to neutral governance.

5. Answer

Approach:

Introduction:

Briefly introduce by stating the importance of maritime security for Odisha and India as well.

Body:

Discuss how smuggling, illegal fishing, and natural disasters pose a threat to Odisha's maritime security. Evaluate the effectiveness of the existing framework and give suggestions for its improvement.

Conclusion:

In conclusion suggest how Odisha can establish a strong and future-proof maritime security framework. Mention some innovative steps like using advanced technology, enhancing law enforcement agencies, and enhancing port security.

Introduction

Maritime security has become important for India, particularly in view of recent smuggling attempts, increasing Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean Region, illegal fishing issues, and susceptibility to natural disasters. The Odisha coast, extending 480 km along the Bay of Bengal, is of great economic, strategic, and environmental importance. The Paradip drug smuggling case in 2023, regular cyclones such as Cyclone Mocha (2023), and mounting Chinese fishing vessel activity in the Indian Ocean underscore the imperative of developing a strong maritime security framework. Odisha, home to prominent ports such as Paradip and Dhamra, has special security concerns that require greater coastal surveillance and policy action.

(a) Major Maritime Security Challenges Confronting Odisha

Smuggling and Illicit Trade: Odisha's permeable coastline and poor surveillance infrastructure expose it to drug trafficking, arms smuggling, and contraband trade. The 2023 Paradip port seizure of 50 kg of heroin worth ₹350 crore pointed to how Odisha is being increasingly exploited as a transit point for narco-trafficking networks connected to Myanmar and Sri Lanka.

Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing: The Bay of Bengal is a highly valued fishing area, but illegal fishing by foreign ships, especially from China, Thailand, and Bangladesh, endangers marine biodiversity and local livelihoods. Increased deep-sea trawling and the use of destructive fisheries technologies have led to overfishing and the devastation of marine resources, impacting thousands of local fishermen.

Human Trafficking and Infiltration: Odisha's coast is becoming more popular as a means of illegal immigration and human trafficking, especially from Myanmar and Bangladesh. With few coastal patrols, traffickers utilise fishing vessels and minor harbours to bring individuals into India. Reports show that Odisha has become a point of transit for trafficking women and children to the Middle East and South Asia.

Natural Disasters and Climate Change Impact: Odisha is among the cyclone-vulnerable states in India, which are often hit by intense storms and sea level rise. Cyclones such as Fani (2019), Yaas (2021), and Mocha (2023) have brought severe damage to coastal villages, fishing facilities, and naval property. Moreover, coastal erosion and growing salinity intrusion are long-term risks to the local population.

Maritime Terrorism and Piracy Concerns: While not as bad as in the Arabian Sea, the risk of maritime terrorism is still a concern, especially after the 2008 Mumbai attacks when terrorists entered through the sea. Odisha's absence of full-fledged naval bases and port security loopholes expose it to possible infiltration by extremist groups.

Port and Offshore Infrastructure Security: Odisha's larger ports—Paradip, Dhamra, and Gopalpur—play a central role in Indian maritime trade, but they still face threats of cyber attacks, physical sabotage, and environmental factors. As foreign investment, including Chinese capital, in neighbouring South Asian port infrastructure increases, the security of strategic maritime installations in Odisha has become increasingly important.

(b) Existing coastal security mechanisms

Indian Coast Guard and Marine Police: The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) is responsible for guarding Odisha's coastline with patrolling ships, interceptor boats, and surveillance aircraft. The Odisha Marine Police, which was set up under the Coastal Security Scheme (CSS), operates 18 marine police stations for more intensive coastal surveillance.

Coastal Surveillance System (CSS): Under the National Coastal Surveillance Network, Odisha has been provided with radar stations, Automatic Identification Systems (AIS), and high-frequency communication networks. The system identifies unauthorised maritime operations in real-time.

National Committee for Strengthening Maritime and Coastal Security (NCSMCS): This committee, led by the Union Cabinet Secretary, is responsible for coordinating coastal security between the Indian Navy, Coast Guard, marine police, and intelligence agencies. Odisha's security plan is coordinated in accordance with its national guidelines.

Fishermen Watch Groups (Sagar Suraksha Dal): To increase the level of community involvement, Odisha has set up fishermen watch groups that provide information on suspicious activities and foreign ship sightings. Their effectiveness is, however, restricted by a lack of professional training and financial reward.

Cyclone Warning and Preparedness: Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA), jointly with IMD and ISRO, has developed an advanced cyclone and tsunami warning system. Specific cyclone shelters and evacuation schemes have immensely helped in minimising human casualties in the recent past.

Measures for Enhancing Coastal Security

Coastal Surveillance and Intelligence Sharing Upgrade: Odisha requires a superior surveillance system consisting of AI-enabled monitoring, satellite tracking, and underwater drone detection to identify illicit activities. The connectivity of Odisha's security network with the Indian Navy's Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) will improve real-time threat identification and response.

Upgradation of Marine Police and Coast Guard Infrastructure: Odisha's sea police stations require upgraded boats, night vision equipment, and GPS systems to enhance efficiency. The Indian Coast Guard must enhance the presence of their fleet and have more regular combined exercises with the Navy and coastal authorities.

Combating Illegal Fishing through Regulation and Punishment: The state has to enforce the law on fishing stringently and penalise unauthorised fishing by foreign vessels. Developing satellite-tracking vessel systems and offering subsidies on sustainable fishing techniques will decrease the exploitation of marine resources.

Improving Port and Cybersecurity Measures: Ports such as Paradip, Gopalpur, and Dhamra require biometric access control, high-resolution CCTV networks, and cybersecurity audits to avoid hacking attempts and digital sabotage. Cybersecurity training for port personnel will improve their capability to tackle adverse situations.

Disaster Resilience and Climate Adaptation: Odisha must construct more cyclone-resistant fishing harbours, embankments, and climate-adaptive infrastructure. Mangrove forests along the coast can be expanded as a natural defence against coastal erosion and storm surges.

Creating a Full-Fledged Naval Base in Odisha: With its strategic position, Odisha must strive to create a permanent naval base off Paradip or Gopalpur to enhance India's Eastern Naval Command presence in the Bay of Bengal. This will serve to increase maritime surveillance and counter external threats.

Community Engagement and Fishermen Training: Empowering local people is essential. Odisha can adopt Gujarat's "Sagar Rakshak Dal" program, in which trained fishermen support coastal patrolling. Organising awareness campaigns and offering incentives to join can enhance local security coordination.

Conclusion:

Odisha's maritime security is essential for national security, economic stability, and disaster resilience. Although existing arrangements such as the Indian Coast Guard, Marine Police, and Coastal Surveillance Systems present an integrated defence mechanism, there are significant gaps in coordination, infrastructure, and local reach. By using advanced technology, enhancing law enforcement agencies, and enhancing port security, Odisha can establish a strong and future-proof maritime security framework.

Q.6 Answer

Introduction

India's government is a mix of central control and state freedom. Some political parties want strong central power to ensure the whole country follows the same rules, grows economically and stays united. On the other hand some state based parties want more control over their own regions to protect local cultures and solve problems specific to their areas.

Body

Why National Parties Support Centralization

Big national parties like the **Bharatiya Janata Party** and the **Indian National Congress** believe in a strong central government because:

They think having a central authority helps keep India together as one country ensuring peace and stability.

When economic policies are the same across all states it creates a smooth and fair system. For example **GST** made taxation uniform across India.

With central planning resources like money and development projects can be shared fairly among all states reducing inequalities.

Why Regional Parties Want More State Control

Regional parties like the **DMK** in Tamil Nadu and **TMC** in West Bengal believe states should have more power because:

Different states have unique languages, customs and traditions. They want to preserve their identity and resist anything that threatens their culture.

What works in one state may not work in another. When states have more control they can create policies suited to their people.

When states have more power their leaders can directly solve issues making governance more effective.

Case Study

One of the biggest disagreements between the central and state governments is about language. The central government has tried to promote Hindi as a national language but many states especially in the South have opposed this move. For example the **DMK in Tamil Nadu** has consistently fought against making Hindi compulsory arguing that it threatens Tamil culture and language. This highlights the ongoing struggle between national unity and regional identity.

Finding a Balance

It is important to balance central control and state freedom so that India remains united while respecting its diversity. This can be achieved by:

The central and state governments should work together and respect each other's needs.

The Constitution should allow states to make decisions that suit their unique situations.

Courts can help resolve disputes between the central and state governments fairly.

Conclusion

The debate between central power and state autonomy is a key part of governance in India. National parties want a strong central government for unity, while regional parties fight for state rights to protect local cultures. The best way forward is through cooperation, respect and ensuring that India's diverse people and regions are equally represented in decision making.

7. Answer

Approach:

Introduction:

In introduction addresses how the new criminal laws tried to replace the colonial archaic and suppressive laws and reform the criminal justice system.

Body:

Analyse how BNSS protects citizen rights, handles security issues, and promotes inclusive governance. Also, mention the shortcomings that remain.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, suggest some ways to improve the criminal justice system.

Introduction:

With the introduction of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS), and Bharatiya Sakshya Sanhita (BSS), the nation witnessed a groundbreaking shift from its colonial-era legal framework. This change signifies a monumental move towards a more contemporary, efficient, and justice-oriented legal system. The BNSS is replacing the old CrPC and started a new era of the criminal procedure code. However, it has involved various issues that restrict the objective of this code.

Key features of BNSS:

- **Extension of police custody:** The massive expansion of the possible duration of police custody in the BNSS strikes at the very heart of civil liberties protection. The extended period of police custody (up to 15 days) within the initial judicial custody period might restrict access to bail during this time.
- **Privacy concerns:** This arises from the addition of subsection (3) to Section 43, 'Arrest how made,' in the BNSS, which formally reintroduces the use of handcuffs. While handcuffs may be deemed necessary in severe cases, their indiscriminate use, as suggested by the BNSS, contradicts the 1979 Supreme Court verdict in the case of **Sunil Batra vs. Delhi Administration**, which strongly criticised their widespread use.
- **Process of digital criminal trial:** It brings with it the major challenge of creating a digital infrastructure for such a huge population with the vast number of cases pending in our courts and also the awareness about such infrastructure at the grassroots.
- **Misuse of technology:** One of the biggest challenges to be faced by these newly introduced provisions in BNSS is the advent of AI, especially "deepfakes". The use of deepfakes is a potential threat to evidence in criminal trials. When **Sec. 532 of the BNSS** confers the power to hold examinations of witnesses and trials can be held virtually, it leaves a huge room for misuse of the same.
- **Restriction on government power:** The amended Section 433 of the CrPC significantly restricts the government's power to commute sentences, as outlined in the revised Section 475 of the BNSS.

BNSS's role in safeguarding the rights of citizens

Apart from the issues involved with the code, this code has **many positive elements for the betterment of society and for smoothly maintaining the rule of law** without affecting citizens' rights.

Citizen rights:

- **Altered Police Custody Rules:** The BNSS extends the flexibility of police custody within the initial days of detention, differing from the previous CrPC provisions. This alteration aims to enhance investigative efficiency while safeguarding human rights.
- **Rights of the Accused and Bail Provisions:** The act also revises bail conditions, particularly for first-time offenders, reflecting a more empathetic approach towards undertrial prisoners. These changes aim to reduce unnecessary pre-trial detention and promote the principle that bail is the norm.

Promotion of inclusive governance:

- **Effect on Law Enforcement and Judicial Efficiency:** The BNSS's amendments assure a more effective and transparent criminal justice system. Through the adoption of contemporary methods and the protection of individual rights, the act aims to create a balance between law enforcement effectiveness and the protection of civil liberties.
- **Improved Investigative Techniques:** The use of digital aids and forensic techniques in investigation highlights a focus on precision and scientific techniques in solving crime.
- **Improved Human Rights:** Through the streamlining of detention and bail processes, the BNSS emphasises the precedence of human rights in the criminal justice system with the protection of the accused's rights.
- **Forensic rules:** One of the key areas of focus for the BNSS is to promote the application of forensic science in the investigation procedures. For crimes punishable by imprisonment for seven years or more, Clause 176 mandates the officer in charge of the police station to cause a forensics expert to go to

the crime scene to gather forensic evidence. If implemented effectively, the application of forensic science has the potential to greatly enhance the quality of investigation.

- **Embracing Technology in Judicial Procedures:** The BNSS embraces technology to make judicial procedures more efficient, a major departure from the conventional approach.
- **Electronic Filing and Service of Summons:** The act provides for electronic means of filing complaints and serving summons, a step towards a paperless legal system. This digitalisation is likely to speed up legal proceedings and make them more accessible.
- **Video Conferencing and Electronic Trials:** Highlighting the necessity of efficiency and modernisation, the BNSS facilitates the widespread use of video conferencing in trials. This technological usage is set to make the judiciary process faster and more responsive.

Handling Security Issues:

Safeguards: Numerous provisions have been instituted to protect the rights and well-being of Indian citizens against injustices and criminal activities. This is one of the key reasons why the new Indian Penal Code (IPC) is often described as "**citizen-centric**."

Two new clauses have been added to Section 183(6)(a) of the BNSS, aligning with Section 164(5A) (a) of the CrPC, to ensure the proper recording of statements by a judicial magistrate.

- **First**, when a statement is provided by a woman, it is now mandatory for it to be recorded by a female magistrate.
- **Second**, in cases involving individuals accused of serious offences carrying imprisonment exceeding 10 years, magistrates are now obligated to record their statements.
- Additionally, there is now a requirement to inform the relatives or friends of a detained woman about her arrest.

Suggested measures:

- Legal change of this magnitude necessitates an **inclusive and informed national discourse**. A dialogue that encompasses the views of legal experts, practitioners, academics, and civil society is essential to prevent potential missteps that could undermine the law's efficacy and social standing.
- An analytics-driven approach to planning would aid in identifying the various stages of the reform's rollout. A comprehensive action plan should factor in the logistical intricacies of implementing new laws across different tiers of institutions, from high courts to local enforcement bodies.

Conclusion:

The prospective legal code promises a profound transformation within India's criminal justice system striving for equity, efficiency and responsiveness to societal needs. However, some elements of these proposed revisions have prompted concerns. It should be resolved with political will and administrative safeguards to ensure the rights of the citizens.

Q.8 Answer

Introduction

Debt management refers to the strategies employed by a government to efficiently handle its borrowing, repayment as well as fiscal obligations and at the same time to ensure macroeconomic stability. In the Indian context it plays an important role in balancing of **inflation control** and **welfare oriented policies**.

Inflation control involves regulating the rise in the general price level of goods and services through **monetary policies by interest rate management of RBI** and **fiscal policies through government spending and taxation**.

Welfare oriented policies include government interventions aimed at poverty alleviation, social security and economic upliftment such as **food subsidies, direct benefit transfers and healthcare programs.**

India faces the challenge of maintaining **fiscal discipline** while ensuring that welfare policies continue to address social inequalities.

Body

Challenges in Debt Management

High Fiscal Deficit and Public Debt

India's fiscal deficit is targeted at **4.4% of GDP for FY 2025-26**, down from **5.8% in FY 2023-24.**

India's **general government debt stands at 81% of GDP** which is high compared to emerging economies.

High borrowing levels increase **debt servicing costs** reducing funds available for developmental programs.

Inflationary Pressures Due to Excessive Borrowing

In India inflation is influenced by:

- **Global oil price fluctuations** affecting fuel costs.
- **Supply chain disruptions** leading to food inflation.
- **Deficit financing** that is government borrowing from RBI which increases **money supply** leading to inflation.

The **RBI's inflation target is 4%** but external shocks may push inflation beyond control.

Balancing Welfare Spending Without Exceeding Fiscal Limits

Welfare schemes like **PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana** and **Ayushman Bharat** require **high government expenditure.**

Unfunded subsidies can widen fiscal deficits forcing the government to borrow more which in turn raises debt servicing costs.

Crowding Out Effect on Private Investment

Crowding out occurs when excessive government borrowing **raises interest rates** making borrowing costlier for the private sector.

A slowdown in private investment affects job creation and GDP growth reducing long-term economic prospects.

Strategies for Effective Debt Management

Expanding the tax base by strengthening **GST compliance** and **reducing exemptions.**

Privatization of non core PSUs to generate revenue and reduce fiscal burden.

Targeted subsidies through **Direct Benefit Transfers** to prevent leakages.

Zero-based budgeting to ensure only essential expenditures continue.

Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act mandates limiting fiscal deficit and public debt to sustainable levels.

State governments are encouraged to adhere to **borrowings limits set by the Centre.**

Using **PPP models** to finance infrastructure and welfare programs reducing direct government expenditure.

Recent initiatives in **urban infrastructure and railways** rely on private sector financing.

Issuing inflation indexed bonds to reduce inflationary risks from government borrowing.

External borrowing in rupee denominated bonds to reduce reliance on domestic debt markets.

Conclusion

Managing debt while ensuring inflation control and welfare commitments requires **a balanced and strategic approach.** The government must focus on

Enhancing revenue collection through tax compliance.

Targeted social spending to avoid fiscal slippages.

Leveraging private sector participation in welfare and infrastructure development.

By **strengthening fiscal discipline while prioritizing inclusive growth** India can achieve economic resilience and long-term financial stability.

9. Answer

Approach

Introduction:

Briefly introduce the topic by mentioning the recent Supreme Court ruling on tribunals.

Body:

Assess the SC's observation on tribunals. Briefly analyse the positive impacts and shortcomings of tribunals.

Conclusion:

Conclude by suggesting ways to strengthen alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

Introduction:

Tribunals are legal and quasi-judicial authorities that provide decisions quickly, inexpensively, and effectively. The two types of Tribunals were provided under the 42nd Amendment Act 1976 with a new Part XIV-A to the Constitution following the recommendation of the *Swaran Singh Committee*. In recent years, the regulations governing their operation were amended by the Tribunals Reforms Act of 2021, aiming at their efficiency and judicial autonomy. The Supreme Court, through a recent judgment, has reaffirmed the principle that tribunals, including quasi-judicial bodies like the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT), do not possess the authority to direct the government to formulate or implement specific policies.

SC emphasised on several key points:

Judicial vs. Executive Function: Making policy is clearly delineated as an executive function and falls outside the jurisdiction of the judiciary, including tribunals. The court emphasised that policy-making is a prerogative of the government, not the judiciary.

Scope of Tribunal's Powers: The AFT, while vested with powers akin to a civil court, does not have the authority comparable to that of the Supreme Court or High Courts. Therefore, it cannot compel the government to create policies or schemes.

Article 226 Jurisdiction: Even under Article 226 of the Constitution, which empowers High Courts to issue writs, directives to the government regarding policy formulation are not within the purview of the courts.

Government Prerogative: The judgment reiterated that decisions on policies concerning matters like defence personnel service or regularisation are exclusively within the domain of the government. This prerogative cannot be usurped by tribunals or courts.

Boundaries of Tribunal's Functioning: Tribunals function within strict boundaries set by their governing legislation. Their role is to interpret and apply the law, not to dictate policy changes.

Positive Implications on Tribunals:

Legitimacy and Trust in Administrative Justice: The Power of the Supreme Court to control India's tribunals is critical in ensuring the judiciary's integrity and independence. Its supervision guarantees that tribunals follow legal and constitutional guidelines, protecting justice & the rule of law. This control also enhances public faith in the judiciary by limiting potential misuse of power and ensuring fair and unbiased adjudication. As the legal system keeps on changing, it is critical that the Supreme Court adapts its supervisory procedures to efficiently address emerging difficulties while maintaining the ideals of justice.

Specialisation and Expertise: The introduction of tribunals will lead to specialisation and expertise in the judiciary, and they can resolve such technical and administrative issues, which can be tough for the regular judiciary.

Efficiency and Timeliness: SCs ruling over tribunals will help the tribunals work efficiently and effectively. It will save time for judiciaries and stakeholders and provide timely justice to them.

Independence and Accountability: This will stop political involvement so that tribunals can work freely from any political disruptions and make tribunals accountable for their judgements.

Judicial Review and Oversight: Judicial review and oversight by the Supreme Court will help in making a disruption-free judiciary and ensure the rule of law.

Negative Implications of Tribunals:

- They may violate the spirit of the "Rule of Law". The rule of law ensures that neither organisations nor people wield arbitrary power. It is the notion that everyone is subject to and accountable to the law (which is equitable).
- Ordinary courts follow a uniform code of procedure for both civil and criminal cases. However, administrative tribunals do not have a uniform code of procedure.
- Such tribunals are occasionally presided over by subject area specialists with no prior expertise in court processes. As a result, they also adopt summary procedures.

Challenges involved with tribunals:

- The report identified the lack of independence as one of the key issues plaguing tribunals in India. At the outset, the system of appointment through selection committees severely affects the independence of tribunals.
- The issues of reappointment and the proclivity to appoint retired judges have the potential to affect the independence of tribunals. Sitting judges and tribunal chairpersons are likely to give orders favourable to the Central government to appease them for continued or future posting.
- The problem of non-uniformity across tribunals with respect to service conditions, tenure of members, and varying nodal ministries in charge of different tribunals – all of which contribute significantly to malfunctioning in the managing and administration of tribunals.

Suggested measures:

- An independent, autonomous body such as a National Tribunals Commission, responsible for oversight as well as administration, can go a long way in remedying issues that plague the functioning of tribunals.
- Tribunals should be given adequate autonomy and effective funding mechanisms.

Conclusion:

The Tribunals Reforms Act 2021 was the legislation designed for the consolidation of tribunals, but the new Act was also criticised for its centralisation themes. An Independent, efficient Tribunal system further calls for a series of reforms focused on the appointment of chairmen and other members, financial autonomy, and proper infrastructure. These aspects should be strengthened to enhance the judicial integrity of tribunals and make them worthy of the status of the real alternative to the traditional courts to provide more people with access to justice.

Q.10 Answer**Approach:****Introduction:**

Briefly introduce by stating the inter-state relation of Odisha with its neighbours.

Body:

Give arguments for both cooperative and competitive relations with neighbouring states. Balanced both the view.

Conclusion:

Suggest how can Odisha become regional leader by balancing both cooperative and competitive relations with neighbours.

Introduction

India's interstate relations have become more complex, with conflicts over resources, economic rivalry, and political divergence. Odisha, being a resource-rich and coastal state, borders West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Andhra Pradesh, each with differing economic and political interests. Recent interstate conflicts over river water sharing (Mahanadi with Chhattisgarh, Vansadhara with Andhra Pradesh), border conflicts (with Andhra Pradesh), and economic rivalry (industrial investments with Jharkhand and West Bengal) reflect the challenges Odisha is facing. Additionally, the centre-state conflict over fiscal devolution, GST compensation, and federalism further entangles Odisha's development path.

Under such a scenario, Odisha needs a strategic mix of cooperative and competitive federalism. While cooperation is necessary for sharing resources, disaster management, and infrastructure development, competitive federalism can channel economic growth, investments, and governance reform.

Why does Odisha need to Prioritize Cooperative Federalism?

Resolution of Water Disputes for Sustainable Growth: Odisha has pending water-sharing conflicts with Chhattisgarh (Mahanadi) and Andhra Pradesh (Vansadhara, Polavaram Project). The Tribunal under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956, is slow in rendering judgments on these matters. A cooperative approach—joint river basin management, sharing of real-time data, and negotiated settlements—can ensure equitable sharing without political conflicts.

Enhancing Disaster Management and Climate Resilience:

Being a cyclone-prone state, Odisha needs to cooperate with neighbouring states and the central government for early warning, infrastructure support, and coordinated disaster relief. Odisha's success with disaster preparedness during Cyclone Fani (2019) and Yaas (2021) demonstrates that interstate cooperation is essential for saving lives and facilitating quick recovery.

Enhancing Connectivity and Trade Corridors: Odisha is an economic gateway to central and eastern India, and its ports (Paradip, Dhamra) are of vital importance for mineral exports and shipping trade. Cooperative infrastructure development schemes with Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh for railway connectivity, road networks, and industrial corridors can facilitate greater economic integration and mutual development.

Enhancing Migration and Labor Welfare Issues: Odisha is faced with mass-scale labour migration to Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Gujarat, which tends to result in exploitation and a lack of social security. With cooperation with the neighbouring states in labour welfare schemes, skilling schemes, and inter-state protection of workers' policies, Odisha can ensure better living standards for its migrant workers.

Taking the assistance of the Centre for Economic Growth:

Odisha can avail itself of interstate cooperation to negotiate better financial grants from the Centre, including GST compensation, special category status, and calamity relief funds. Constructive engagement with the Union government and neighbouring states is essential for Odisha's securing long-term economic gains.

Why does Odisha Need to adopt competitive federalism?

Repeated Investment and Industrial Growth: Odisha has to compete with Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and West Bengal to lure mineral-based industries, steel units, and manufacturing hubs. Odisha has so far succeeded in luring investments from Tata Steel, JSW, and Vedanta, but other states like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh offer tax benefits and cheaper-priced land to industries. A competitive approach to ease of business, power subsidies, and policy benefits can make Odisha a choice industrial hub.

Creating Higher Education and Skill Infrastructure: Neighbouring states have IITs, IIMs, and AIIMS and are hence favoured by students and skilled human resources. Odisha has to develop its institutions of higher learning, invest in research, and cooperate with overseas universities to compete. Odisha Skill Development Authority's efforts are in the right direction.

Building Tourism and Cultural Economy: Odisha has a rich heritage (Konark, Puri, Chilika), but West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh dominate the eastern tourism space. By improving tourism infrastructure, promoting Odisha's ecotourism and heritage tourism, and competing with neighbouring states to get tourists, Odisha can raise its revenue and employment.

Increasing Political and Administrative Efficiency: Healthy competition in governance leads to better policy delivery, digital governance, and services. Odisha can benchmark its performance with neighbouring states in areas like public health (Odisha's Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana vs. West Bengal's Swasthya Sathi), infrastructure (Smart Cities Mission), and digital services to enhance governance as a whole.

Balanced Model of Cooperative and Competitive Federalism

Institutional Framework for Interstate Cooperation: Odisha should push for strengthening the Eastern Zonal Council, which includes West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Odisha, to address regional economic, water, and security issues. A permanent interstate disputes redressal body under Article 263 (Interstate Council mechanism) must be institutionalised.

Joint Economic and Infrastructure Zones: Odisha must join hands with Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh to develop joint industrial corridors and logistic centres similar to the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC). This will create employment, exports, and regional economic integration.

Competitive but Fair Business Policies: Odisha must provide better incentives to industries and startups while ensuring that environmental policies and labour legislation are not unduly sacrificed. A mix of tax incentives, single-window clearances, and sustainable policies can attract investment without resource exploitation.

Odisha's Enhanced Coastal Security and Maritime Economy: With its coastal advantage, Odisha needs to step up port-led development, blue economy initiatives, and protection against smuggling and piracy. Collaboration with coastal states such as Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, and Tamil Nadu in maritime security and economic development will be in the shared interest.

Federal Bargaining for Financial and Special Status Concessions: Odisha needs to fight for greater financial devolution, special category status, and higher disaster relief grants collectively with other eastern states. Collective bargaining on finances will enhance Odisha's bargaining with the Centre.

Conclusion

Odisha cannot afford to be all-cooperative or all-competitive – a mix of both is called for. While cooperative federalism is essential for sharing resources, disaster management, and economic integration, competitive federalism will attract investment, good governance, and industrialisation. By judiciously balancing cooperation with states on issues of common concern and competition in economic and policy excellence, Odisha can become a regional leader in governance, industry, and social development.

Q.11 Answer**Approach:****Introduction:**

Briefly introduce by stating the background for creating a body like NITI Aayog, which replaced the erstwhile Planning Commission.

Body:

Mention the objectives of NITI Aayog. In the second part, critically analyse the achievements, such as the Aspiration district program, the SDG index and shortcomings, such as the lack of financial power, the implementation gap, etc.

Conclusion:

Conclude by suggesting how NITI Aayog can be strengthened and can maintain a balance between cooperative and competitive federalism.

Introduction

On January 1, 2025, NITI Aayog marked 10 years since it was formed to replace the Planning Commission in 2015. As a think tank, it was intended to enhance cooperative federalism, evidence-based policymaking, and strategic economic planning. NITI Aayog has played a significant role in some of the major policy decisions on infrastructure, innovation, sustainable development, and social welfare over the last decade. However, controversies still exist regarding its efficiency, considering that it does not have financial powers and faces issues with implementation.

Objectives of NITI Aayog

Encouraging Cooperative Federalism: In contrast to the centralised method of the Planning Commission, NITI Aayog stresses state involvement in policymaking by institutions such as the Governing Council and Sub-Groups of Chief Ministers.

Strategic and Long-Term Policy Planning: It develops long-term policies like Vision @2047 and India@75 (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav) to harmonise national development priorities with international trends.

Encouraging Competitive Federalism: It ranks states on different indices, including the Ease of Doing Business, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index, and Health Index, to promote performance-oriented governance.

Driving Innovation and Digital Transformation: NITI Aayog leads initiatives such as the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), Artificial Intelligence Strategy, and Digital India initiatives to promote technological development.

Monitoring Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): It monitors India's performance on SDGs and offers policy suggestions for sustainable and inclusive growth.

Facilitating Public-Private Partnerships: It helps to promote private sector participation in priority sectors such as infrastructure, education, and healthcare to complement government initiatives.

Achievements of NITI Aayog in the Last 10 Years

Building Federalism and Development Program: NITI Aayog has ensured enhanced inter-centre-state coordination on platforms such as the Governing Council and the Chief Minister's Sub-Groups. Initiatives such as the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) have resulted in significant improvements in healthcare, education, and infrastructure in underdeveloped districts. Competitive federalism has also been encouraged through rankings such as the SDG India Index, Health Index, and Export Preparedness Index, wherein states are pushed to adopt governance best practices.

Encouraging Innovation and Startups: The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), initiated under NITI Aayog, has greatly enhanced India's startup ecosystem, and India is now the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world. Over 10,000 Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) have been established to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship among students. NITI Aayog has also been instrumental in formulating India's Artificial Intelligence (AI) strategy, making the country a leader in emerging technologies.

Driving Green Energy and Sustainable Development: NITI Aayog has led the charge in developing India's renewable energy policies on solar power, hydrogen fuel, and electric vehicles. It was also responsible for developing India's Net Zero emission target for 2070, making sustainable industrial and environmental policies. It also monitors India's SDG progress and incorporates climate change mitigation into the policy framework.

Economic and Infrastructure Planning: The PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, which was rolled out with the inputs of NITI Aayog, seeks to transform multi-modal connectivity and enhance logistics efficiency. It has also played its role in infrastructure expansion, providing emphasis on areas like roads, railways, and urbanisation. The provision of data-driven insights has made an impact on crucial economic policies like the Digital India program, the Make in India program, etc.

Social Welfare and Health Initiatives: In the social sector, NITI Aayog has assisted in framing Poshan Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission) to combat malnutrition and stunting of children. Further, it has been engaged in healthcare transformation, launching the Health Index to measure state-wise performance of public health delivery. The organisation has also contributed to Ayushman Bharat, the largest universal health insurance scheme in India, providing improved access to healthcare.

Weaknesses of NITI Aayog

Absence of Financial and Legislative Powers: In contrast to the Planning Commission, which had the power to allocate finances, NITI Aayog is an advisory body only. This restricts it from direct policy implementation or ensuring that recommendations are adopted by the states. The lack of financial powers also diminishes its role in influencing fiscal planning and resource allocation.

Lax Implementation of Recommendations: Most policy suggestions proposed by NITI Aayog have not been implemented because they lack legally binding power. State governments tend to overlook or procrastinate, particularly when political agendas conflict. The Aspirational Districts Programme, though successful, continues to experience implementation issues owing to bureaucratic inefficiencies at the local level.

Limited Role in Economic Recovery and Crisis Management: While major crises such as COVID-19 and economic recessions, NITI Aayog would have been in a position of greater influence regarding economic revival and fiscal strategy. Yet, owing to its narrow powers, finance decisions were made in the purview of the Finance Ministry and RBI, and it was more of a recommendatory organisation than an implementary one.

Constraints in Redressing Social Inequalities: Even with several policy efforts, income inequality, regional disparities, and rural distress continue to be serious issues. While NITI Aayog is emphasising long-term growth policies, pressing issues like rural jobs, farmer distress, and gender imbalance have not been dealt with effectively through tangible policy intervention.

Lack of Effective Monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Though NITI Aayog monitors SDG progress via its SDG India Index, India's global SDG ranking is below potential. Disparities in real-time data gathering and implementation of environmental policy indicate shortcomings in the monitoring mechanism, necessitating improved coordination with states and municipalities.

Strengthening NITI Aayog for the Future

Increasing Financial and Legislative Powers: For NITI Aayog to be more effective, it needs to play a larger role in budgetary allocations or at least have a voice in the distribution of funds based on performance indicators. Granting it more legislative support would help ensure that states implement policy suggestions more effectively.

State-Level Implementation Strengthening: To fill the gap between policymaking and implementation, NITI Aayog must create regional offices that directly interact with state governments. This would enable real-time policy monitoring and correction where necessary.

Prioritising Inclusive Growth and Social Welfare: A renewed focus on poverty reduction, generation of employment opportunities, and health sector reforms is needed. Welfare schemes should reach marginalised sections effectively, with NITI Aayog closely interacting with ministries.

Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and Data-Driven Governance:

By promoting private sector involvement, especially in healthcare, education, and infrastructure, NITI Aayog can ensure policies are effective and technology-oriented. Moreover, by utilising Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, and Blockchain for policy monitoring and evaluation, governance efficiency can be enhanced.

Ensuring Grievances Response Mechanisms are Strengthened: NITI Aayog should play a more active role in the management of economic crises, including pandemic response, food security planning, and disaster management. Having a special Crisis Response Unit at NITI Aayog would enable India to prepare itself better for impending global and national challenges.

Conclusion

NITI Aayog, in the last 10 years, has played a role in structuring India's economy, society, and technology landscape. Its thrust on cooperative federalism, data-driven policy formulation, and innovative thinking has given a boost to governance. However, its financial powerlessness, weak implementation culture, and curtailed role in crisis management have circumscribed its functionality. Consolidation of its functioning in implementation, monitoring, and state-level coordination will be imperative to transform it into a strong institution for the long-term progress of India.

Q.12 Answer**Approach:****Introduction:**

Introduce by describing what the delimitation is and mentioning the nature of the Delimitation Commission.

Body:

In the first part, mention about the delimitation commission and the constitutional article related to it. Describe the composition of the commission.

In the second part, discuss why the southern states raise concerns regarding the upcoming delimitation. Suggest some measures regarding this.

Conclusion:

Conclude on a positive note by suggesting some innovative ways.

Introduction

Delimitation is redrawing parliamentary and state assembly constituency boundaries to ensure fair representation. The Delimitation Commission, a constitutional body, undertakes this task based on Census data to maintain electoral equity. However, states that have low growth rates are worried about losing representation, particularly after 2026.

What is the Delimitation Commission?

The Delimitation Commission takes its powers under Article 82 in the case of parliamentary constituencies and Article 170 in the case of state assemblies. Parliament passes a Delimitation Act after each Census, and the Commission is formed to delimit the constituency boundaries. The 42nd Amendment of 1976 froze delimitation till 2001, which was later extended by the 84th Amendment of 2001 until 2026 to avoid disincentivising states for having effective population control.

Composition of Delimitation Commission: The members of the Commission are retired Supreme Court judges, the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), and State Election Commissioners. It maintains that constituencies should be of equal population and allocate seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) according to population distribution. Its suggestions are mandatory and cannot be appealed in court, facilitating speedy implementation.

Why Do Southern States Raise Concerns?

Population-Based Representation Issue: The southern states are apprehensive that if delimitation is done after 2026 based on population, their share in the parliament will decrease. They have successfully enacted family planning schemes, resulting in lower birth rates, whereas northern states such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have more population growth. Thus, delimitation based on population alone would reallocate more Lok Sabha seats in favour of the northern states, leaving the south with less political power.

Disproportionate Resource Allocation: A reduction in seats would also affect resource distribution through the Finance Commission, which allocates central funds partially based on state representation. Though contributing more to tax revenues and economic production, Southern states might get lower financial allocations. This would generate an imbalance wherein the North enjoys greater representation with lower per capita contributions to GDP.

Federal Imbalance: Another key issue is the weakening of federalism since more seats for the North would shift national policymaking in their direction. This might result in national policies contrary to the southern states' developmental agendas. Political marginalisation is a threat since fewer MPs mean a less powerful voice in parliament, impacting policy advocacy in their regions.

Political Representation Concern: The number of Lok Sabha seats allocated to a state affects policy priorities at the national level. A reduction in seats for the south could lead to marginalisation of their interests in the national political discourse.

How Can India Fix This Issue?

Decoupling parliamentary representation: One possible solution is decoupling parliamentary representation from population growth by incorporating economic contributions, governance quality, and development indicators in seat allocation. This would ensure that states with better social policies are not penalised for controlling their population. Countries like Germany follow a mixed representation model, balancing population with other factors in seat distribution.

Weighted model of representation: A weighted model of representation is also possible, where MPs from less populated states receive more voting weight to balance things out. The United States Senate is a good example, where all states are equally represented, irrespective of size, to avoid domination by sizeable states. The same system in India would eliminate the political marginalisation of the southern states.

Strengthening the role of Rajya Sabha: Another method is to make the role of the Rajya Sabha stronger by giving it more power in policymaking. If Lok Sabha representation is imbalanced towards populous states, a more powerful Rajya Sabha with equal representation of states can correct this imbalance. Nations such as Canada adopt this system, where smaller provinces remain politically relevant despite lower numbers.

Economic incentives to the state: Offering economic incentives to the states that had managed their population effectively can also offset the effect of delimitation. The Finance Commission should ensure that economic contributions and development are critical factors while distributing funds so that states do not suffer from the lack of resources due to decreased representation. Gradual implementation and consensus from all parties involved could also be the solution, avoiding sudden changes in political power.

Relevant Case Laws

In *Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India* (2006), the Supreme Court upheld parliamentary sovereignty in matters of representation and the federal structure. This precedent underscores parliament's authority to devise a fair representation system.

Similarly, in *Indira Sawhney v. Union of India* (1992), the court addressed concerns about equitable representation, which can be extended to parliamentary seat distribution to ensure fairness.

Conclusion

Delimitation is essential to ensure electoral fairness, but it should be done without compromising federalism. Southern states' apprehensions of curtailed representation need to be met through constitutional protection, weighted voting, monetary incentives, and other representation models. An equilibrium policy rewarding efficiency in governance while maintaining democratic justice is central to India's federal integrity.

13. Answer**Introduction**

In order to promote regional cooperation among the various South Asian nations, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation or SAARC was established in 1985. However political tensions and a lack of integration have always limited SAARC's progress. Putting his face aside India has been moving toward other regional organizations in recent years such as ASEAN and BIMSTEC. These modifications raise issues about standing of SAARC as well as its role in regional strategy of India.

Body**Challenges Facing SAARC**

Regular conflicts between India and Pakistan have obstructed initiatives of SAARC leading to stalled summits and unimplemented agreements.

Despite the South Asian Free Trade Area agreement intra-regional trade remains low due to non-tariff barriers and infrastructural deficits.

Consensus based decision making process of SAARC often results in gridlocks impeding timely and effective action.

Engagement with BIMSTEC and ASEAN

India's involvement in BIMSTEC aligns with its Act East policy aiming to enhance connectivity and cooperation with Southeast Asian countries. BIMSTEC focuses on sectors like trade, technology, energy and counter-terrorism offering a pragmatic platform for regional collaboration. India's partnership with ASEAN has strengthened through initiatives like the ASEAN India Free Trade Area and participation in regional forums such as the East Asia Summit. This engagement facilitates economic integration and geopolitical influence in the Indo-Pacific region.

Implications for the Future of SAARC

India's shift toward ASEAN and BIMSTEC points to a strategic realignment that might marginalize SAARC. Nonetheless if reforms are implemented SAARC still has the potential to foster regional cooperation due to its distinctive membership of South Asian countries.

Suggestions for SAARC Revival

Member states should communicate to settle disputes especially between India and Pakistan in order to foster an atmosphere that is favorable to collaboration. Intraregional trade can be strengthened by putting policies in place to lower trade barriers and increase connectivity.

SAARC's efficacy might be increased by moving away from rigid consensus based decision making and toward a more flexible strategy.

Conclusion

While increased focus on BIMSTEC and ASEAN reflects a pragmatic approach to regional cooperation SAARC's future depends on addressing internal challenges and adapting to the evolving geopolitical landscape. Revitalizing SAARC requires collective political will, economic initiatives and institutional reforms to realize its foundational vision of regional integration and prosperity.

14. Answer**Approach:**

Introduction: Briefly introduce by mentioning the present judge's appointment system and how it has evolved over time.

Body: Analyse the strengths (judicial independence, stability and continuity, etc.) and weaknesses (lack of transparency, uncle judge syndrome, lack of Executive and Legislative Supervision, etc.).

Mention how transparency can be increased through the proposed reforms.

Conclusion: In conclusion, give suggestions for creating a robust judicial appointing system which can balance between transparency, quality and judicial independence.

Introduction

The selection of judges in India is presently regulated by the Collegium System which developed through judicial decisions instead of clear constitutional provisions. Although it provides judicial independence, it has been faulted for being secretive, non-accountable and non-diverse. With these issues in mind, the system needs to be reformed to enhance transparency, meritocracy and institutional effectiveness while preserving judicial independence. Various alternatives such as a National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) have been mooted to meet these deficiencies.

Strengths of the Collegium System

Guarantees Judicial Independence

The greatest advantage of the Collegium system is that it keeps judicial appointments independent of executive and political influence, thereby avoiding political and executive interference in the judiciary. This idea was further solidified in the Second Judges Case (1993) and the Third Judges Case (1998) in which the Supreme Court held that the appointment of judges was in the jurisdiction of the judiciary. By avoiding political interference, the system avoids judicial integrity being tainted and judges being influenced by politics in delivering judgments.

Institutional Capability in Selection

As the appointments are made by senior judges, the process is informed by their experience and expertise regarding the requirements of the judiciary. Judges are better placed than politicians to evaluate the legal talent, integrity and temperament of potential candidates. This data ensures high professional standards for judicial appointments because the decisions are being taken by people who have a day-to-day understanding of the functioning of the courts.

Stability and Continuity

The Collegium system has ensured a steady mechanism of judicial appointments during the last three decades, avoiding frequent policy changes. Confining the process within the judiciary has ensured that the appointments are immune to political whims or governmental changes. This steadiness is most important in keeping the institution whole so that judicial activities are not influenced by political changes.

Weaknesses of the Collegium System

Loss of Transparency

The strongest criticism of the Collegium system is the lack of transparency in decision-making where the judges are appointed on the basis of unknown criteria. No reasons for rejection or acceptance are on record which leaves the process open to nepotism and personal bias. Justice J. Chelameswar's dissent in the NJAC case (2015) criticised the Collegium system's secrecy holding that public trust in the judiciary can only be established through a transparent process.

Lack of Merit-Based Selection

The lack of a merit-based system of assessment for the appointment of judges has led to nepotism and favouritism whereby persons are appointed on the basis of acquaintance and not merit. The system is blamed for fostering judicial dynasties where judges appoint people from their social circles of lawyers rather than the best qualified. In the absence of a formal evaluation of qualifications, legal ability and ethical standing, the system fails to ensure a meritocratic process of appointment.

Lack of Executive and Legislative Supervision

Unlike other democracies in which judiciary appointments are brought for legislative scrutiny, India's system vests exclusive autonomy in the judiciary with absolutely no external controls. In America, Supreme Court judges are nominated by the President and approved by the Senate to ensure democratic accountability. In India, the lack of such accountability means that the judiciary is both nominating and approving authority thus causing problems of institutional insularity and lack of external accountability.

Diversity Deficit in Appointments

The Collegium method has not been serious about taking gender, caste, and regional concerns into consideration while appointing judges. Only 4 of the 34 judges of the Supreme Court are women, and that is an indication of it not being very inclusive. Neither are Dalits and Adivasis well represented. A judiciary

that is unrepresentative of the country's plural social tissue can alienate large sections of society and also not be able to deliver justice that is genuinely equitable.

Delayed Appointments in Courts

The primary drawback of the Collegium system is that there is no time limit for appointments, and this leads to vacancies and pendency in the judiciary. There are over 600 vacant posts of High Court judges as of 2024, leading to a pendency of nearly 60 lakh cases. Delays in appointments are hampering the smooth working of the judiciary, leading to delays in the delivery of justice and overburdening existing judges.

Possible Reforms:

Creation of a Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC)

Substituting the Collegium with an equally weighted JAC with members from the judiciary, executive, legal fraternity, and civil society can enhance transparency and accountability in appointments. The UK system is also similar, where the JAC appoints judges solely on their merit and experience, irrespective of others, to reduce favouritism. Adopted in India, the system can ensure democratic checks and balances and judicial independence. It needs to be well crafted to reduce political interference, as in the NJAC case (2015), which was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court for encroaching on judicial autonomy.

Coding the Selection Criteria for Objectivity

A codified and transparent system of judicial appointments would prevent arbitrary choice. This could be done on the basis of quantifiable factors like judicial experience, legal acumen, integrity, and previous judgments to ensure that appointments are merit-based. By institutionalising the process and making it objective, India can ensure that the best of the best become part of the higher judiciary.

Having Transparency in the Selection Process

A more open selection process would include the release of reasons for selection or rejection and recommendations, as the U.S. Senate publicly questions Supreme Court nominees. This would minimise favouritism concerns and enhance public confidence in the judiciary. While full disclosure is not always feasible, providing minimal reasons for appointments would render the system more accountable.

Ensuring Increased Diversity of Appointments

Reforms must positively ensure the inclusion of women, minorities, and first-generation lawyers in the judiciary to make the judiciary reflect the social diversity of India. Affirmative action programs or quotas in the appointment of judges could be a step in bridging the gap. By ensuring representative inclusion, the judiciary can enhance its legitimacy and ability to deliver inclusive justice.

Enhancing a Time-Limited Scheduling System: Implementing a compulsory timeline for the selection of judges – e.g., finishing the process within 90 to 120 days – would fill court vacancies. Legal timelines for the judiciary and government to act on recommendations would prevent delays. A specified timeline would fill vacancies on time, preventing case backlogs and improving judicial efficiency.

Conclusion

Although the Collegium system has worked well in safeguarding judicial independence, its transparency, merit-based assessment, and lack of diversity must be urgently reformed. Implementation of a Judicial Appointments Commission with transparency, well-defined selection criteria, and a well-defined time frame for appointments can build a more accountable, diverse, and meritocratic system. Any reform, however, must maintain judicial independence while avoiding political interference in the judiciary, thus strengthening the rule of law in India.

15. Answer**Approach:****Introduction:**

In the Introduction, briefly mention how homosexual individuals suffer in the society. Highlight the decriminalisation of section 377 of IPC in one line.

Body:

Discuss the social and legal problems faced by homosexual individuals in heterosexual marriages. Analyse the impact of the Decriminalization of Section 377 on these issues. Mention other legal reforms needed for this.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, suggest what more needs to be done as only decriminalization of section 377 of the IPC alone cannot safeguard their rights.

Introduction

India's heteronormative social structure and legal prohibitions have long pushed many homosexual individuals into heterosexual marriages due to family coercion, societal expectations, and a lack of legal sanction for same-sex marriages. The decriminalisation of Section 377 of the IPC (Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India, 2018) was a landmark judgment that decriminalised homosexuality, but it left untouched the structural and legal issues of homosexuals trapped in heterosexual marriages. Such individuals typically endure mental distress, legal issues, and lack of freedom, and therefore, there is a need for further reforms.

Social Problems Facing Homosexuals in Heterosexual Marriages**Social Media and Family Pressure**

Indian marriage is considered to be a social obligation rather than a personal choice, with high cultural and familial pressure to marry and have children. Homosexuals are forced to marry heterosexually in order to fulfil traditional gender expectations and family line continuation. The family's disapproval of homosexuality forces individuals to suppress their sexual orientation, leading to emotional maladjustment, repression of identity, and marital disharmony.

Emotional and Psychological Distress

Homosexuals in heterosexual unions suffer from mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, and identity crises due to living a life that does not reflect their sexual orientation. Fear of rejection by society, disapproval from family, and legal consequences make them afraid of seeking help or being themselves. The majority of them remain in dissatisfying and emotionally draining marriages to avoid dishonour or family revenge.

Stigma and Inadequate Support Systems

India lacks formal support mechanisms for individuals who face sexual identity issues in marriage. Because of the social stigma against LGBTQ+ members, they are refused legal recourse as well as psychological counselling. Divorce, further, is extremely stigmatised, especially for women, such that it becomes even more difficult for homosexual members—especially lesbians in straight marriages—to exit such marriages.

Legal Problems Faced by Homosexuals in Straight Marriages**No Basis in Law for Annulment on Sexual Orientation**

While Indian marriage acts (Hindu Marriage Act, 1955; Special Marriage Act, 1954) do not provide a spouse with a right to annul a marriage on sexual incompatibility or homosexuality grounds, the majority of homosexuals are forced to continue unhappy marriages or face long judicial battles for divorce on weak bases like "mental cruelty" or "irretrievable breakdown of marriage."

Complex Divorce Processes

The majority of gay men in heterosexual marriages desire divorce as a way of reclaiming their identity, but Indian divorce law makes this difficult, especially when the other partner is not in agreement. Mutual

consent divorce under the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 has a six-month waiting period, which prolongs the suffering. Contested divorces also involve long legal wars, social stigma, and economic hardship, which disproportionately affect women who are not economically independent.

Custody Battle and Parental Rights Issues

When a gay parent of a straight marriage gives birth, custody battles become entangled. The court system and society's biases typically work against LGBTQ+ parents, with courts inclined towards the straight spouse in custody battles. Homophobia in court reasoning could lead to the assumption that a gay parent may not be capable of providing a "normal upbringing" and thereby lead to unfair custody decisions.

Danger of Prosecution Under Laws of Adultery

Even though adultery was decriminalised in *Joseph Shine v. Union of India* (2018), it is still a civil wrong under personal laws. If a homosexual person engages in a same-sex relationship while being in a heterosexual marriage, he/she can be held liable for civil penalties, such as grounds for divorce and allegations of "marital misconduct." This puts homosexual individuals facing obstacles in seeking consensual same-sex relationships outside coercive marriages.

Impact of Decriminalization of Section 377

Heightened Awareness and Visibility of LGBTQ+

The Navtej Singh Johar judgment in 2018 was in the right direction of accepting LGBTQ+ rights, which sparked additional social discussion of homosexuality. Many individuals have gained the strength to come out and refuse coercive heterosexual marriages. Legal and social barriers, though, remain present, with same-sex marriage yet to be legally accepted in India.

Decriminalised but No Relief in Marriage

Even though homosexuality is not illegal anymore, it does not benefit the victims of heterosexual marriages. Homosexual individuals in heterosexual marriages cannot divorce based on their sexual orientation and have to resort to external legal grounds to release themselves from the marriages. The ruling also did not address marital rape, domestic violence, or forced conversion treatments, which some LGBTQ+ individuals in heterosexual marriages undergo.

Not Recognizing Same-Sex Partnerships Legally

Decriminalisation was a significant step, but homosexual couples are not legally sanctioned in India. Without marriage, domestic partnership, or civil union, LGBTQ+ have no other legal institution with which they can form meaningful relationships in the event of divorce. The withholding of inheritance rights, adoption rights, and spousal benefits is another legal manifestation of discrimination against LGBTQ+.

Legislative Reforms to Check Such Problems

Implementing Annulment Provisions on Sexual Orientation

Indian marriage laws must be amended to allow homosexual couples to have their heterosexual marriages dissolved on the basis of sexual incompatibility. This would provide a clean and dignified legal exit to those who have been coerced into marriages without unnecessary court proceedings and social stigma associated with divorce.

Identifying Same-Sex Marriages or Civil Unions

Parliamentary sanction of homosexual marriages or civil unions would grant homosexual couples the same status as heterosexual couples, enabling them to legally remarry after they have escaped forced heterosexual marriages. There are countries such as the U.K. and Canada that have civil partnership acts that grant legal and financial protection to homosexual couples, which can be adopted by India.

Making Divorce Laws More Accessible and Gender-Sensitive

Current divorce laws need to be amended to accelerate divorce for individuals in incompatible marriages due to sexual orientation. There also needs to be economic and psychological support for lesbians and other oppressed LGBTQ+ individuals who become economically disadvantaged after divorce from their marriages.

Ensuring LGBTQ+ Parental Rights in Custody Proceedings

Indian family laws should explicitly prohibit discrimination against LGBTQ+ parents in custody cases. The courts should consider a parent's overall capacity and not sexual orientation while deciding on custody so that children are not unnecessarily removed from loving LGBTQ+ parents.

Strengthening the Safeguarding of LGBTQ+ Individuals from Spousal Violence

LGBTQ+ individuals in heteronormative marriages are expected to face physical, psychological, or emotional violence due to their sexual orientation. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, and accompanying laws must introduce some provisions in order to provide protection to LGBTQ+ individuals against coercive heterosexual marriages, conversion therapies, and family coercion.

Conclusion

Decriminalisation of Section 377 was a giant step, but it has not rectified the legal and social issues of homosexual persons in heterosexual marriages. Most of them still suffer from emotional trauma, legal issues, and social isolation due to a lack of legal recognition of homosexual relationships and sexual orientation-based annulment provisions. India has to progress towards all-encompassing LGBTQ+ legal reforms, such as marriage equality, right to annulment, and gender-sensitive divorce laws, to provide homosexual persons with the freedom, dignity, and legal protection they need to live their lives freely.