

GS SCORE



UPSC Mains 2017

Model Hints

GENERAL STUDIES

Paper - 2

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Model Hints

UPSC MAINS 2017

GS PAPER - 2

Time Allowed: 3 hr.

Max. Marks: 250

1. "The local self-government system in India has not proved to be effective instrument of governance." Critically examine the statement and give your view to improve the situation.
(Answer in 150 words)
2. Critically examine the Supreme Court's judgement on 'National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014' with reference to appointment of judges of higher judiciary in India.
(Answer in 150 words)
3. "Simultaneous election to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies will limit the amount of time and money spent in electioneering but it will reduce the government's accountability to the people." Discuss.
(Answer in 150 words)
4. How do pressure groups influence Indian political process? Do you agree with this view that informal pressure groups have emerged as more powerful than formal pressure groups in recent years?
(Answer in 150 words)
5. Discuss the role of Public Accounts Committee in establishing accountability of the government to the people.
(Answer in 150 words)
6. "To ensure effective implementation of policies addressing water, sanitation and hygiene needs the identification of the beneficiary segments is to be synchronized with the anticipated outcomes." Examine the statement in the context of the WASH scheme.
(Answer in 150 words)
7. Does the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ensure effective mechanism for empowerment and inclusion of the intended beneficiaries in the society? Discuss.
(Answer in 150 words)
8. Hunger and poverty are the bigger challenges for good governance in India still today. Evaluate how far successive governments have progressed in dealing with these humongous problems. Suggest measures for improvement.
(Answer in 150 words)
9. "China is using its economic relations and positive trade surplus as tools to develop potential military power status in Asia." In the light of this statement, discuss its impact on India as her neighbour.
(Answer in 150 words)
10. What are the main functions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)? Explain different functional commissions attached to it.
(Answer in 150 words) 5 + 5
11. Explain the salient features of the Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016. Do you think it is efficacious enough "to remove cascading effect of taxes and provide for common national market for goods and services"?
(Answer in 250 words)
12. Examine the scope of Fundamental Rights in the light of the latest judgement of the Supreme Court on Right to Privacy.
(Answer in 250 words)

13. The Indian Constitution has provisions for holding joint session of the two Houses of the Parliament. Enumerate the occasions when this would normally happen and also the occasions when it cannot, with reason thereof. **(Answer in 250 words)**
14. To enhance the quality of democracy in India the Election Commission of India has proposed electoral reforms in 2016. What are the suggested reforms and how far are they significant to make democracy successful? **(Answer in 250 words)**
15. Is the National Commission for Women able to strategize and tackle the problems that women face at both public and private spheres? Give reasons in support of your answer. **(Answer in 250 words)**
16. "The emergence of the Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in contemporary times points to the show but steady withdrawal of the State from developmental activities." Examine the role of the SHGs in developmental activities and the measures taken by the Government of India to promote the SHGs. **(Answer in 250 words)**
17. "Poverty alleviation programmes in India remain more showpieces until and unless they are backed up by political will." Discuss with reference to the performance of the major poverty alleviation programmes in India. **(Answer in 250 words)**
18. Initially Civil Services in India were designed to achieve the goals of neutrality and effectiveness, which seems to be lacking in the present context. Do you agree with the view that drastic reforms are required in Civil Services? Comment. **(Answer in 250 words)**
19. The question of India's Energy Security constitutes the most important part of India's economic progress. Analyze India's energy policy cooperation with West Asian countries. **(Answer in 250 words)**
20. Indian diaspora has an important role to play in South-East Asian countries' economy and society. Appraise the role of Indian diaspora in South-East Asia in this context. **(Answer in 250 words)**



UPSC MAIN EXAMINATION

(GENERAL STUDIES PAPER - 2)

HINTS

1. *"The local self-government system in India has not proved to be effective instrument of governance." Critically examine the statement and give your view to improve the situation.*

Hints:

The local self-government was implemented by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Acts in 1992 where they were envisaged as the effective instruments of governance.

They have not lived up to this expectation, because:

- Function- Only 8 state governments and 1 Union territory have transferred all 29 functions to PRIs.
- Functions- Only 6 states have devolved matching amount of funds to local governments. They don't have lucrative taxable income.
- Functionary- they can appoint only lower level ad- hoc functionaries thereby depending entirely upon the state government for functionaries.
- They are regarded as subordinate departments by state governments.
- Lack of political will
- Lack of adequate support by Central government to make them viable.
- Lack of awareness in citizens
- Conflict of interest with regard to district administration as in some states, developmental functions are taken by District Magistrate. E.g.- MPLAD Scheme.
- Increase in corruption

However, there are some success stories too-

- They have created huge number of political leaders at grass- root level. E.g., Vilas Rao Deshmukh. This has increased the political socialization.
- Local government in Karnataka led to decrease in power theft and non- transfer of payments. They also trained people to save power.
- Vellamuda Panchayat in Wayanad district worked towards universal enrolment of children in school and increasing the quality of education.

Suggestions to improve their functioning-

- Providing them adequate function, finance and functionary.
- Increase in the participation of private sector and civil society.
- Activity mapping must be made compulsory in all states.

- Increase in the participation of people in decision making in local bodies.
- Inculcating best practices from different regions.
- Social audit to be made compulsory for all developmental activities.
- Delineating the duties and rights of local bodies.
- Representation from all sections of society especially the vulnerable section.

Only a broad-based participative and democratic local government can tread us to the path of sustainable development.

2. *Critically examine the Supreme Court's judgement on 'National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014' with reference to appointment of judges of higher judiciary in India.*

Hints:

The National Judicial Appointment Commission Act sought to replace the collegium system for appointment of higher judges and give civil society and executive to have a say in their appointment.

The Supreme Court strike it down as unconstitutional as it was violative of judicial independence.

Pros of the decision:

- It is in tune with the doctrine of Separation of Powers.
- The judicial independence is the part of the basic structure of the Constitution and should not be tampered with.
- It would lead to interference of executive in appointment of judges leading to biasness in judiciary.
- It led to the violation of Article 124 and 217 concerning the appointment of judges in Supreme Court and High Court.

Cons of the decision are:

- The collegium system is opaque in its functioning and is accused to be biased and full of nepotism.
- NJAC act would have led to more transparency and accountability in judiciary.
- It aimed to implement the doctrine of checks and balances.
- The huge number of vacancies is also a shortcoming of collegium system. E.g.- 469 vacancies in SC and HC

Recently, the SC came out with reforms in collegium system wherein the process will be digitalized under CJI Deepak Mishra. The memorandum of Procedure is also an improvement over collegium system having representation from both judiciary and govt. We need to implement these reforms expeditiously so as to decrease the 30 million pending cases in courts.

3. *"Simultaneous election to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies will limit the amount of time and money spent in electioneering but it will reduce the government's accountability to the people." Discuss.*

Hints:

The Prime Minister has recently emphasised on simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.

Pros:

- Governance- It takes a back seat during elections. Simultaneous elections allow govt to devote four years to governance.
- It results in logjam in legislative work as every party wants to be in spot light at the time of elections.
- Frequent elections hamper stability in the region.

- The exchequer spends a lot of money in conducting elections every year which can then be utilised in developmental works elsewhere.
- The central forces are deployed for conducting elections. Simultaneous elections would ensure their better utilisation for nation's security.
- No new schemes can be introduced during Model code of conduct. This hampers the economic development.
- The simultaneous election once in five years provides stability to the governments. It allows the government to take difficult and harsh decision in larger public interest.
- It also happens in Germany, South Africa and Sweden.
- It has been recommended by Law Commission (170th Report) as well as Parliamentary Standing Committee.

But, it will reduce the accountability to the people as-

- Frequent elections keep government on their toes.
- It is usually seen that the ministers visit their constituencies only during elections.
- This keeps politicians in touch with the pulse of public and the result of various elections may lead to course correction by the govt.
- Usually the result is also tied to the approval of govt policy. E.g.- UP elections tied to demonetisation move by govt.
- They keep the national issues separated from the regional issues thus imparting clarity in the minds of voters.
- Simultaneous elections may reduce the importance of state elections. Thus, it affects the concept of federalism.
- Simultaneous elections with fixed tenure of five years curtail people's right to express their confidence or displeasure on the government.

The other issues with simultaneous elections are the implementation and logistical issues.

However, in light of the huge time and money saved, the government should go for simultaneous elections providing suitable alternative mechanisms for accountability to people.

4. *How do pressure groups influence Indian political process? Do you agree with this view that informal pressure groups have emerged as more powerful than formal pressure groups in recent years?*

Hints:

A pressure group refers to any interest group that has members with common interests and these members making joint efforts to pressurize the formal political system to pursue their interests. They are sometimes known as informal face of the politics.

Methods of exerting influence:

- There are a variety of ways via which the pressure groups could exert political influence. These include:
- Ministers and Governments consult groups for a variety of reasons.
 - Major economic, industrial and trade policies are developed with the consultation of major corporations, trade associations and business groups.
 - To gain the cooperation of important groups.
 - To gauge the reaction of the affected groups to proposed policies.
- Parliamentary Lobbying: Parliamentary lobbying is to supplement contacts with ministers and officers via

members of parliament in influencing the policy through private members bills, parliamentary questions and select committee enquiries.

- **Political parties:** Links with a political party help in influencing the policy decisions when that party is in power. One of the major ways to influence the parties is funding and donations.
- **Public opinion:** Pressure group indirectly influence the policy decision by public-opinion campaigning via pushing issues up the political agenda and demonstrating both the strength of commitment and the level of public support for a particular cause.
- **Direct action:** Strikes, blockades, boycotts and sit-ins are all examples of direct action. Direct action may be violent or non-violent. Non-violent direct action sometimes takes the form of civil disobedience.
- **Electioneering:** Placing in public office persons who favor their interests.

Formal pressure groups like FICCI, civil society organizations and even political parties have played significant role in public interest like RTI act and RTE act was due to influence of formal pressure groups. The widening of access points: Devolution has allowed pressure groups to exert influence through the Parliament.

Conventional Pressure Groups (PGs) based on caste, community, religion-based & regional groupings are playing decisive role in Indian polity.

- Informal pressure groups have been more powerful, as they are characterized by greater political activism and the spread of grass roots participation, so there is a mass appeal to it.
- There are some groups that keep on emerging & dissolving as per circumstances or for specific purpose. e.g. anti-dowry, anti-sati, etc.
- Sometimes they have biased interests limited to few members. Most of these groups do not have autonomous existence, so they are unstable and lack commitment, their loyalties shift with political situations which threatens general welfare.
- They many a times resort to un-constitutional means like violence; Naxalite movement started in 1967 in West Bengal is one such example.

5. *Discuss the role of Public Accounts Committee in establishing accountability of the government to the people.*

Hints:

The Public Accounts Committee was set up in 1929 by Montague- Chelmsford Reforms and is called as the Mother of all Committees.

It consists of 22 members- 15 from Lok Sabha and 7 from Rajya Sabha who are elected by Parliament. No minister can become its member.

It establishes the accountability to the people as:

- Its main function is to examine the appropriation accounts and the finance accounts of the union government and any other accounts laid before the Lok Sabha.
- It examines public expenditure not only from legal and formal point of view to discover technical irregularities but also from the point of view of economy, prudence, wisdom and propriety to bring out the cases of waste, loss, corruption, extravagance, inefficiency and nugatory expenses
- It examines the accounts of state corporations, trading concerns and manufacturing projects and the audit report of CAG on them and accounts of autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies.
- CAG works as the mentor, friend, philosopher and guide of PAC.
- It also examines money spent on any service during the financial year in excess of the amount granted by the Lok Sabha for that purpose.
- It can also make recommendations to streamline the administration for efficient, speedy and economical implementation of policy.

- It provides for Parliamentary oversight over Executive decisions and acts as a check on slackness, negligence and even wrongdoing on the part of the Executive.
- It has representation from nearly all political parties and the head is from opposition party making the democracy meaningful in nature.
- Thus, it increases the awareness of public and increases the answerability of govt.
- PAC unearthed 2G scam and recently summoned the head of RBI to speak on demonetization.

However, there are some challenges like its work is of post- mortem in nature and it suffers from lack of technical expertise. Its recommendations are not binding in nature. Measure should be taken to improvise and reform PAC adequately.

6. *"To ensure effective implementation of policies addressing water, sanitation and hygiene needs the identification of the beneficiary segments is to be synchronized with the anticipated outcomes." Examine the statement in the context of the WASH scheme.*

Hints:

WASH scheme:

- As transition from Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals is taking place water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) are taking policy center stage in most emerging and developing countries.
- WASH is the collective term for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene. Each is dependent on the presence of the other. For example, without toilets, water sources become contaminated; without clean water, basic hygiene practices are not possible.
- There are large disparities in access to WASH services across different segments of the population. In India, 128 million lack safe water services and about 840 million people don't have sanitation services.

How WASH accomplishes successful linking of beneficiaries with the outcomes?

- Within the WASH Results Programme, the suppliers have tended to define handwashing outputs in terms of the reach of handwashing promotion. They have defined outcomes in terms of:
 - knowledge of handwashing behaviour,
 - self-reported behaviour, and
 - the presence of handwashing facilities.
- Access to WASH, in particular safe water, adequate sanitation, and proper hygiene education, can reduce illness and death, and also impact poverty reduction and socio-economic development.
- In addition, lack of WASH facilities can prevent students from attending school, impose a burden on women and diminish productivity.
- The fact that WASH is the subject of dedicated targets within the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 6) is testament to its fundamental role in public health and therefore in the future of sustainable development.
- Improving access to WASH is both a development goal in its own right and a means of achieving other development benefits, particularly in health. WASH is also thought to contribute to school attendance, nutrition and gender equality.

Concerns:

- WASH policies formulated by State governments have low robustness as compared to that of national policies. Only 22 per cent of the WASH policies from India could be classified as highly robust,
- Sustainability is a particular challenge in the WASH sector. It has multiple dimensions, including technical, financial and institutional.

Suggestions:

- Contemporary thinking is that adoption of human life cycle for segmenting of beneficiaries can significantly help in improving the access to WASH services. To be able to achieve India's WASH targets, it is imperative that our policies straddle both the LCS and GSS approaches.
 - The robustness of policies can be enhanced if more and more policies can focus on identifying the barriers faced by the different segments in accessing WASH services. Better identification of barriers would also have a positive impact on subsequent downstream components such as formulation of strategies and outcomes.
 - Rather, to achieve nutrition goals countries must ensure they've got the right sectors and ministries involved, and that they're collaborating in the most effective ways.
 - These include: identifying entry points for integrated delivery (for example, behaviour change interventions targeting both WASH and nutrition)
 - strengthening institutional mechanisms to allow for greater knowledge transfer
 - understanding the barriers for cross-sectoral work and what incentives exist or can be created to improve the nutrition sensitivity of WASH programmes.
7. *Does the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ensure effective mechanism for empowerment and inclusion of the intended beneficiaries in the society? Discuss.*

Hints:

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities act-2016 was passed recently in the Parliament. The act replaced the PwD Act, 1995, which was enacted 21 years back. According to Census 2011, India is home to 26.8 million people with disabilities and that is a huge underestimation.

The salient features of the Bill are which ensure empowerment and inclusion are:

- Disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept.
- The types of disabilities have been increased from existing 7 to 21 and the Central Government will have the power to add more types of disabilities.
- Provision and extension of affirmative action
- Penalties for offences committed against persons with disabilities
- Rights based approach: The new Act empowers persons with disabilities (PwDs) with the right to equality, preservation of dignity and personal liberty. It also protects against discrimination.
- Education: Right to free education in a neighborhood school for children between 6-18 years with a benchmark disability
- Guardianship of mentally ill persons: provision of grant of limited guardianship by the District Court- a limited guardian will take joint decisions with the mentally ill person- affirmation of freedom of the mentally ill.

Social security

- The new Act widens the ambit of social security- provision for community centres with good standard of living, support to women for livelihood, free healthcare in the neighbourhood areas, cultural and sporting activities etc.
- In fact, the inclusion of acid-attack victims and people with learning disabilities, Parkinson's disease, blood disorders, speech and language disabilities (among others) under its ambit is a perfect example of the inclusive undertone sustained throughout the Act.
- Obligations under the new disability regime apply not only to government establishments but also to "private establishments".

Criticisms:

- They carry ambiguities that can be twisted and distorted to meet selfish interests.
- The goal of empowerment may well remain elusive and reliant on the interests of the persons without a disability.
- Many new appointments and the strengthening of offices, which have been promised in the Act, are also devoid of the aim of providing absolute justice.
- There also seems to be no authority that can try an accused or pass a verdict.
- The authority that the Act wields on the private sector is therefore, highly limited.

Therefore, The New Act will bring our law in line with the United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), to which India is a signatory. This will fulfill the obligations on the part of India in terms of UNCRD. Further, the new law will not only enhance the Rights and Entitlements of Divyangjan but also provide effective mechanism for ensuring their empowerment and true inclusion into the Society in a satisfactory manner.

8. *Hunger and poverty are the bigger challenges for good governance in India still today. Evaluate how far successive governments have progressed in dealing with these humongous problems. Suggest measures for improvement.*

Hints:

India is on track to become a global power. However, despite economic miracles, many Indians still live in abject poverty. According to the latest GHI, India, which ranks 100 out of 119 countries, is one of the countries with the "lowest reduction in hunger" in the nine years since the last index was calculated.

- According to UN report India is home to 23.4% of world's hungry.
- In India, undernutrition is the most common indicator of poverty, a fact government data acknowledges.

Schemes for reducing poverty and hunger:

In India, successive governments have adopted multiple strategies to tackle these problems, including distribution of free or subsidized food, provision of jobs under various schemes, Mid-day meal, etc.

- **ICDS:** it has made major strides in its implementation and has helped in reducing malnutrition amongst children aged between 0-3 years drastically. Also, by focusing on expectant mothers, this scheme has helped target the most ignored section bearing the brunt of this evil.
- **TDPS and PDS (Targeted Public Distribution system and Public Distribution System):** The PDS in India is one of the largest distribution system of its type across the globe. It ensures the availability of food at subsidized prices at the household level to the poor.
- In a comparative national study of 26,000 rural households on income, employment and household wellbeing found that MGNREGA had prevented 14 million people from falling into poverty that year, and reduced the number of people below the poverty line by between 25% and 32%.

Criticism:

- **Lack of coordination:** National Food Security Act which was passed in 2013 includes three schemes that can help with improving nutrition. The schemes are implemented by different departments of the government, each working in isolation from the other.
- **Ineffective strategy:** The approach for tackling hunger in urban areas is same as that of rural areas. Activists working on food security believe that India's policies for tackling hunger have largely remained focused on rural regions.
- At present there are no specific government interventions to address the issue of adult undernourishment.
- **lack of access to healthcare facilities:** Most rural areas don't have a child-specialist to treat children with severe and moderate malnutrition.

- Stunting: an outcome of poor nutrition in which a child is shorter for his or her age, has been found to adversely impact school performance
- Even in NREGA gram Sabha (village councils) have been unable to formulate effective programmes or enrol genuinely needy people.

Suggestions:

- Stable employment would help improve the well-being of both undernourished mother and her child. In rural areas too, scarcity of jobs has led to migration which makes families including children more vulnerable to hunger.
 - Outcomes can be improved through capacity enhancement and transparency at the local government level, and by targeting MGNREGA works towards creating productivity and income-enhancing community assets or, in special cases, assets on participants' lands.
 - Human resource capacity building is the key as is access to education and health services and empowering the poor through partnerships.
 - In particular, programmes must focus on women and girls. Longstanding discrimination against women and girls, which affects their access to food, sanitation, care, and health services, is a key driver of poor nutrition outcomes in India.
9. *"China is using its economic relations and positive trade surplus as tools to develop potential military power status in Asia." In the light of this statement, discuss its impact on India as her neighbour.*

Hints:

China has used its tremendous economic achievement in increasing its geo-political role around the world. It is using its Belt and Road initiative and Maritime Road Initiative along with a positive balance of trades to influence countries in their economic as well as political decisions.

Impact on India-

Geographic-

- The rising China is leading towards geographic and economic encirclement of India.
- China's presence in Djibouti nation, development of Chittagong port in Bangladesh, Kyaukpyu port in Myanmar, Hambantota port in Sri Lanka and Gwadar Port in Pakistan is leading towards a string of pearls encircling India from all sides.
- It is extending its boundaries in South China Sea (Senkaku islands in Japan) and thereby, restricting the right to navigation of all countries.
- The proposed BRI passes through Pakistan- dominated Kashmir challenging our sovereignty.

Economic-

- It is dumping a number of products in Indian market at ultra-low prices to hurt the indigenous industries.
- India suffers a huge trade deficit with China- around 51 billion dollars.
- China is funding a lot of infrastructural projects in Asia and Africa under its BRI initiative which may lead to subjugating their economy to Chinese economy that can further be used to harm India in future.

Strategic-

- The recent Doklam episode showed no initiative on the part of China for preventing a stand-off from escalating into a war.
- It vetoed the inclusion of Majhood Azhar in the list of international terrorists. This gives encouragement to the terror organisations posing security threat to India.
- Rising China is leading to decrease in the stature of India in its neighbourhood. The Nepal blockade put China in limelight whereas maligned India's relation with Nepal.

- The decision by International Court of Justice was not accepted by China. This is also a dangerous precedent for India.

Thus, India should work towards balancing China and improving its relations with all the nations. It should act vigorously on its frontier region development, military modernisation and regional economic integration etc to deal with rising China.

10. What are the main functions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)? Explain different functional commissions attached to it.

Hints:

United Nations ECOSOC is one of the six principle organs of UN having 54 members based on geographic representation. It is responsible for coordinating the economic, social, and related work of 15 UN specialised agencies, their functional commissions and five regional commissions.

Main functions are-

- It is the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues, as well as for implementation of the internationally agreed development goals.
- It serves as the central mechanism for the activities of the United Nations system and its specialized agencies, and supervises the subsidiary and expert bodies in the economic, social and environmental fields.
- It engages a wide variety of stakeholders - policymakers, parliamentarians, academics, major groups, foundations, business sector representatives and 3200+ NGOs - in a productive dialogue on sustainable development.
- Its annual high- level segment includes High Level Political Forum that provides political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development, and development Cooperation Forum that reviews trends and progress in development cooperation.

The different functional commissions attached to it are-

- **UN Commission for Social Development-** Its purpose is to advise ECOSOC on social policies of a general character and, in particular, on all matters in the social field not covered by the specialised inter-governmental agencies. It is also in charge of the follow up and implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.
- **UN Human Rights Council-** It is an intergovernmental body that addresses human rights-related situations in all UN member states. The UNHRC also addresses important thematic human rights issues such as freedom of association and assembly, freedom of expression, freedom of belief and religion, women's rights, LGBT rights, and the rights of racial and ethnic minorities.
- **Commission on Narcotic Drugs-** is the central drug policy-making body within the United Nations system.
- **UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development-** IT provides high-level advice on relevant issues through analysis and appropriate policy recommendations on science and technology.
- **Commission on Sustainable Development-** It is tasked with overseeing the outcomes of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development/Earth Summit.
- **UN Commission on the Status of Women-** It is a global intergovernmental body dedicated to promoting gender equality, and empowering women.
- **UN Statistical Commission-** It promotes the development of national statistics and the improvement of their comparability and coordinates the statistical work of specialized agencies.

11. Explain the salient features of the Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016. Do you think it is efficacious enough "to remove cascading effect of taxes and provide for common national market for goods and services"?

Hints:

The 101st Constitutional Amendment Act paved way for Goods and Service Tax in India which unified the nation in terms of indirect taxation.

Salient features of GST are:

- Single tax on supply of goods and services, right from the manufacturer to the consumer
- It is a destination based tax unlike the present taxation scheme which is origin based
- It is a value based tax as credits of input taxes paid at each stage will be available in the subsequent stages
- The final consumer will bear only the GST charged by the last dealer in the supply chain

At the central level, following taxes are being subsumed under GST.

- Central Excise Duty
- Additional Excise Duty
- Service Tax
- Countervailing Duty
- Special Additional Duty of Customs

At the state level, following taxes are being subsumed under GST:

- State VAT/Sales Tax
- Entertainment Tax
- Central Sales Tax
- Octroi and Entry Tax

Structure:

- There are two components of GST – Central GST and State GST. Both CGST and SGST will be simultaneously levied across the value chain, both on goods and services.
- The tax will not be levied on exempted goods (alcohol, petroleum and its products) and those transactions which are below the prescribed threshold limits.
- In case of interstate movement of goods and services, IGST will be levied.
- GST Council has been made as a constitutional body having representation from both Union and States to make recommendations on rates, taxes, surcharges etc.

Benefits:

- It will be able to provide a single national market and remove the cascading effect of taxes as-
- It provides for a uniform tax structure for the whole of country.
- Self-monitoring mechanism
- Easy compliance
- It removes the barrier like state entry tax, octroi etc. making the goods and services available at the same price all over the nation.

There are some challenges too:

- Exempted Items- petroleum products and alcohol are kept out of its purview.
- Hasty Implementation- The former PM Manmohan Singh said that government did not prepare well for its implementation and it affected the small and medium sector enterprises.
- Preparedness- The companies and MSME sector was not trained by govt before ushering this significant reform. This poses a big implementation challenge.
- **Lack of Common market:** it is not possible till it abolishes the state- specific APMC laws.

But overall, it's a good reform as it truly reforms India into an economic union.

12. Examine the scope of Fundamental Rights in the light of the latest judgement of the Supreme Court on Right to Privacy.

Hints:

The Supreme court recently ruled that the right to privacy was “an intrinsic part of Article 21 that protects life and liberty”.The verdict overturns two previous rulings by the top court which said that privacy was not a fundamental right.

- The judgement reaffirmed the principle of the individual as the *raison d'être* of the state. In the process, it fulfilled its constitutional role as a check upon legislative and executive power in comprehensive fashion.
- The privacy judgement thus reaffirms the strength of the Constitutional protections given to fundamental rights.
- The judgement also sketches out the evolution of the concepts of human dignity and the right to life, both guaranteed by the Constitution. When a citizen cannot draw a boundary between the state and his personal life, dignity is manifestly impossible.
- The right to be let alone is a part of the right to enjoy life. The right to enjoy life is, in its turn, a part of the fundamental right to life of the individual. This means privacy will have no definition. It's scope and definition will be decided on a case to case basis. The restrictions on the privacy will depend upon which article it emanates from
- If the restraint on privacy is over fundamental personal choices that an individual is to make, State action can be restrained under Article 21 read with Article 14 if it is arbitrary and unreasonable.

Reading the right to privacy into each and every one of the fundamental rights in the Indian Constitution has meant that the scope and depth of these rights have been expanded. The Supreme Court also criticized a previous ruling by the top court that reinstated a law criminalizing homosexuality, saying that discrimination against an individual on the basis of sexual orientation is deeply offensive to the dignity and self-worth of the individual.

- **The right to privacy and the protection of sexual orientation lies at the core of the fundamental rights guaranteed by Articles 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution.**
- **Section 66a of the IT act:** with to Right to Privacy verdict, an individual breaching privacy by on social networking sites could be held accountable.
- The ruling has implications for the government's vast biometric ID scheme, covering access to benefits, bank accounts and payment of taxes.
- It will have a bearing on the challenge to the validity of the Aadhaar scheme on the grounds of its being violative of the right to privacy.

Concerns:

- Supreme Court did not hold that the right to privacy is absolute. It cannot, for example, be used by individuals to exempt themselves from zoning regulations. The state is within its rights to fetter privacy in some circumstances but the onus would be on it to justify itself.

13. *The Indian Constitution has provisions for holding joint session of the two Houses of the Parliament. Enumerate the occasions when this would normally happen and also the occasions when it cannot, with reason thereof.*

Hints:

As the Parliament of India is “bicameral” concurrence of both houses are required to pass any bill. However, the authors of the Constitution of India visualized situations of deadlock between the upper house i.e. Rajya Sabha and the lower house i.e. Lok Sabha. Therefore, the Constitution of India provides for Joint sittings of both the Houses to break this deadlock. Joint session of Indian parliament has been called for only three bills i.e. dowry prohibition act, 1960, banking service commission act, 1977 and POTA, 2002.

- As per **Article 108** of Constitution, a Joint session of Parliament can be summoned in the following situations.
- If after a Bill has been passed by one House and transmitted to the other House
- The Bill is rejected by the other House or
- The Houses have finally disagreed as to what the amendments to be made in the Bill
- More than six months elapse from the date of the reception of the Bill by the other House without the Bill being passed by it, the President may notify to the Houses intention to summon them to meet in a joint sitting for the purpose of deliberating and voting on the Bill unless the Bill has elapsed by reason of a dissolution of the House of the People,
- **Not all bills can be referred to a joint sitting of Parliament. There are two exceptions.**
- Money Bill
 - Under the Constitution of India, money bills require approval of the Lok Sabha only. Rajya Sabha can make recommendations to Lok Sabha, which it is not required to accept.
 - Even if Rajya Sabha doesn't pass a money bill within 14 days, it is deemed to have been passed by both the Houses of Parliament after expiry of the above period. **Therefore, a requirement to summon a joint session can never arise in the case of money bill.**
- Constitution Amendment Bill
 - Article 368 of Indian constitution require that constitution of India can be amended by both houses of parliament by 2/3 majority. In case of disagreement between both houses, there is no provision to summon joint session of parliament.

14. *To enhance the quality of democracy in India the Election Commission of India has proposed electoral reforms in 2016. What are the suggested reforms and how far are they significant to make democracy successful?*

Hints:

The Election Commission of India is set up under Article 324 of the Indian Constitution. It is responsible for the election of President, Vice- President, Parliament and state legislative assemblies.

Suggested reforms by Election Commission are-

- Giving equal status i.e. equal constitutional protection to all the members of ECI as given to its head.
- Making the budget to be charged rather than voted by Parliament.
- A permanent secretariat for ECI.

Electoral rolls

- Use of common electoral rolls for Parliament, State legislature and local bodies.
- Option of proxy voting for NRIs

Election Management

- Making of any false declaration before authorities punishable.
- Uniformity in the procedure of voting system in the case of election of members of State Legislative Council and the Council of States by members of Legislative Assembly
- Election officials
- empower the District Election Officer also, apart from the Chief Election Officer, to requisition of staff for election duties
- Permanent staff to ECI instead of deputing officials from outside.
- Use of totalizer for counting of votes

Nomination of candidates

- Restriction on the number of seats from which a candidate is fighting
- Disqualification of a candidate if he is a defaulter on public money

De-criminalization of politics

- Persons charged with cognizable offences shall be de-barred from contesting in the elections
- Making bribery and using religious sentiments a cognizable offence with punishment of at least 2 years

Political Parties

- Provisions for exemption of Income Tax should be made applicable only to political parties that contest elections and win seat(s) in the Parliament or Legislative Assemblies.
- compulsory maintenance of accounts by political parties
- Provisions for exemption of Income Tax should be made applicable only to political parties that contest elections and win seat(s) in the Parliament or Legislative Assemblies.
- Use of electoral bonds
- Cap on expenditure by political party in election
- Limit the number of star campaigners

Election campaign

- Ban on exit polls and opinion polls
- Restriction on paid news

Election petition

- appointment of additional Judges in High Courts for trying election petitions
- Fast track the election cases

Significance of the Reforms:

- These lead to free and fair elections which are the backbone of democracy
- These provide more teeth and power to ECI
- These seek to decriminalize the political system
- Increase in transparency and accountability
- Decrease the use of money and muscle power during elections
- Increase the intraparty and interparty democracy amongst political parties
- In tune with various SC and HC directions.

15. *Is the National Commission for Women able to strategize and tackle the problems that women face at both public and private spheres? Give reasons in support of your answer.*

Hints:

National Commission for Women (NCW) is a statutory body constituted in 1992 under National Commission for Women Act, 1990 and seeks to preserve and promote the rights of women. Women face a lot of challenges and discrimination in every sphere of life, starting from nutrition, education, inheritance rights, salaries, etc.

Success in tackling problems of women:

- It supported the Shah Bano case as a legal means to reform the harsh laws of Islam.
- Did field surveys for collection of data on the status of Muslim women for a rational response.
- Recommended reforms in legislations and policies of the State.
- Made campaigns to enforce recommendations of Sachar Committee for reservations in educational institutions and jobs besides empowering women.
- It has acted suo motu and provided speedy justice in many cases, reviewed Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, PNDT Act 1994 and many other women-centric laws.
- It organizes workshops, seminars for the awareness drive.
- Has been active with respect to victims of NRI marriages.

Concerns:

- Members are mostly linked to political party in power, so they can't be expected to go against any policy or action of the government.
- Members have been, at times, accused of victim blaming and made regressive statements against gender and sexuality.
 - Commission has been in controversy during Guwahati molestation case, and Mangalore pub attack case and by controversial statements made by members of the commission.
- Lack of adequate funds allocated to body depriving it of helping a complainant financially and supporting campaigns of any kind.
- Its composition is basically of Government-nominated members. As such the independence of working is lacking in the NCW.
- Even though it has been provided with quasi-judicial functions the implementation of them seems abysmal.
- It could not change the patriarchal mindset established in the society. The way people think about women in India is a big cause for concern. People think women have to be submissive and obedient, that they cannot question the family, and cannot be independent.
- Powers are recommendatory and not mandatory.
- Lack of power to summon individuals before it unlike National Commission for Protection of Child Rights
- Chandigarh, which has one of the worst sex ratios, does not even have a women's commission
- Members belonging more often to the political and bureaucratic class makes it amenable to political interference.

Suggestions:

- More autonomy should be given to the commission and appointments for posts should be strictly merit-based without any political agenda.
- Selection of politically neutral members who have contributed to or have a deep understanding of issues related to women's rights.

16. *"The emergence of the Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in contemporary times points to the show but steady withdrawal of the State from developmental activities." Examine the role of the SHGs in developmental activities and the measures taken by the Government of India to promote the SHGs.*

Hints:

Self-Help Groups are informal associations of people who choose to come together to find ways to improve their living conditions. There are around 8 million SHG out of which 80% are women SHG.

Role of SHG in developmental activities-

- SHG acts as saving, credit and insurance institution. It increases the credit worthiness of poor by extending microfinance to them.
- They help the poor to transform economically as well as socially. The govt is using them to implement various education, sanitation programs etc.
- They help the women to focus on productive expenditure, bringing financial discipline and increase efficiency.
- It enables the govt to focus in its programs etc. while minimizing its administrative and other costs.
- Increases the financial inclusion in the nation.

Measures taken by govt to promote SHG are:

- SHG- Bank linkage program is the major initiative by NABARD and RBI for making SHG viable.
- SIDBI, HUDCO and Rashtriya Mahila Kosh set by govt also provide credit to SHGs.
- Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana aims to eradicate poverty by providing income generating assets to rural people via SHG.
- The government provides training to the members regarding book keeping, basic literacy etc.
- Their skills are groomed in reading, writing, livelihood options etc. by the govt.

However, today they are faced with various challenges like corruption, fading of their homogenous character, regional imbalances, increasingbureaucratization and politicization of SHG which need to be tackled as soon as possible so as to achieve inclusive growth.

17. *"Poverty alleviation programmes in India remain more showpieces until and unless they are backed up by political will." Discuss with reference to the performance of the major poverty alleviation programmes in India.*

Hints:

Poverty, hunger and unemployment have been the bane for India since long so the successive governments have taken active role in forming the poverty alleviation programmes. The programmes have been implemented considering wide dimensions like Health, education, malnutrition etc.

Success:

- NREGA has been relatively successful in reaching the rural poor with shift in the pressure of newly mobilised political outsiders, including an activist judiciary and civil society groups.
- The programme reduced poverty by up to 32 per cent and prevented 14 million people from falling into poverty
- **Rich states have done better at poverty alleviation than in the past as they had better resources and political will**
- Between 2004-05 and 2011-12, most states did well at poverty alleviation

- It is because of string political like states in Tamilnadu where were taken like universal PDS to alleviate poor and it has largely been successful there.
 - involves technological interventions
 - drawing up innovative fool-proof delivery mechanisms
 - surprise checks and constant reviews
 - fixing responsibility at each level

Failure:

- Planning process is faulty with respect to:
 - Identifying the 'poor'
 - Defining 'poor'
 - Processing of the identification involves too many stages.
 - lack of technology up gradation.
 - The program focuses on benefitting a small group of the people in a big way
 - Ideally the programs should be broader based.
 - Disjointed programs beneficiaries overlap, the same rural areas benefited from served programs.
- Implementation of programs:
 - Corrupt officials/ staffs.
 - Lack of involvement.
 - Local politics. (selection of beneficiaries)
 - Improper follow up of program/ review or revision is practically none existed. III. Lack of support from the credit and marketing system:
 - Role of local money lenders and banks.
 - Inability to sustain income generation from the asset credited
- Awareness issue:
 - Still most of the people especially in rural areas are illiterate that's why they are not getting loans or initial capital for self-employment.
 - Fund allocation especially for NREGA continued to be unpredictable. The change in government state has taken away a key ingredient that contributed to the success of the MGNREGA: Political will and belief in the act

Way forward:

- Corruption needs to be dealt with harshly, but cutting funds to development programmes is definitely not a plausible solution.
- **Lessons from China:** China's Internet-based poverty alleviation method has set an example for the rest of the world. The government's plan is to take e-business to more than 80 percent of villages by 2020. India can follow this model to carry out poverty alleviation efforts.
- By adopting multiple approaches, there has been a noticeable decrease in the head count ratio of poverty i.e. from 55% in 1973 to about 30% presently. However, the absolute number has reduced only slightly. India is still home to 1/5th of world's poor people, about 300 million people. With the recent Food Security Act, Insurance driven social safety net, and focus on SHGs, it can be hoped that India will make bigger strides towards completely eradicating the poverty.

18. *Initially Civil Services in India were designed to achieve the goals of neutrality and effectiveness, which seems to be lacking in the present context. Do you agree with the view that drastic reforms are required in Civil Services? Comment.*

Hints:

Civil services are the steel frame of the nation which help in maintaining law and order, provide stability and develop the nation. Of late, our civil services are marred with a number of challenges like corruption, red-tapism, insensitivity, lack of technology, political interference etc. which decrease its neutrality and effectiveness.

Drastic reforms are needed in these services, because:

- Rising complexity of economy means specialists are needed with lateral entry as recommended by 2nd Administrative Committee Report.
- Institutionalize goal setting and tracking for each department- Each Ministry and government agency should set outcome-based goals with a clear timeline. E.g.- Sarvodaya framework
- More and more use of technology in governance. E.g.- MyGov application, Daksh application etc.
- E-governance and paperless governance ranking for ministries at central and state levels on the basis of their move to the e-office system, reduction of paper use, and citizen engagement through the electronic medium.
- Outsource service delivery where possible- We should reduce dependence on government administrative machinery wherever possible by PPP models etc.
- Citizen grievance redressal must be institutionalized and properly implemented. E.g.- PRAGATI platform
- Code of Ethics should be prepared in every department to resolve the conflict of interest etc. and make them ethical.
- The recent initiative of awarding good civil servants for their exemplary work is also a good initiative.
- Periodic training must be given to them so as to keep them updated and increase their efficiency.
- Their relationship with political executives must be properly defined by code of conduct and other channels.

These reforms are more incremental in nature but their implementation leads to big bang reforms as told by the Economic Survey. They will lead to better delivery of goods and services.

IN the globalised world, it is of utmost importance that our civil services are SMART i.e. sensible, mobile, responsive, accountable and tech- savvy so as to lead us towards 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas'.

19. *The question of India's Energy Security constitutes the most important part of India's economic progress. Analyze India's energy policy cooperation with West Asian countries.*

Hints:

- Energy security has long been a concern for the India, a global giant in oil consumption. The fuel demands are growing fast in proportion to its rapid economic development.
- Due to the lack of significant domestic reserves of oil and natural gas, India has looked towards the geopolitically challenging West Asian region to fulfil its requirements throughout much of its independent history.
- The domestic coal production faced a huge loss during 2013 and it was a serious shock for India's energy sector as thermal power plants wriggled to find cost-effective opportunities to buy coal from the huge domestic coal sector. As an outcome of this, India was forced to import coal from foreign countries such as Indonesia and South Africa, at cheaper costs than obtainable in national market.

Relation with West Asia:

- The West Asia is of vital importance for India's energy security, providing around 60 percent of India's oil imports and liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports.

- Securing the supplies of oil and natural gas from the West Asia is closely linked with the foreign policy of India towards the region because, in today's security environment, energy security and foreign policy are separated by a blurry line.
- **Israel:** Importance of India's relationship with Israel, particularly for military support, technology transfer, agricultural and irrigation development and now renewable energy.
- Of-late India has been able to forge strategic partnership with UAE and some other countries in gulf, as a part of broader agenda, which also includes energy security and regional peace.

Concerns:

- The security scenario in the region, issue of terrorism, China's increasing influence in the region etc. has always been a concern for India
- India is presently trying its best to diminish its dependence on West Asia for its energy requirements, mainly due to the political uncertainty in the region especially in countries like Iraq.
- Long delays in TAPI pipeline.

Suggestions:

- India should expand its energy security department within the MEA, presently operated by a single Joint Secretary level officer, and give it equal importance as the defence department gets.
- Intensification of direct investments in West Asian energy resources, both at the public and private sector levels. Accelerate earlier assurances in energy cooperation with countries such as Iran, and use security and defence accords with these nations to make healthy measures over fortification of these investments.
- **Diversification:**
 - **Enhance energy cooperation with other Asian countries** like China, Japan, South Korea etc. Form a cooperative partnership to ensure continuous energy flow to the region.
 - Develop closer ties with countries like Iceland, Israel etc. to develop India's renewable energy technology and to backup with an alternate way other than oil and natural gas.
- Work to sign more defence treaties on bilateral (such as agreements with signed with Qatar and Saudi Arabia etc.) and institutional levels (such as GCC) and make sure to include energy as a strategic asset in this agreement.

20. *Indian diaspora has an important role to play in South-East Asian countries' economy and society. Appraise the role of Indian diaspora in South-East Asia in this context.*

Hints:

Introduction:

- **India's cultural relations with south east Asia are one of the most fascinating fields of history.** Indian diaspora in these countries is varied. Indians roughly constitute about 8% to 9% of the total population in Malaysia and Singapore respectively.

Role of Indian diaspora in these economies:

- In Indonesia, traditionally the Sikhs, Sindhis, and Tamils are engaged in various small businesses like sports goods, textiles and construction among many others.
- Recent trends indicate that the present Indian migration includes professionals holding senior positions in local and multinational companies in the fields of IT, education, and technology among other aspects. Overall, the Indian community is well respected in Indonesia.
- Singapore is distinct in all the Southeast Asian countries as Indians are well represented in the judiciary, civil services and armed forces of that country.
- Some of the prominent persons of Indian origin include former President Late S. R. Nathan and Late S. Rajaratnam, an influential personality in the public life of Singapore, among many others.

- The entrepreneurial success of some Indians in Hong Kong is a fabulous story. Indian diaspora made considerable and consistent contributions made by the Indian community in Hong Kong in the fields of business, trade, education and social services.
- There is significant presence of Indian diaspora even to the far east in countries like Japan, Korea, Brunei, etc.

Concerns:

- In the case of Malaysia, the political, economic and social status of Indians vis-à-vis Chinese and local Malays is not satisfactory.
- The New Economic Policy of 1970 adversely affected the Indian community in Malaysia. “Only a small group of Indian businesses with political patronage has prospered by venturing into services, construction and related activities.”
- **Myanmar:** Ethnic Indians have no social, political or economic clout. When Myanmar got independence in 1948, all the important spheres of society were populated by Indians. Later nationalization policies implemented by the government led to an exodus of Indians on a large scale.
- Indian diaspora in Southeast Asia is numerically very small and does not enjoy the economic clout that may change the state policies to India’s advantage.
- Foreign Direct Investments from these countries is meagre. Same is the case with remittances when compared with those from Gulf or Western countries.
- In the political realm, except for Singapore, Indians are not well represented politically in these states.
- Even the administrative machinery constitutes few Indians. Therefore, the Indian diaspora has little utility for lobbying on behalf of India.
- In addition to this, the region varies extensively in terms of politics. Very few countries are genuine democracies which again is a hindrance for lobbying.

