

GS SCORE



Model Hints

UPSC Mains 2018

Model Hints

GENERAL STUDIES

Paper - 2

www.iascore.in

UPSC MAINS 2018

GS PAPER - 2

Time Allowed: 3 hr.

Max. Marks: 250

1. In the light of recent controversy regarding the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), what are the challenges before the Election Commission of India to ensure the trustworthiness of elections in India? **(Answer in 150 words)**
2. Whether National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine. **(Answer in 150 words)**
3. Under what circumstances can the Financial Emergency be proclaimed by the President of India? What consequences follow when such a declaration remains in force? **(Answer in 150 words)**
4. Why do you think the committees are considered to be useful for parliamentary work? Discuss, in this context, the role of the Estimates Committee. **(Answer in 150 words)**
5. "The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has a very vital role to play." Explain how this is reflected in the method and terms of his appointment as well as the range of powers he can exercise. **(Answer in 150 words)**
6. "Policy contradictions among various competing sectors and stakeholders have resulted in inadequate 'protection and prevention of degradation to environment.'" Comment with relevant illustrations. **(Answer in 150 words)**
7. Appropriate local community level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieve 'Health for All' in India. Explain. **(Answer in 150 words)**
8. E-governance is not only about utilization of the power of new technology, but also much about critical importance of the 'use value' of information. Explain. **(Answer in 150 words)**
9. "India's relations with Israel have, of late, acquired a depth and diversity, which cannot be rolled back." Discuss. **(Answer in 150 words)**
10. A number of outside powers have entrenched themselves in Central Asia, which is a zone of interest to India. Discuss the implications, in this context, of India's joining the Ashgabat Agreement, 2018. **(Answer in 150 words)**
11. Whether the Supreme Court Judgement (July 2018) can settle the political tussle between the Lt. Governor and elected government of Delhi? Examine. **(Answer in 250 words)**
12. How far do you agree with the view that tribunals curtail the jurisdiction of ordinary courts? In view of the above, discuss the constitutional validity and competency of the tribunals in India. **(Answer in 250 words)**
13. Indian and USA are two large democracies. Examine the basic tenets on which the two political systems are based. **(Answer in 250 words)**

14. How is the Finance Commission of India constituted? What do you know about the terms of reference of the recently constituted Finance Commission? Discuss. **(Answer in 250 words)**
15. Assess the importance of the Panchayat system in India as a part of local government. Apart from government grants, what sources the Panchayats can look out for financing developmental projects? **(Answer in 250 words)**
16. Multiplicity of various commissions for the vulnerable sections of the society leads to problems of overlapping jurisdiction and duplication of functions. Is it better to merge all commissions into an umbrella Human Rights Commission? Argue your case. **(Answer in 250 words)**
17. How far do you agree with the view that the focus on lack of availability of food as the main cause of hunger takes the attention away from ineffective human development policies in India? **(Answer in 250 words)**
18. The Citizen's Charter is an ideal instrument of organisational transparency and accountability, but it has its own limitations. Identify the limitations and suggest measures for greater effectiveness of the Citizen's Charters. **(Answer in 250 words)**
19. What are the key areas of reform if the WTO has to survive in the present context of 'Trade War', especially keeping in mind the interest of India? **(Answer in 250 words)**
20. In what ways would the ongoing US-Iran Nuclear Pact Controversy affect the national interest of India? How should India respond to its situation? **(Answer in 250 words)**

GS SCORE

UPSC MAIN EXAMINATION

(GENERAL STUDIES PAPER - 2)

HINTS

1. *In the light of recent controversy regarding the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), what are the challenges before the Election Commission of India to ensure the trustworthiness of elections in India?*

Approach

1. *Brief introduction of EVM and controversy surrounding it (30-40 words)*
2. *Elaborate on challenges before the Election Commission to ensure the trustworthiness of elections in India (120-140 words)*
3. *Conclusion (30-40 words)*

Hints:

In foresight of overcoming certain problems associated with use of ballot papers and taking advantage of development of technology for ambiguity free voting, removing the possibilities of invalid votes totally, the Election Commission in 1977 mooted the idea of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM). Since 2000, EVMs have been used in various General Elections to State Legislative Assemblies and 3 General Elections to Lok Sabha held in 2004, 2009 & 2014. However, over the years the issue of possible tampering of EVM has been raised before various High Courts since 2001.

Controversial Issues

- After declaration of result of the recently held General Elections to the State Legislative Assemblies of Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, some political parties have raised voice against the credibility of the ECI-EVMs, alleging **tampering and manipulation of EVMs** during the said elections wherein the machine has been so set in advance as to the **vote will be made to a particular party irrespective of whatever the choice made physically** without the voter knowing it.
- Various **administrative and technical glitches** where in certain poll booths during Delhi municipal elections, 2017 and Kairana and Noorpur by-elections the EVM's and VVPAT's stopped working owing to **sensor paralysis due to hot weather and humidity**.
- **Alleged hacking**, issue of **EVMs only storing votes**. Verification of vote is not possible and eventually promoting favouritism wherein a candidate can know how many people from a polling station voted for him.

The **Election Commission has rejected these allegations** and unequivocally reiterated the credibility of EVM's with technical and administrative safeguards in view of them being **stand alone machines**, non-manipulatable by signals from any sources. Example mobile phones. EVM is burnt into a **one-time programmable chip** thus can never be tampered with. Moreover, the **source code of the software is not handed over to any outsider**. Also the **use of totalizer machines and VVPAT's** have been started to eliminate the aforesaid issues. A **Totalizer unit** which can connect several balloting units and would display only the overall results from an Assembly or a Lok Sabha constituency instead of votes from individual polling stations thus eliminate favouritism and **VVPAT system** enables EVM to record each vote cast by generating the EVM slip, thus allowing a fool proof voting system in place after the **Supreme court verdict on Subramanian swami's PIL**. Also in June 2018, Election Commission of India decided that all VVPATs will have a **built-in-hood to prevent** it from excess light and heat.

Challenges before the Election Commission of India

- To **regain trust and confidence of all stakeholders in the election system** in India amidst cases of political opportunism and political aversion towards use of EVM. Recently ECI also introduced innovative measures like **organising workshops, EVM Hackathons** for wider credibility establishment.
- Introduction of VVPAT is an appreciated move. However, **lacunae in VVPAT technology should be immediately addressed**. Measures include: making it independent of battery, include the usage of sustainable inks and reducing sensitivity to heat and light.
- **Employment and proper training of workforce** to manage errors and technological snags
- The EC announced that it will count V-VPAT slips up to a definite percentage. A proper **statistical method** should be deployed for while deciding on the required proportion of **tallying V-VPAT with EVMs**. At present it only involves randomly choosing booths.
- **Invest more to upgrade technology and procurement of required logistics in time.**
- Rather than moving to paper ballot system of election, the focus should be on **improving the efficiency, credibility and transparency of the EVM-VVPAT enabled electoral process.**
- Targeted focus on **increasing the voter awareness and electoral literacy** to make them more decisive and empowered in making their choice, along with being the first line of audit in ensuring a fair and just election process

The Election Commission of India has been able to nourish India's democratic health since independence by improving the quality of election management. Elections are the cornerstone of every democratic process. It is through this process that first footsteps into Rule of law, freedom for speech, transparency etc are laid. Any hollowness in this will change the course of all the institutions of the political system which are at the heart of maintaining people's faith in democracy itself. EVM's play a vital role amidst this in the fate of a candidate and also voters who cast their vote with the hope that it will bring the change that they seek in the country. Therefore, rather than going back to paper-ballot which (too can be tampered) and be inefficient we need to embrace newer technologies and make them fool proof to make the elections **fair and just elections** which is also mandated by the constitution under **Article 324** and is a '**basic structure**' of the democracy.

2. *Whether National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine.*

Approach

1. *Brief introduction about the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and Religious minority institutions (30-40 words)*
2. *Constitutional provisions for safeguard of minority rights and powers of NCSC (120-140 words)*
3. *Conclusion (30-40 words)*

Hints:

National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) is an Indian **constitutional body established by Article 338** of the constitution with a view to provide safeguards against the exploitation of Scheduled Castes, to promote and protect their social, educational, economic and cultural interests, under special provisions in the Constitution. It is an advisory and recommendatory body to look upon the holistic upliftment of the schedule castes.

About Religious Minority

National Commission for Minority Educational Institution Act, 2004 has defined 'minority' as a community which is defined as according to the central government based on religion within the meaning of **Article 30** and 'Minority institution' as an educational institution which is administered and set up by the minority.

Rights of Minorities to establish and administer Educational Institutions (Article 30)

- All minorities should have right to set up and govern educational institutions according to their own choice.

- If the government is having an acquisition on any property of minority educational institution then the government should keep this in mind that a fixed price should be settled in a way that does not deter the rights minorities
- The State shall not, differentiate among any educational institution on the ground that it is under the administration of a minority whether in terms of a religion or a language.

Benefits available to Minority Institutions

There are, comprehensively, three advantages accessible to a minority educational institution that is not accessible to other institutions:

- Minority educational institutions don't need to keep up a reservation in work or affirmations for SCs, STs, and OBCs as required to be done by other educational institutions.
- In respect of control over representatives, minority educational institutions have substantially more prominent power than other institutions. For example, in the selection of teacher and principals, the minority educational institution can have a choice advisory group which does exclude the university representatives. Thus, while in customary schools the headmaster ordinarily must be appointed based on seniority, minority administrations can choose a headmaster according to their own choice.
- In case of admission of the student, minority educational institutions can have a reservation of up to 50 percent for the student of their own community.

The Supreme Court held in the Case of **P.A. Inamdar vs State of Maharashtra** [2006 (6) SCC 537] that:

- The policy of reservation to admit students is not applicable to a minority institution.
- The policy of reservation in terms of employment is not applicable to a minority institution.

In view of the recent demands for Dalit Quota in minority-run institutions such as AMU and Delhi's Jamia Millia Islamia reservation issue in religious minority institutions again raked up.

The idea to make the provision for minorities as a fundamental right under the constitution to protect their educational right is not inequality towards the privileged classes but it definitely gives the sense of security to the minority groups against the perceived threat of majority. Jains are the minority community that has the highest literacy rate and the majority of their population is educated is a successful example of this 'right'. Thus, the way forward would be a **formulation of unambiguous list of religious minority institutions that seek aid or recognition from the state to avoid overlapping of regulatory powers** in respect of that particular institute for the healthy balance and growth of minorities as well as other communities simultaneously. This holds significance more so in case of a majoritarian country like India which is a cradle of diversity and epitome of inclusivity.

The right conferred on minorities under Article 30 is only to ensure equality with the majority and not intended to place the minorities in a more advantageous position vis-à-vis the majority.

3. *Under what circumstances can the Financial Emergency be proclaimed by the President of India? What consequences follow when such a declaration remains in force?*

Approach

1. **Brief introduction on emergency (30 words)**
2. **Elaborate on circumstances under which financial emergency is proclaimed (30-50 words)**
3. **Consequences of financial emergency (90-110 words)**
4. **Conclusion (30 words)**

Hints:

The rationality behind the incorporation of Emergency provisions in the Constitution is to safeguard the sovereignty, unity, integrity and security of the country, the democratic political system, and the Constitution. During an Emergency, the central government becomes all powerful and the states go into the total control of the Centre. It **converts the federal structure into a unitary one without a formal amendment of the Constitution**. This kind of transformation of the political system from federal during normal times to unitary during Emergency is a unique feature of the Indian Constitution.

Grounds of Declaration

Article 360 empowers the president to proclaim a Financial Emergency if he is satisfied that a **situation has arisen due to which the financial stability or credit of India or any part of its territory is threatened.**

The 38th Amendment Act of 1975 made the **satisfaction of the president** in declaring a Financial Emergency final and conclusive and not questionable in any court on any ground. But, this provision was subsequently deleted by the 44th Amendment Act of 1978 implying that the satisfaction of the president is **not beyond judicial review.**

Consequences of Financial Emergency

The consequences of the proclamation of a Financial Emergency are as follows:

1. The executive authority of the Centre extends (a) to directing any state to observe such canons of financial propriety as are specified by it; and (b) to directions as the President may deem necessary and adequate for the purpose.
2. Any such direction may include a provision requiring (a) the reduction of salaries and allowances of all or any class of persons serving in the state; and (b) the reservation of all money bills or other financial bills for the consideration of the President after they are passed by the legislature of the state.
3. The President may issue directions for the reduction of salaries and allowances of (a) all or any class of persons serving the Union; and (b) the judges of the Supreme Court and the high court.

Thus, during the operation of a financial emergency, the **Centre acquires full control** over the states in financial matters. **H N Kunzru**, a member of the Constituent Assembly, stated that the financial emergency provisions pose a **serious threat to the financial autonomy of the states.** Explaining the reasons for their inclusion in the Constitution, **Dr BR Ambedkar** observed in the Constituent Assembly:

“This Article more or less follows the pattern of what is called the National Recovery Act of the United States passed in 1933, which gave the president power to make similar provisions in order to remove the difficulties, both economic and financial, that had overtaken the American people, as a result of the Great Depression.”

No Financial Emergency has been declared so far, though there was a financial crisis in 1991.

4. *Why do you think the committees are considered to be useful for parliamentary work? Discuss, in this context, the role of the Estimates Committee.*

Approach

1. *Significance of Parliamentary Committees (50 words)*
2. *Role of Estimates committee (50-60 words)*
3. *Challenges before Parliamentary Committees (70-80 words)*
4. *Conclusion (30 words)*

Hints:

The **Parliament is too unwieldy a body to deliberate effectively** the issues that come up before it. The **functions of the Parliament are varied, complex and voluminous in a modern industrial economy involving cases of GST, Rafael deal, issues of money laundering, etc. Moreover, it has neither the adequate time nor necessary expertise** to make a detailed scrutiny of all legislative measures and other matters as the Constitution specifies 3 sessions in one financial year which comes down to around 67 working days in a year. Therefore, it is assisted by a number of committees in the discharge of its duties.

Significance of Parliamentary Committees:

- To ensure executive accountability, which is central in a representative democracy
- Increase the amount of work that can be done
- Ensure that issues can be debated in more detail than in plenary sessions

- Increase the level of participation of Members of Parliament (MPs) in discussions
- Indian parliamentary committees are a huge reservoir of information. Thus, they enable MPs to develop expertise and in-depth knowledge of the specific Committee's area of work and contribute ideas to strengthen the parliamentary system and improve governance.
- Provide a platform for the public to present views directly to MPs, something which is not possible in a plenary sitting of -Parliament
- Provide an environment for Parliament to hear evidence and collect information related to the work of a specific Committee.
- They examine specific areas of public life or matters of public interest
- They take care of domestic parliamentary issues
- Committees have the power to summon any person to appear before them, give evidence or produce documents.
- They may require any person or institution to report to them.

Role of Estimates Committee

Under this regard, the origin of the **Estimates committee** can be traced to the standing financial committee set up in 1921. The first Estimates Committee was constituted on the recommendation of **John Mathai**. This Committee consists of **30 members** who are elected by the **Lok Sabha** every year from among its members. Estimates committees usually meet three times a year to **scrutinise how the government has spent Budget funds**. The main function of the Committee on Estimates is:

- To report what **improvements in organisation, efficiency, or administrative reform, consistent with the policy underlying the estimates may be affected.**
- **Suggest alternative policies** in order to bring about efficiency and economy in administration.
- To examine **whether the money is well laid out within the limits of the policy** implied in the estimates
- To **suggest the forth in which the estimates are to be presented** to Parliament
- From time to time the Committee selects such of the estimates pertaining to a Ministry or a group of Ministries or the statutory and other Government bodies as may seem fit to the Committee.
- The Committee also **examines matters of special interest** which may arise or come to light in the course of its work or which are specifically referred to it by the House or the Speaker.

Challenges before Parliamentary committees:

- a. It examines the budget estimates only after they have been voted by the Parliament, and not before that.
- b. It cannot question the policy laid down by the Parliament.
- c. Its recommendations are advisory and not binding on the ministries.
- d. It examines every year only certain selected ministries and departments. Thus, by rotation, it would cover all of them over a number of years.
- e. It lacks the expert assistance of the CAG which is available to the Public Accounts Committee.
- f. Its work is in the nature of a post-mortem.

In recent years, committees have become more important in the work of the Parliament, especially since law-making is increasingly more complex. Committees are also a powerful way to bring Parliament to the people and allow a greater variety of opinions to be heard. Thus, it is important for periodic experiments and reviews to bring about changes. No such attempts have been made in the Indian parliament in the past 64 years except to increase the total strength of the Houses and boost the security system. A systemic overhaul of the parliamentary committees is thus long overdue.

5. *“The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has a very vital role to play.” Explain how this is reflected in the method and terms of his appointment as well as the range of powers he can exercise.*

Approach

1. **Significance of method and terms of appointment of CAG (50-60 words)**
2. **Powers of CAG and Constitutional vitality of the post (110-120 words)**
3. **Conclusion (30 words)**

Hints:

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) is a **constitutional post** mandated under **Article 148** of Constitution of India that provides for an **independent office** of the CAG. Under this regard the CAG of India has a very vital role to play that is **vividly reflected in the method and terms of his appointment as well as the range of powers he can exercise.**

Method of Appointment and Removal and Term of Appointment

The CAG is **appointed by the highest rank and order of the officials of the union and state governments, the President of India, by a warrant under his hand and seal following a recommendation by the Prime minister.** This means that there would be a **signature of the president on the appointment letter** in this case (the highest order of the method of appointment in India). Whereas in other cases where the President is the appointing authority it is not necessary that he is also the FINAL appointing authority. He might delegate his function to some other authority. For e.g. The appointment of officers is done by the President but in general it carries the signature of secretary of the concerned department. The Final appointment by the President is followed by the **oath of affirmation** made and subscribed by the CAG before the **President of India**, before he enters upon his office.

Wherein, the government of the nation holds power for five years at a time the CAG holds the office for a period of **six years or up to the age of 65 years**, whichever is earlier with the **security of tenure** and can resign any time from his office by addressing the **resignation letter to the president** like other vital dignitaries like Chief Election Commissioner, Chairman of Union Public Services Commission, etc. to keep a check on the working of the government and the nation during and after their tenure. This becomes vital especially in case of CAG that has been mandated the responsibility of keeping the revenue and estimates of the nation in check in the aftermath of the transaction through the channels of legal, regulatory and also the most important proprietary audit. Further the fact that the CAG can be **removed by the President only on an address from both houses of parliament with special majority** on the ground of **proved misbehaviour or incapacity in manner of impeachment** reflects the vital role CAG has been mandated to play. The grounds of proved misbehaviour and incapacity are wide and subjective in approach and requires a detailed investigation before it can be proved, which eliminates the element of casualty in the appointment of CAG to a greater degree.

Powers of CAG and Constitutional vitality of the post

As per the provisions of the constitution under **Article 149**, the **CAG's (DPC) (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act, 1971** was enacted. As per the various provisions, the duties of the CAG include the **audit of:**

- **Receipts and expenditure** from the Consolidated Fund of India, State and Union Territory having legislative assembly, government companies, corporations established under law, authorities and bodies substantially financed from the Consolidated Funds of the Union and State Governments or even though not substantially financed from the Consolidated Fund, the audit of which may be entrusted to the C&AG, grants and loans given by Government to bodies and authorities for specific purposes, entrusted audits by the President or the Governor. This holds significance as the nation aspires **towards cooperative and competitive federalism and financial devolution** in making India one of the fastest growing economies round the globe today.
- He **ascertains and certifies the net proceeds of any tax or duty (Article 279)**. His certificate is final. The 'net proceeds' means the proceeds of a tax or a duty minus the cost of collection. This helps in ascertaining the goal of **fiscal federalism and financial inclusivity** especially in times when the nation is opening itself to new avenues like GST that will further its goal of enhancing the tax to GDP ratio.

- He acts as a **guide, friend and philosopher of the Public Accounts Committee** of the Parliament to assist them in their working and balance the **streamline the work of the Parliament** as per their vision.
- He **compiles and maintains the accounts of state governments** to keep the states and nation as a whole within the limits of **fiscal deficit with a vision of fiscal consolidation**.
- submits three audit reports to the President—**audit report on appropriation accounts, audit report on finance accounts, and audit report on public undertakings**.

The appropriation accounts compare the actual expenditure with the expenditure sanctioned by the Parliament through the Appropriation Act, while the finance accounts show the annual receipts and disbursements of the Union government.

Under this regard the role of CAG is to **uphold the Constitution of India and the laws Parliament in the field of financial administration**. The **accountability of the executive** (i.e., council of ministers) to the Parliament **in the sphere of financial administration** is secured through audit reports of the CAG. The CAG is an **agent of the Parliament and conducts audit of expenditure** on behalf of the Parliament. Also, the **proprietary audit** the CAG in furthering its vital role in the administration of the vast nation specially in a scenario where it has more freedom with regard to audit of expenditure than with regard to audit of receipts, stores and stock unlike CAG of Singapore and Britain. In relation to expenditure he decides the scope of audit and frames his own audit codes and manuals, he has to proceed with the approval of the executive government in relation to rules for the conduct of the other audits.

6. *“Policy contradictions among various competing sectors and stakeholders have resulted in inadequate ‘protection and prevention of degradation to environment.” Comment with relevant illustrations.*

Approach

1. *Briefly introduce about policy paralysis (20 words)*
2. *Discuss about degradation of environment (60 words)*
3. *Discuss different examples and illustrations (45 words)*
4. *Way ahead (25 words)*

Hints:

The increase in multitude of parties has led to indecisiveness, confusion, fragmentation which has further led to policy paralysis and policy contradictions. This type of contradiction adversely affects common people and environment at a large scale. The level and pattern of economic development also affect the nature of environmental problems.

Factors that have led to environment degradation:

- The manufacturing technology adopted by most of the industries has placed a heavy load on environment especially through intensive resource and energy use.
- Transport activities have a wide variety of effects on the environment such as air pollution, noise from road traffic and oil spills from marine shipping.
- Direct impacts of agricultural development on the environment arise from farming activities which contribute to soil erosion, land salination and loss of nutrients.
- Institutional and technological activities
- There is no effective coordination amongst various Ministries/Institutions regarding integration of environmental concerns at the inception/planning stage of the project.
- Market distortions created by price controls and subsidies may aggravate the achievement of environmental objectives

Examples:

- The rift between Capitalists and tribals- As the capitalist’s demand mining rights, tribals suffer a huge loss and this rift ultimately leads to environmental degradation.

- Considering the recent example by “Art of Living” organising a religious program which led to the damage of Yamuna River.
- Sinking aquifers and short-sighted public works such as paving banks and even the riverbed in many places has hastened the decline of Godavari and Ganga majorly.

Way ahead

Though, it is tough to achieve a perfect balance between environment and development but further steps can be taken:

- Strengthening the enforcement capabilities of environmental institutions, both at the Centre and the states.
 - Effective coordination amongst various Ministries/Institutions regarding integration of environmental concerns at the inception/planning stage of the project.
 - Proper trained personnel and precise database so that there is no delay in the projects
 - Providing the State Government institutions with adequate technical staff and resources.
 - Making Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) procedure a more effective instrument for environment protection and sustainable development.
7. *Appropriate local community level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieve ‘Health for All’ in India. Explain.*

Approach

1. *Introduction (20 words)*
2. *Need for the policy (30 words)*
3. *Government schemes in the health sector (50 words)*
4. *Briefly explain measures to be taken (30 words)*
5. *Conclusion (20 words)*

Hints:

As per Article 47 of Indian Constitution, it is the duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health. To achieve this India’s flagship health sector program, the National Health Mission (NHM) was introduced. It sought to revitalize rural and urban health sectors by providing flexible finances to State Governments.

Need for the policy:

- Local community level healthcare intervention is extremely important for which Government has launched the National Health Mission that improves health infrastructural facilities at District and Sub-district levels.
- The NHM brought in considerable innovations into the implementation of health sector programs in India.
- Accredited Social Health Activists Care (ASHA) workers were deployed as transformational change agents in every village which had brought a significant impact on behavioural changes of local communities.

Government Schemes:

- **Ayushman Bharat**- It has two goals, one, creating a network of health and wellness infrastructure across the nation to deliver comprehensive primary healthcare services, and another is to provide insurance cover to at least 40 per cent of India’s population which is majorly deprived of secondary and tertiary care services.
- **Mission Indradhanush**, sought to achieve full immunization coverage of 90 per cent children by 2020.
- The Government has added the **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan** for assured antenatal care.

- Policy shift in Primary Health Care from selective care to assured comprehensive care.
- **Kayakalp Award Scheme:** The scheme is intended to encourage and incentivize Public Health Facilities in the country to achieve a set of standards related to cleanliness, hygiene, Waste management and infection control practices.

Measures required in the health sector:

- **Digital interventions for the nation's health:** Promoting tele-consultation linking tertiary care institutions with specialist's consultations.
- Tracking behaviour change, education and counselling at all levels.
- **Universal, easily accessible, affordable Primary Healthcare:** Comprehensive primary health care package with Health Card to access primary healthcare anytime, anywhere. Also, free drugs and diagnostics along with low cost pharmacy chains (Jan Aushadhi stores).
- Gradually, increasing public health expenditure to 2.5 per cent of GDP

Thus, by implementing the Government schemes in the most effective way, it can be said that the significant strides envisaged to be made in health sector through different policy interventions will enable India to achieve the objectives of Affordable Healthcare for All.

8. *E-governance is not only about utilization of the power of new technology, but also much about critical importance of the 'use value' of information. Explain.*

Approach

1. **Advantages of new technology (40 words)**
2. **Utility of information (70 words)**
3. **Way forward (40 words)**

Hints:

Along with the utilization of New Technology, E-governance is, *the public sector's use of information and communication technologies with the aim of improving information and service delivery, encouraging citizen participation in the decision-making process and making government more accountable, transparent and effective.*

In the E-governance era Government's interaction with citizens, **Citizen to citizen** interaction (in different discussion forum of government portals) has led to gathering of huge information with the government institutions. Not just government but Citizens can also access to information **using RTI.**

This information can be immensely used by the government in

- **Target based policy implementation** or allocation of resources.
- To better cater the needs of particular region or section of the society through **good governance.**
- This information **enhances feedback mechanism** and decision-making process.
- **Helpful in monitoring** whether the rules and regulations are being followed. For example, it will help in finding who are evading tax under the new GST regime is.
- Information if kept open for the access of citizens will bring more transparency and accountability in the administration. **National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP)** is a national open data sharing portal, which was developed to proactively share the government shareable data to the general public

Correct analysis and right use of information at the right time will also help in securing the defence and security system of the nation along with the socio-economic development. Modernizing and utilization of machines in governance will help in serving better when we use this information in a more constructive and fruitful manner to serve the larger good of the society.

9. "India's relations with Israel have, of late, acquired a depth and diversity, which cannot be rolled back." Discuss.

Approach

1. Briefly introduce status of Indo-Israel relations presently and in the past (60 words)
2. Elaborate on traditional and new areas of cooperation (70 words)
3. Conclusion (20 words)

Hints:

India and Israel are two important democracies in South Asia and Middle East, respectively. 26 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries, saw little engagement for most part of it. Recent with by the Israeli PM was only second by an Israeli PM which has come after 15 years, one by PM Modi is the first ever by an Indian PM. But with India de-hyphenating its relations with Israel from Palestine, relations have never been stronger. With greater political will, both nations are finding new areas of cooperation. As the relationship is changing from transactional one to strategic, current Israeli PM describes bilateral relation between the two nations as "marriage made in heaven."

Diversity in relations:

Tradition areas of cooperation

- **Defense:** Currently, India is the largest arms buyer from Israel. Last year, India signed the biggest weapons deal in Israeli defence history, which is nearly \$2 billion.
- **Trade:** Bilateral trade between the two countries has increased from \$200 million to more than \$4 billion (excluding defence) in 2016-17. But it is still less compared to India's trade with other nations. To address that, recently, India- Israel CEO forum has been setup. A dedicated web platform called 'India-Israel Innovation Bridge' was also launched to promote and fast-track the Israeli investment in India.
- **Tourism:** Air India has launched a direct flight from New Delhi to Tel Aviv flying straight over Saudi Arabian airspace. After receiving a good response now Air India is going to increase the frequency of the flights and an Israeli airline Arkia is planning to begin operations between Israel and India too.
- **Agriculture:** Multiple Centers of Excellence has been set up in India which has been a main-stay of agricultural cooperation between the two countries by bringing in advanced Israeli practices and technology. Both nations are working on Five Year Joint Work Plan for strategic cooperation in Agriculture and Water
- **Counterterrorism:** India-Israel counterterrorism cooperation is quite robust and has been scaled up gradually over the last few years through a joint working group on terrorism. Intelligence-sharing in this realm has been the most important element of this partnership. Also, Israel is helping India improve border management along the India-Pakistan border given Israel's experience in dealing with cross-border infiltration and terrorism.

New areas of cooperation

- **Cyber-security:** Cybersecurity cooperation is also expanding, with cybersecurity academies being set up in India by an Israeli company, Vital Intelligence Group.
- **Big data:** It will be used to improve agriculture cooperation with Israel.
- **Space:** India's Department of Science & Technology and National Technological Innovation Authority of Israel are setting up India-Israel Industrial R&D and Technological Innovation Fund (I4F) of 40 million dollars for the next five years.
- Other areas of cooperation are **film production, energy sector, startups** and more

Depth in relations:

Signs of a mature partnership between India and Israel

- Both nations are working hard to balance its current relationship with India's historical support to the Palestinian cause.

- Relations between the two nations did not turn sour with India's vote at the UN against U.S. President Donald Trump's decision on Jerusalem or with the reported cancellation of the Spike anti-tank guided missile deal.
- For Israel, Iran is the most significant national security threat. Yet, Israel has not made Indo-Iranian ties central to its engagement with India. Similarly, India has not let Israel-China closeness affect Indo-Israel relations.
- India and Israel have been having regular exchanges on regional geopolitics in the wider Middle East and thereby understanding each other's concerns with every development.

Thus, although, the breadth and depth of India-Israel ties is no match as of now compared to Sino-Israeli, but it has its own merit and has significantly gained momentum.

10. *A number of outside powers have entrenched themselves in Central Asia, which is a zone of interest to India. Discuss the implications, in this context, of India's joining the Ashgabat Agreement, 2018.*

Approach

1. *Briefly introduce importance of central Asia for India (50 words)*
2. *Elaborate on outside powers and their interest in the area (30 words)*
3. *Discuss implications for India joining Ashgabat agreement (50 words)*
4. *Conclusion (20 words)*

Hints:

Central Asia is a part of India's "extended neighbourhood." India has major geo-strategic and economic interest in the region. It has four major interests in Central Asia: security, energy, trade and mutual cooperation in various realms. As of today, India is facing competition in all mentioned areas in the region from major powers of the world.

There are many factors that are attracting world's attention towards Central Asia. Being placed in the middle of the Eurasian Continent, it is also one of the most convenient routes of transit. It is rich in minerals, especially hydrocarbons. Their consumer market is still remains to be exploited. It became a natural, historically formed buffer zone as well as forms the hub of Islamic extremism. Thus, it is witnessing flow of capital and expansion of trade triggering large-scale infrastructure, shipment of goods and flow of people across the region.

Owing to this, great powers rivalry over security and energy stakes in the region has increased.

Outside powers in the region and implication for India:

Russia is the traditional player in the region and wishes to exert political influence after a short gap of retreat from the region. But **India's major rival in the region is China**, which has gained an image of reliable partner. China has fully used its geographical proximity to the region and while pursuing an ingenious soft-power policy, it has successfully converted every challenge in Central Asia into an opportunity. CIS countries have pledged support to the 'Silk Route Belt' idea for deepening their ancient ties with China.

The **US and its allies** remained deeply engaged in the region and used it as a valuable supply hub for the Afghanistan war effort.

When compared to that of China and Russia, although, India's interest in Central Asia is visible, its relations with the region are marginal. Despite efforts being made by India, questions such as what India can offer to Central Asia and what India symbolizes for Central Asia remain a challenge for India-Central Asia relations.

Ashgabat Agreement:

Recently, India joined the Ashgabat agreement which envisages enhancing connectivity within the Eurasian region and synchronizing it with other regional transport corridors, including the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC). Turkmenistan, Iran, Uzbekistan and Oman are the founding members of the agreement.

Implications for India:

It will diversify India's connectivity options in Central Asia and will have a positive influence on India's trade and commercial ties with the Eurasia region.

- On connectivity front, it is now easier for India to reach out to Central Asia which houses strategic and high-value minerals including uranium, copper, titanium and more. Further, this synchronises with India's efforts to implement the INSTC for enhanced connectivity.
- India's share in Central Asia's total trade is only about one per cent. With improved transport connectivity, the prospect of commercial ties with the region is stronger now.
- Strategically too, connectivity with Central Asia will help India. Peace and stability in CARs and Afghanistan is one of the most crucial factors for India's security. India can now play greater role in the region.
- There is a vast scope for furthering bilateral ties in education and English-language teaching from schools to universities, healthcare, tourism, agriculture and agro-processing industries, pharmaceuticals and more. Connectivity will be boon for all.

Thus, India has to compete and succeed in Central Asia as the stakes are high.

11. *Whether the Supreme Court Judgement (July 2018) can settle the political tussle between the Lt. Governor and elected government of Delhi? Examine.*

Approach

1. *Brief insight into the Supreme Court Judgement (July 2018) (40-50 words)*
2. *Analysis of the judgement (100-120 words)*
3. *Conclusion (30 words)*

Hints:

In light of the appeals filed by the NCT government against the verdict of the Delhi High Court, which had declared that the L-G has "complete control of all matters regarding the National Capital Territory of Delhi, and nothing will happen without the concurrence of the L-G." The **Supreme Court Judgement (July 2018)** by a five judge constitutional bench pronounced its verdict ruling that the **Delhi government has power in all areas except land, police and public order and the LG is bound by the aid and advice of the government in areas other than those exempted.**

The Supreme Court observed:

- **The L-G is bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers.** In case of difference of opinion, **the L-G should straightaway refer the dispute to the President for a final decision.**
- The Lieutenant-Governor should act as a "facilitator" for good governance in the national capital and not as an "obstructionist".
- The Lieutenant-Governor's authority, saying he cannot exercise his discretion in "each and every matter" of daily governance. **His discretionary powers are in fact limited to only matters in the State List — public order, police and land —** over which the legislative power of the Delhi Legislative Assembly stand excluded under Article 239AA.
- **The NCT government need only to inform the L-G of its "well-deliberated" decisions.** The government need not obtain his "concurrence" on every issue of day-to-day governance.
- The elected government could make policies on laws enacted by its own Assembly. **The executive power of the NCT government was co-extensive with its legislative powers.**

Analysis of the Judgement

Although the verdict has clearly demarcated the jurisdiction of authority of the L-G and the Delhi government, the verdict, however, **did not address a critical issue** which could still be the bone of contention in future litigation, i.e., **the exact ambit of the provision to Article 239AA (4) of the Constitution** and this might

prove to be a stumbling block for the Delhi government whenever it is not ruled by the party which is in power at the Centre. Article 239AA provides for **special provisions with respect to the National Capital**. **Sub-clause 4 of the said Article** provides that the Council of Ministers shall aid and advise the Lt. Governor. It reads as follows:

“There shall be a Council of Ministers consisting of not more than ten percent, of the total number of members in the Legislative Assembly, with the Chief Minister at the head to aid and advise the Lieutenant Governor in the exercise to his functions in relation to matters with respect to which the Legislative Assembly has power to make laws, except in so far as he is, by or under any law, required to act in his discretion.”

However, the provision states that **in case the Lt. Governor has a difference of opinion on any matter, he can refer it to the President, whose decision in this regard shall be binding**. Thus, this provision effectively vests in the Lt. Governor **the power to stall and overturn the actions/decisions taken by the Delhi government with respect to any matter by referring it to the President**.

While both the judgments – that of the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court – dealt with myriad issues including the status of Delhi (whether it is a Union Territory or State) and the scope of the term “aid and advice”, it is the interpretation of this provision alone which would hold the key when it comes to the battle for Delhi. Failing to provide a concrete answer to when the Lt. Governor should exercise his power under the proviso, the Court goes on to state that difference of opinion between the Lt. Governor and the Council of Ministers should have a sound rationale and the former should not adopt an obstructionist attitude. However, the practicality and feasibility of the recommendation is subjective in nature and a loophole when it comes to the actual exercise of power. Effectively, the power of the Lt. Governor under the proviso remains, and given that the situations wherein he can exercise the said power have not been circumscribed, the future exercise of this power could lead to political tensions similar to the current one.

L-G’s role is not that of a Constitutional figurehead, though the ultimate responsibility for good administration of Delhi is vested in the President acting through the Administrator. However, to avoid the contention, the Administrator should take a more active part in the administration than the Governor of a State and in cases of difference of opinion refer to President for a final decision. This should however be kept as a last resort.

12. *How far do you agree with the view that tribunals curtail the jurisdiction of ordinary courts? In view of the above, discuss the constitutional validity and competency of the tribunals in India.*

Approach

1. **Brief introduction on Tribunals (30-40 words)**
2. **Constitutional validity and competency of Tribunals (120-140 words)**
3. **Conclusion (30-40 words)**

Hints:

Tribunals are **specialised courts in addition to the formal judiciary** added in the Constitution by **Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976** as Part XIV-A, articles viz. **323-A (administrative tribunals) and 323-B (tribunals for other matters) for dealing with disputes regarding a particular kind of law**. These were established to **reduce the burden of formal judiciary** and to **bring expertise and speed to dispute resolution**. However, over the years, concerns from various stakeholders have been raised over the **tribunalisation of courts** time and again claiming usurpation of certain judicial power from the courts under the garb of **Article 50, i.e., the doctrine of separation of power**. This authorises that the State shall take steps to separate the judiciary from the executive in the public services of the State whenever the need be.

However, despite so many concerns, tribunals have been pivotal and effective in addressing disputes in past. They may adjudicate on matters under their jurisdiction but the ultimate power lies with the High Courts and the Supreme Court. With nearly three crore cases pending in Indian courts coupled with vacancies in judiciary is proving detrimental to the efficient functioning of judiciary tribunals act as a relief to the overburdened courts. In a modern society, implementation of Separation of Powers doctrine in its strictest sense is an extremely difficult task. In this complex era of social networking and cybercrimes we need to have tribunals with experts who can deliver justice without undue delay.

Competency of Tribunals

- a. **Reduced burden on courts** at all levels significantly. Example: Central Administrative tribunal established in 1985, National Green Tribunal.

- b. **Reduced delays and complication in delivery of judgement** related to government services disputes, tax claims and business and financial markets disputes. Courts are governed by strict procedure defined in CrPC, IPC and the Indian Evidence Act. Whereas Tribunal follow **principles of Natural Justice**. Thus, less procedural delay and legal obligations.
- c. For **ensuring efficiency and independence** (Administrative tribunals CAT, SAT),
- d. Deal with matters requiring **specialized knowledge** (National Green Tribunal, Intellectual Property Appellate Board etc. income tax appellate tribunal, EC etc) and thus have **expert members** also apart from judicial member with efficient and competent knowledge and rich experiences in adjudication on those matters.
- e. To provide **speedy resolution of disputes** as they generally have original jurisdiction for that particular subject matter (appellate authority under CIC)
- f. To provide **cheap remedy (Lok Adalat)**

While it may seem that executive is taking over judiciary in the form of tribunals it would be premature to view tribunals as agents of executive in judicial proceedings. In our parliamentary form of governance, a lot of cooperation is required and thus each organ must correspond to the other on some level so as to function smoothly. Since vesting any one organ with too much power maybe very dangerous, a system of checks and balances should be developed. However, in the past it has been realised that finding retired judges and competent candidates with qualifications set out by Parliament, to be members of quasi-judicial tribunals has been a difficult task. Therefore, restructured effort must be made just like the NJAC act, to develop a statutory framework to ensure selection of eminent persons to these offices and further reforms to empower them.

13. *Indian and USA are two large democracies. Examine the basic tenets on which the two political systems are based.*

Approach

1. **General similarities between India and USA (50 words)**
2. **Core features that are similar (150 words)**
3. **Way forward (50 words)**

Hints:

The United States and India can both lay claims to the title of being the world's largest democracy — albeit by different metrics. The United States for its economy and India for the number of people it is home to.

National politics in the two countries shares common features. Both countries are basically federations of states which themselves have great political and economic powers.

1. **Written constitution:** Both US and India have a written constitution based on which the federal political structure has been set up and both federal governments are functioning. Both constitutions have provisions for amending the constitution to meet the growing socio, political and economic needs and demands of their respective countries.
2. **Bill of Rights and Fundamental Rights:** The US constitution has ensured the fundamental rights of its citizens like right to equality, freedom, right against exploitation, freedom of religion, cultural and educational rights, etc. The Indian constitution has guaranteed the fundamental rights of the people through articles 14 to 34 in Part III.
3. **Supremacy of the Federal or Union Government:** Both in US and India, states which have acceded to the Federal set up have no unilateral power to secede from the Federal Government or the Union Government. The law enacted by the Federal or Union Government will have overriding effect over the law enacted by the states on the same subject.
4. **Division of Labor and Separation of Powers:** The executive governs the country, the legislature enacts laws and the judiciary administers justice. President of US is the chief executive head of US, whereas the Union cabinet headed by the Prime Minister is the real chief executive body in India.

Both the US and India have a bicameral legislature. US legislature has an upper and lower house known as the House of Senate and the House of Representatives respectively and the Indian Parliament has Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha as its Lower and Upper house respectively.

Both US and India have a well-organized judiciary, having the Supreme Court or the Federal Court as the apex court and a number of other courts in various states to administer original and appellate jurisdictions.

5. **Powers of Checks and Balances:** Though there exists a clear-cut division of labor known as separation of powers into executive, legislature and judiciary in both countries, still there is a threat to democracy. The powers of checks and balances have been the effective mechanism both in the US and in India in safeguarding the democracy in both countries.

To maximize the partnership's potential, both countries must continue to adjust to each other's fundamentally different operational philosophies and identify new areas of convergence.

When it comes to developing multilateral solutions to global challenges, the United States and India often have different short-term priorities and operational philosophies. India has long rejected multilateral efforts that it believes are built on assumptions that favor developed Western powers. For this reason, India and the United States clash at the WTO and on issues like climate change.

14. *How is the Finance Commission of India constituted? What do you know about the terms of reference of the recently constituted Finance Commission? Discuss.*

Approach

1. *Constitution of the Finance Commission of India (30-40 words)*
2. *Terms of reference of the 15th Finance Commission (60-70 words)*
3. *Controversial terms in the reference (60-70 words)*
4. *Conclusion (30 words)*

Hints:

Constitution of finance Commission:

The Finance Commission is **constituted by the President every fifth year or at such earlier time as he considers necessary**. The **Constitution authorises the Parliament to determine the qualifications** of members of the commission and the manner in which they should be selected. As per the provisions contained in the **Finance Commission [Miscellaneous Provisions] Act, 1951** and **The Finance Commission (Salaries & Allowances) Rules, 1951**, the **Chairman** of the Commission is selected from among persons who have had experience in public affairs, and the **four other members** are selected from among persons who—

- (a) are, or have been, or are qualified to be appointed as Judges of a High Court; or
- (b) have special knowledge of the finances and accounts of Government; or
- (c) have had wide experience in financial matters and in administration; or
- (d) have special knowledge of economics

15th Finance Commission:

The Union Government on 27 November 2017 constituted **Fifteenth Finance Commission** under the chairmanship of former bureaucrat **NK Singh**. The Commission will make recommendations for five years commencing on 1 April 2020. The Commission will submit its report by 30 October 2019.

Terms of Reference of 15th Finance Commission:

- It will make recommendations on the **distribution of net proceeds of taxes** between Centre and States.
- It will recommend the **principles which will govern the grants-in-aid of the revenues** of the States out of the **Consolidated Fund of India**.

- It will recommend **measures needed to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement the resources of the Panchayats and Municipalities** on the basis of the recommendations made by the State Finance Commission.
- It will **review the current status of the finance, deficit, debt levels, cash balances and fiscal discipline efforts** of the Centre and the States and recommend a **fiscal consolidation roadmap** for sound fiscal management.
- It will **look at the resources of the Central Government and the State Governments** for the five years commencing on 1 April 2020 on the basis of the levels of tax and the non-tax revenues.
- It will look at the **impact of GST**, including payment of compensation for possible loss of revenues for 5 years and abolition of a number of cesses and other structural reforms programme on the finances of Centre and States.
- It may **review the present arrangements on financing Disaster Management initiatives**, with reference to the funds constituted under the **Disaster Management Act, 2005** and make appropriate recommendations thereon.
- It will **indicate the basis on which it has arrived at its findings** and make available the State wise estimates of receipts and expenditure.
- The Commission can also **use the population data of 2011** while making its recommendations.

Contentious issues raising the questions of constitutional propriety:

- Southern states have raised objections over the **directive to use population data in the ToR from the 2011 Census and not the 1971 Census** that was used as this would imply massive cut in their share of the devolutions from the central government.
- Term of reference (ToR) which asks to examine **whether revenue deficit grants be provided at all**, questions the very objective of Article 275 which enables the Commission to give grants to offset post-devolution gaps between normatively assessed revenues and expenditures.
- The ToR seek to reduce the role of Article 275, which is a legitimate channel for grants, and asks the Commission to leave it more fiscal space to **expand grants under Article 282**, which is questionable.
- Asking the Commission to take into account the performances in implementation of various Central schemes is equally contentious. **Performances must be built into the implementation of schemes** and not into the tax devolution formula.

The Constitution of India envisages the Finance Commission as the **balancing wheel of fiscal federalism in India under article 280** of the Constitution as a **constitutional, quasi-judicial, advisory body**, mainly to give its recommendations on **distribution of tax revenues between the Union and the States and amongst the States themselves**. The Finance Commission forms one of the most important organ for **unitary administration** in India more so after the negation of Planning commission as the present government is working towards enhanced cooperative, competitive and fiscal federalism. This demands **cooperation among the states and their coming together** for the early resolution of the issues regarding the terms of reference which have raised the question of constitutional propriety and work towards **redressing the vertical imbalances between the taxation powers and expenditure responsibilities of the centre and the States** respectively and **equalization of all public services across the States**.

15. *Assess the importance of the Panchayat system in India as a part of local government. Apart from government grants, what sources the Panchayats can look out for financing developmental projects?*

Approach

1. *Briefly introduce Panchayat System in India (30 words)*
2. *Discuss the importance of PRI's (80 words)*
3. *Sources of finance (60 words)*
4. *Measures to strengthen PRIs (50 words)*
4. *Conclusion (30 words)*

Hints:

India is a federal republic with three spheres of government: central (union), state and local. The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments give recognition and protection to local government and in addition each state has its own local government legislation. They are the statutory bodies which are elected at village, block and district level.

Panchayati Raj Institution:

- The PRIs are the local self-governing bodies that ensure the opportunity for people's participation and involvement in the formulation and implementation of rural development programmes.
- The main objective of Panchayat System in India is to strengthen the base of democracy at the grass root level.
- It was introduced as a real democratic political apparatus which would bring the masses into active political control from below, from the vast majority of the weaker, poor sections of rural India.
- They play the role of a catalytic agent in integrating development of tribal masses in rural areas.

Sources of finance:

- The taxes imposed by the Village Panchayats are important source of income of Gram Panchayats, such as:
 1. taxes on land and houses,
 2. the custom duty
 3. toll tax
 4. license fees
- Money comes also as grants-in-aid from the Central or the State government or from the Zilla Parishad or Panchayat Samiti.
- Another source of earning of the Panchayat is the loan collected from the Central government, the State government or other financial agencies. Money collected from gifts through Government schemes such as MPLADS also becomes a source of earning for the Panchayat.

Way ahead:

- Sufficient funds should be given for meeting critical gaps in local infrastructure and other development requirements.
- Developing capacities of the faculty of state panchayat resource centres and district resource centres
- Strengthening PESA, **Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan and other schemes.**
- Promote devolution of powers and responsibilities to Panchayats according to the spirit of the Constitution and PESA Act.

Hence, by strengthening Panchayati Raj, local governance will be strengthened at the grass root level that would enhance accountability and increase space for people's participation.

16. *Multiplicity of various commissions for the vulnerable sections of the society leads to problems of overlapping jurisdiction and duplication of functions. Is it better to merge all commissions into an umbrella Human Rights Commission? Argue your case.*

Approach

1. *Safeguards for the vulnerable sections (60 words)*
2. *Advantages of a unified Human Rights Commission (50 words)*
3. *Cons of such a unified body (50 words)*
4. *How to improve present situation (50 words)*
5. *Conclusion (30-40 words)*

Hints:

Vulnerable groups are those groups of society which would be susceptible under any unfavorable situations. In India the vulnerable groups include Women, Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Children, etc.

These vulnerable section needs consideration for safeguarding their interests. For their accelerated socio-economic development and protections, several commissions such as National Commission for SCs, National Commission for STs, National Commission for Women, National Commission for Child Rights are provided in the constitution or through statute.

These commissions have similar objectives to provide safeguards against the exploitation of these vulnerable groups and to promote and protect their social, educational, economic and cultural interests, WHICH sometimes lead to problems of overlapping jurisdiction and duplication of functions. For example, National commission for women protects women against violence and is also protected by Human rights Commission.

Pros of integration of all the Commissions into umbrella Human Rights Commission

- **Efficient use of Resources** (Financial, Human, time) as there will be no issue of overlapping of functions.
- Vulnerable **will not get contrary judgements** from different commissions. As many of them have power of civil court.
- Issues of vulnerable sections such as Women and children are inter-related, so holistic solution can be derived.

However, there are **some cons** in merging all the commissions

- Human Rights commission will be **overburdened**.
- **Centralization** might make it difficult to help someone responsible for protection of vulnerable rights.
- **Different issues of different vulnerable groups** need Expert analysis or inputs. It will get hampered as there will be resource crunch.

Suggestions

- **Rationalization** of resources.
- Giving **more autonomy** and power to these commissions
- **Strengthening** their organizational and functional performance.
- **Improving co-ordination** among them.

Every vulnerable group have **specific problems**, that's why we need separate constitutional body to protect their rights (Separate legislature such as Protection of Civil Rights act or Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities Act). Human rights Commission of India has **taken many provisions from International convention of Human Rights because of which it will be difficult for it to consider the socio economic conditions of different vulnerable groups in India**, especially those of SC's/ST's/Women etc.(Issues of reservations).

Therefore, it would be better to **continue with separate commissions for various vulnerable groups but at the same time we should try to streamline the functions and their jurisdiction in a more rational and efficient manner**. So that the purpose for which they have been created can be served better.

17. *How far do you agree with the view that the focus on lack of availability of food as the main cause of hunger takes the attention away from ineffective human development policies in India?*

Approach

1. *Briefly introduce the concept of hunger (40 words)*
2. *Discuss few illustrations (50 words)*
3. *Discuss briefly the ineffectiveness of development policies (60 words)*
4. *Suggest corrective measures (60 words)*
5. *Conclusion (40 words)*

Hints:

India has a “serious” hunger problem and ranks 100th out of 119 countries on the global hunger index — behind North Korea, Bangladesh and Iraq. Despite rapid economic growth in the past two decades, India could not achieve Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of cutting the proportion of hungry people by half. Hence, endemic hunger continues to affect a large proportion of the Indian population.

Thus, India’s high growth has had little impact on food security and the nutrition levels of its population.

Illustrations:

- In 1995, the Government of India implemented a school-feeding program to incentivize children to attend primary school through the provision of a subsidized mid-day meal. However, analysis suggests a high degree of non-compliance, as a large number of children in public schools did not receive the meal. Although provision of a mid-day meal was mandatory in all public, primary schools, only about 50% of the public-school children in the sample who attended school reported benefitting from the program.
- There is a link between nutritional status or health and human effort and productivity. Hunger is thus both a cause and an effect of poverty.
- Hunger can also be equated with chronic food insecurity, as both refer to a situation in which people consistently consume diets inadequate in calories and essential nutrients. This often happens as a result of the inability to access food because of lack of purchasing power.

Challenges:

- In spite of India’s rapid economic growth, there has been a sustained decline in per capita calorie and protein consumption during the past 25 years.
- The existing types of poverty programmes may not be enough to tackle hunger and food insecurity. Important food security issues, like the stability of food consumption, dietary diversity and food absorption and utilisation, are often left out of poverty programmes.
- The NSSO data on consumer expenditure on food indicates a declining trend in the annual per capita consumption of cereals, for all classes of people.
- Various structural imbalances like a high Minimum Support Price (MSP), rising capital intensity, lack of land reforms, failure of poverty alleviation programmes, and no new technological breakthrough in agriculture.

Suggestive measures:

- **Target infant nutrition-** The solution lies in education on good feeding techniques and getting the right nutrients to the mother and child from the beginning of pregnancy.
- It is essential to realise the potential for production surpluses in central and eastern India, where most poor people live. Many states in this region do not benefit from the MSP for rice, as the FCI does not buy paddy from the farmers in these states, but buys it from the millers.
- Public investment has to be considered as a policy instrument for providing effective human development policies.

Thus, in the backdrop of persistent deprivation, poverty and hunger, India needs a balanced and inclusive growth so as to improve the effectiveness of social programmes for attaining better human development outcomes.

Also, malnutrition is a pressing issue, which needs immediate attention if public health schemes and strategies have to be made effective. Henceforth, food supplementation programmes are essential for tackling hunger and food security issues, and for ensuring social equity.

18. *The Citizen's Charter is an ideal instrument of organisational transparency and accountability, but it has its own limitations. Identify the limitations and suggest measures for greater effectiveness of the Citizen's Charters.*

Approach

1. *Briefly introduce Citizen's Charter (40 words)*
2. *Elaborate on its features (50)*
3. *Discuss in detail its limitations (80 words)*
4. *Suggest corrective measures (60 words)*
5. *Conclusion (20 words)*

Hints:

A Citizen's Charter is a set of commitments made by an organization regarding the standards of service which it delivers. As an idea, in India, it was first mooted by the consumer organization called common cause in 1994.

It covers not only the Central Government Ministries/ Departments/ Organizations but also the Departments/ Agencies of State Governments and UT Administrations. As an instrument, it is propagated to make an organization transparent, accountable and citizen friendly.

Features of Citizen Charter

- Increases participation
- Reduces corruption
- Ensures accountability
- It leads to citizen friendliness and citizen convenience
- Increases morality in administration
- Raises efficiency and effectiveness in public delivery system.
- Reduces cost
- Prevents delay and red tapism
- Promotes good governance

Limitations of Citizen Charter

Since the introduction of Citizen Charter in India, there have been concerns regarding its effectiveness, both as information-sharing mechanism as well as grievance redress solution. Other shortcomings realized over the years are:

- **Poor design and weak content:** In a majority of cases, the Charters were not formulated through a consultative process
- **No training has been provided to staff:** By and large, service providers were not familiar with the philosophy, goals and main features of the Charter.
- Further, adequate publicity to the Charters had not been given in any of the Departments evaluated. In most Departments, the Charters are only in the initial or middle stage of implementation
- **Absence of penal provisions in case of non-implementation of the spirit of charter:** Some important ministries have not adopted Citizen Charter on the ground that they are not public organisation like Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Human Resource Development etc. Other Ministries have failed to implement Citizen Charter despite having it like Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Women and Child Development
- **General attitude is that Citizen Charters are directed from top:** No funds have been specifically earmarked for awareness generation of Citizens' Charter or for orientation of the staff on various components of the Charter.
- There is **no mention of citizen's responsibility.**

Way ahead

The last two decades have seen the introduction of Right to Information Act and Right to Public Services Act that make information sharing a legal requisite and shows that it's high time that Citizen Charter program should be revived and reintroduced to government departments so that they can become accountable not only to their customers but to themselves also.

There need for two-pronged approach to ensure that every department of the government has a citizen charter

- Firstly, a revision of existing citizen charter to ensure that they meet with all the critical parameters.
- Secondly, a systematic consensus-based formulation of every citizen charter that is practical and whose commitments are achievable.

This can be ensured through:

- Consultation with all stakeholders
- Orientation training to staff to objective of Citizen Charter
- Publicity campaign
- Creation of database on consumer grievances
- Replication of best practices
- Earmark of budget

19. *What are the key areas of reform if the WTO has to survive in the present context of 'Trade War', especially keeping in mind the interest of India?*

Approach

1. *Problems in WTO structure (60 words)*
2. *Current problems and reasons behind trade wars (80 words)*
3. *Reforms for sustainability of WTO (100 words)*

Hints:

The WTO is at a crossroads. Not only are the multilateral trade negotiations stuck, but overall rule-making has made little progress while alternative trade pacts, not least the mega-regional arrangements, have clearly challenged the position of trade multilateralism.

The rise of emerging countries and the relative decline of traditional economic powers, their various negotiating demands and approaches, the proliferation of preferential trade agreements, and the need to deal with complex new issues, such as climate change and food security, are all shaking the foundations on which the WTO was built some twenty years ago.

The impasse of the Doha Round is not so much a result of transatlantic disagreement as a situation in which highly industrialized countries and large developing countries disagree over the type of market access and protection of vulnerable sectors of the economy.

Current problems

There are clear signals that the current trading system represented by the WTO has lost its utility for the US and the EU. They want a new system by making the current one dysfunctional. While most of US President Donald Trump's current actions like raising tariffs are directed against China, they violate WTO rules.

The US and the EU have not been able to beat China in trade. They are also bound by the commitments made under the WTO rules so they cannot raise import duties without violating WTO rules. But they do not want to meet the WTO obligations such as reducing agriculture subsidies.

Their game plan is to put the old obligations on the back-burner and push the WTO to form rules on e-commerce, an area where the US firms have a clear edge.

Most WTO member countries want them to first deliver on the agreed issues like reduction in agriculture subsidies. This time, the US and EU are unable to bully the developing countries the way they have been doing earlier. The consensus-driven decision-making process leaves no scope for unilateral pushing of the agenda.

Reforms Required:

- The establishment of procedures and practices that are more inclusive of the majority of WTO Members, notably developing countries.
 - Adoption of “peace clauses” for developing country implementation of current agreements. This will formalize the commitments made by major trading powers to allowing “grace periods” and to exercising “due restraint”.
 - The Uruguay Round’s single package approach is not working in the Doha Round and new types of negotiation modes have been advocated.
 - Dispute settlement mechanism must be strengthened and made faster.
 - Separation of political and human rights issues from trade disputes under SPS norms.
20. *In what ways would the ongoing US-Iran Nuclear Pact Controversy affect the national interest of India? How should India respond to its situation?*

Approach

1. *Briefly introduce Iran nuclear pact and recent controversy with Iran (60 words)*
2. *Elaborate on how India's national interest is affected by it (80 words)*
3. *Elaborate on response India should have (80 words)*
4. *Conclusion (30 words)*

Hints:

Donald Trump has withdrawn from the Iran nuclear deal calling it a “disaster” and “one-sided.” The deal was signed between P5+1 (US, the UK, Iran, China, France, Russia, Germany and the European Union) and Iran. Commonly known as Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), under the deal, Iran was to eliminate stockpiles of enriched uranium in return of lifting nuclear-related economic sanctions. Trump also announced the re-imposition of sanctions. Other signatories are not with the US in this pull-out and continue to support the deal. Exiting the deal was part of Trump’s campaign pledge.

Implications for India:

Undeniably, India’s relation with Iran is less crucial than its relations with the USA. But for India, Iran is significant because of India’s energy interests, and connectivity to Afghanistan and Central Asia. Both could be affected by the Trump administration’s withdrawal from the JCPOA.

- **Oil prices:** India may continue to import Iran’s oil but the impact on world oil prices will be the immediately visible impact of the U.S. decision. Iran is presently India’s third biggest supplier (after Iraq and Saudi Arabia), and any increase in prices will hit both inflation levels as well as the Indian rupee. Both countries have instituted several measures in the past few months, including allowing Indian investment in rupees, and initiating new banking channels, between them.
- **Regional connectivity:** The relationship between the two goes beyond energy. India has committed more than \$500 million to develop Chabahar port, which gives New Delhi access to Afghanistan, bypassing Pakistan. Dozens of pacts on trade, regional connectivity and investment were signed during Rouhani’s India visit in February.
- **US-India ties:** For India, it will also add another difficult item to the U.S.-India agenda. Dialogues on it will require India to expend time and resources that are already in short supply.

Thus, while the US decision may have implications on India’s foreign policy, trade relations are unlikely to be impacted.

Indian response:

India has long been a proponent of a “rules-based order” that depends on multilateral consensus and an adherence to commitments made by countries on the international stage. By walking out of the JCPOA, the U.S. government has overturned the precept that such international agreements are made by “States” not just with prevailing governments or regimes. This could also impact all agreements India is negotiating both bilaterally and multilaterally with the U.S., and the government will have to choose its future course factoring in the new U.S. behaviour.

India should engage in private discussion with the U.S. counterparts and other stakeholders to resolve the issue peacefully through dialogue and diplomacy by respecting Iran’s right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy international community’s strong interest in exclusively peaceful nature of Iran’s nuclear programme.



GS SCORE