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कृपया इस स्थान में प्रश्न संख्या के अतिरिक्त कुछ न लिखें।

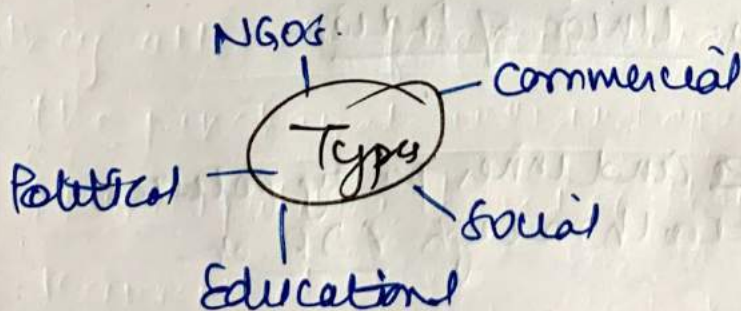
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Q 1) : Illustrate how pressure groups have emerged as a strong mechanism for making democracy participatory and responsive.

Pressure Groups are non-government bodies of civil society who exercise force and pressure to convince the government take appropriate steps and measures of public policy.
(eg. FICCI, EII).



Role:

- 1) Democratic education and information to the public through reports (eg. ADR)

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- ii) Transparency in the political party funding through disclosure of criminal records in the nomination papers.
- iii) Accountability through passing of Right to Information (eg. All India Kisan Sangh).
- iv) Right to negative vote through none of the Above (NOTA) as in People's Union of Civil Liberties case (PUCL - Union of India).
- v) Corruption and intra-party politics information through ADR etc.

Thus, pressure groups have played vital role in making democracy participative and responsive.

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Q 2) : Highlight the importance of State Finance Commission in strengthening fiscal federalism in India. Do you agree with the view that they have not been provided with the necessary environment to play their rightful role?

State Finance Commissions

have been the institutions of financial devolution powers upon states to transfer and allocate finances to local bodies.

Importance :

- (i) They allocate finances among the panchayats and urban municipalities based on their requirements.
- (ii) True local self governance can only be achieved with devolution of financial powers.
- (iii) The various vertical and horizontal differences are considered in decision making

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- (1) Devolution of grants
- (2) To meet the management and governance of grass root democratic institutions.

Issues :

- concentration of taxation powers with the states.
- The Panchayats are totally vulnerable and dependent upon the devolution of grants by states
- It leads to all responsibility and governance, without any financial resources and authority.
- Majority items of 11th and 12th schedule are not devolved.

Thus, they need to devolve more financial powers to the local bodies.

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Q3): Explain the significance and controversies, if any, associated with the Article 35A of the Indian constitution.

Article 35A was introduced as per Presidential order, 1954 as per the powers u/A 370, to give special powers to Jammu and Kashmir, which has been repealed recently -

Significance

- special rights to Jammu and Kashmir
- restriction of right to citizenship to select few
- reservation in government jobs only to Kashmiri
- Right to property and barring alien to buy property in Kashmir

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Issues

Art 35A had the following issues:

- contrary to the equality of Art 14.
- contrary to single citizenship of Indian constitution
- discrimination to Kashmiri women marrying outside the state
- temporary provision under Art XX
- violation of human rights
- against federal structure of India

While the Art 3 of Constitution and Section 3 of J&K Constitution say that J&K is an integral part of India, the age old discrimination should have been and thus, has been repeated

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Q 4): It is of paramount importance to ensure that the Election Commission of India (ECI) be fully insulated from political pressure to maintain the purity of elections. In this context, discuss the need to have a look at the process of appointment and removal of EC.

Elections are the bedrock of democratic body politic and Election Commission WA 324 is the 'bulwark of Indian democracy'!

Importance of Election Commission's independence:

- free and fair elections
- political neutrality
- people's trust
- ideal democracy

Process of appointment:

WA 324, the President appoints the Election Commission at the sole pleasure of the Council of Ministers and the only restriction being conventional practice of being a civil servant.

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The following changes are needed:

- (1) The appointment to be made by a selection committee comprising of ^(a) Prime Minister, ^(b) leader of opposition of lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India (or his nominee), as suggested by 2nd ARC Report.
- (11) The appointment and the terms and salary to be charged on the Consolidated Fund of India.

Removal:

While the constitution states that the Chief Election Commissioner can be removed only the way a judge of Supreme Court is removed, the Election Commissioners can be removed by President on advice of Chief Election Commissioner.

This leads to lack of independence and thus, the Election Commissioner should also be removed in the way the judge of Supreme Court is removed.

The ECI is the supremacy, directs and controller of elections and thus must be an independent body.

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Q.5: By providing new pools of leadership talent, lateral entry will help in addressing the most crucial challenges that the Civil Services in India currently face. Critically evaluate.

NTI Aayog's Report on 'India @ 75'

and 2nd ARC Report suggested lateral entry in the civil services and thus, recently 9 lateral entrants were appointed. (eg. RBI, CEA, etc)

Benefits of Lateral Entry:

- i) New leadership style by the lateral entrants can reduce bureaucratic red tapism.
- ii) The outside in approach through real life corporate or private world knowledge to enhance decision making.
- iii) It can be used to fill the vacancies in the posts as recommended by Baswan Committee.

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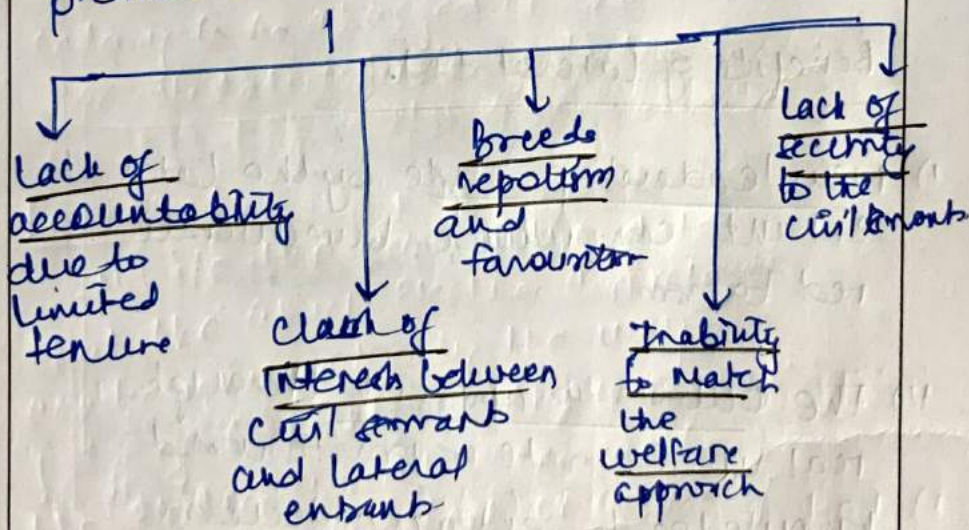
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(iv) The semi-monopolistic attitude and complacency prevalent in the civil servants can be remedied.

(v) Innovative policies and suggestions can be provided.

Issues :

However, the following issues prevail :



NITI Aayog's Three Year Action Agenda also suggested that - However, internal remedies in bureaucracy are essential for long term development.

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Q.6). Public Service delivery in India has long been marked by various issues leading to poor service delivery outcomes. While discussing the reasons for the same, suggest ways to make public service delivery more efficient.

Public Service Delivery means governance aspect of policy implementation in creating democratic delivery of public services by the civil servants to achieve the goal of good governance.



Issues with the Public Service Delivery:

- 1) Lack of accountability and transparency at the governance level.
- 2) Prevalence of elitist attitude of public servants.

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- (3) lack of awareness about public schemes and programmes.
- (4) Top-down approach to policy formulation.
- (5) Lack of participation of the citizens

Measures :

- ① Participative budgeting like Sabli Yojna Sabha Vikas.
- ② Communitisation of service like in Nagaland.
- ③ Citizen Report Card to evaluate the civil servants.
- ④ Social Audit to lead to stakeholder approach.
- ⑤ Citizen charter to lead to transparency.
- ⑥ Lokpal and Lokayuktas to curb corruption.

Good public service is a way of life to lead to good governance.

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Q7: The changing employment landscape across the globe makes it imperative that vocational education be integrated with the school curriculum in India. Discuss.

With growing population and demographic dividend of India, we need to focus on education, skilling and employment of our demographic potential to capitalize on our opportunity. -
vocational education is the right step in the direction -

Importance of vocational education -

- (1) skill development at early stage
- (2) creation of jobs
- (3) pattern of education as per needs of students
- (4) will motivate poor families to send child to school.
- (5) capitalization of demographic dividend
- (6) elimination of structural unemployment
- (8) elimination of poverty -

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Measures of Vocational Education:-

- (i) The Draft National Education Policy, 2019 includes the focus on vocational education-
- (ii) SWAYAM and STRIVE focus on vocational education for employment
- (iii) The Skill India Mission can be merged with vocational education aspect -

While the employment labour force is increasing at a rapid pace, jobs are increasing at half the speed. To ~~see~~ bridge the demand-supply gap, vocational education can solve one end of the problem and help achieve SDG-1.

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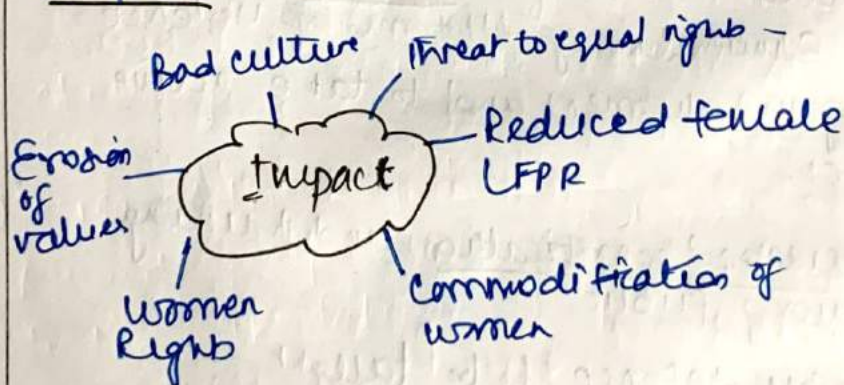
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Q 8): There is need for a more effective implementation of the existing provisions, as well as strengthening the current legal and institutional frameworks for addressing issues related to sexual harassment at work place. Discuss.

Sexual Harassment has increased with increasing avenues of women involvement, leading to a threat to women development and gender equality. With increasing women empowerment, Sexual Harassment at workplace has reached the epitome.



Measures taken by government in the regard are:

- 1) Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act passed to create stringent punishment and measure.

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- 2) Internal Complaints Committee at all organisations employing > 10 persons
- 3) SHE-BOX portal to report violence -
- 4) SHOUT feature to make the people aware
- 5) Swadhar Greh to rehabilitate women and empower them towards rights -

Measures further needed :-

- 1) India has ratified CEDAW (Convention for Elimination of All forms of violence against women) and to take active steps
- II) Increased sensitisation and training among public -
- III) Self-defence to be taught -
- IV) MeToo campaigns to be more inclusive and expansive -

To achieve SDG-5 and inclusive development of women, the harassment at workplace needs to stop and permeate equality -

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Q 9): Discuss the challenges that India may face in the eventuality of withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan. What options does India have to safeguard its interests in the context of the changing situation?

Due to the rising protectionism in the US and due to change in power dynamics, the US has decided to withdraw troops from Afghanistan.

Challenges for India:

India might face the following challenges as a result of above:

- i) Increased threat of terrorism as the Al Qaeda group can spread towards India with Pakistan's help.
- ii) Economic repercussions may follow as India has many investments and projects in Afghanistan, which can be threatened. (eg. Kalade Zaranj Delaram, ~~the~~ power pipeline TAPI).
- iii) Drug trafficking and humans can increase.

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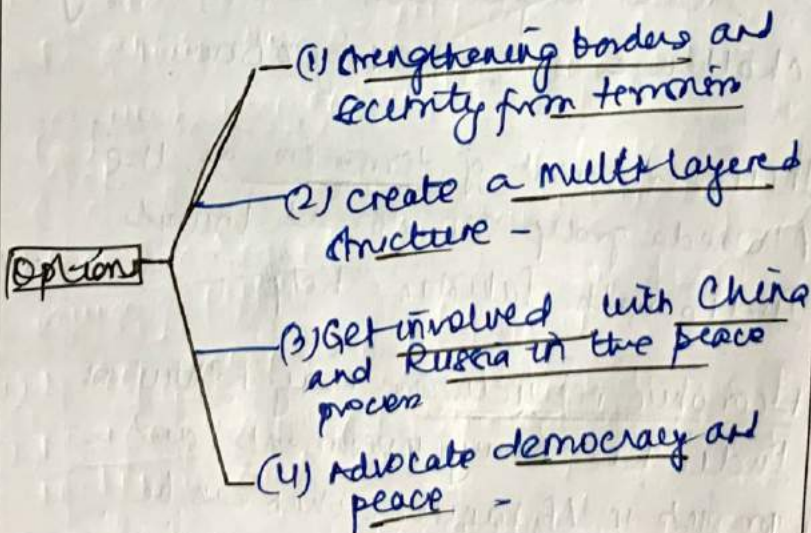
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11) Geopolitical issues wherein India may get sidelined due to increased involvement of China and Pakistan in dispute resolution

12) Connectivity issues as INSTC, and Connect West Asia Policy can get affected due to deterioration of the country.

Options available to India :



India has outrightly rejected the option of sending troops as that will be against non-interference policy. However, we need to take a cautious stance to protect our interests -

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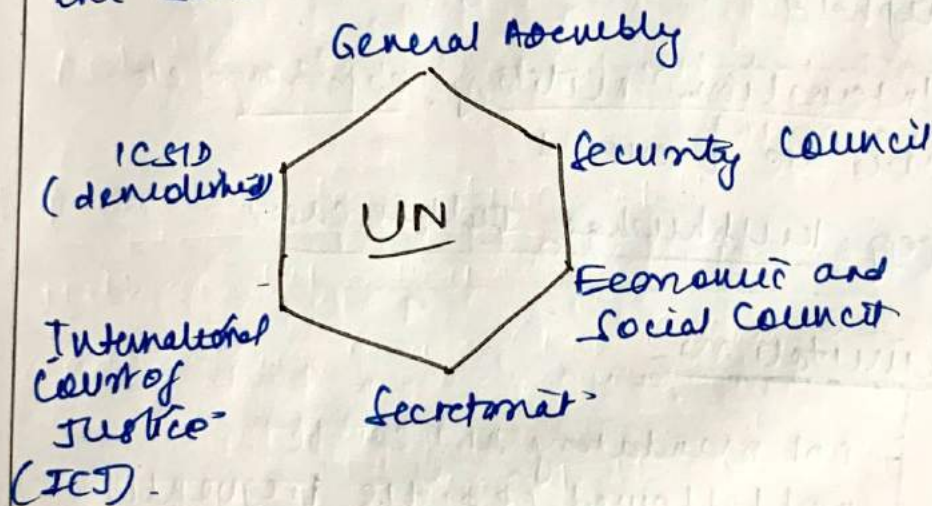
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Q 10) Highlight the role and significance of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the peaceful settlement of international disputes. Also, discuss some limitations with regard to functioning of ICJ.

The United Nations is a 6 member organ body established in 1946 after the Second World War.



Significance of ICJ :-

- (1) Peaceful resolution of disputes between member nations.
- (2) Control over all the decisions of dispute taken in UNGA or UNSC.
- (3) The wide mandate makes it a major dispute resolution body.

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- (4) The financial, peacekeeping, general administration disputes can be solved.
- (5) International Rule of law
- (6) Human Rights are maintained and upheld.
- (7) International military, espionage etc cases are discussed.
(eg, Kulbhusan Jadhav case).

Limitations:

- not mandatory and can be not followed. (eg, US frequently flouted the demand of ICJ).
- mainly seen to have a bias towards western nations
- Representation is skewed towards developed countries
- no power to enforce decisions
- dependent upon nation member forces.

Thus, IJT needs to be reconstituted as a powerful body of international dispute settlement.

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Q 11) Indian Constitution displays multiple features adopted from the practices around the world. Explain. How did the Government of India Act 1935 influence the constitution of Independent India?

The Indian Constitution has been the largest written constitution in the world, wherein various constitutions from various countries have contributed according to the needs of Indian democracy. It has been called a beautiful patchwork as under:

France : Liberty, equality, Fraternity.

US : independence of judiciary, Fundamental Rights

UK : parliamentary form, Rule of Law

Ireland : Directive Principles of State Policy

Germany : Emergency provisions

USSR : Fundamental Duties

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Influence of Government of India Act, 1935 :-

The following features of Indian Constitution have been adopted from Government of India Act, 1935 :-

- 1) Bicameral Legislature at the centre with an Upper House (Rajya Sabha) and a Lower House (Lok Sabha).
- 2) Responsible Executive to the legislature the bedrock of parliamentary form of government to achieve stability and responsibility.
- 3) Governor U/A 163 to be a representative of the centre at the states leading to coordination.

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4) Civil Services with UPSC, SPSC to regulate the appointment of merit based civil services and all India services U/A 312

5) Supreme Court powers from the Government of India Act, 1935 to achieve judicial sovereignty

6) Parliamentary Committees and Budgets & checks on executive by legislature -

However, the various provisions have been modified to suit the Indian needs and created the social ethical document of Constitution

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Q12). Highlighting different Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms available in India, explain their importance. Also, mention different measures that have been adopted to further improve the framework of ADR in India.

Due to easy access of judiciary, the judicial cases pending and reduced inefficiencies have increased, which lead to the focus upon Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms.

ADR means resolution of disputes outside judicial process

ADR mechanisms in India

Arbitration
An independent arbitrator appointed by the parties leading to an inherent resolution. The decision is binding.

Mediation
The independent party brings in solution only at the initiative of the parties.

Conciliation
The conciliator analyzes the dispute and gives a solution.

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Importance of ADR :

Importance

- (1) It leads to speedy resolution -
- (2) The court pendency can be reduced as ADR lead to out of judiciary settlement -
- (3) The expensive of the independent parties can lead to long term solution
- (4) Since this is resolution at inherent initiations of parties, it leads to long term peaceful relation.
- (5) Efficiency of courts can be increased as only questions of law are forwarded in appeals.
- (6) The international trust is maintained.
- (7) FDI increases -

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However, the ultimate resort to judiciary can lead to extended cases and docket explosion.

Measures:

India has taken various measures to efficiently organise ADR in disputes:

- (i) Arbitration Council of India has been established to perform grading of arbitrators at various levels.
- (ii) Commercial Courts, Commercial Division, Commercial appellate division Bill has been passed for district courts and high courts, with defined threshold limit.
- (iii) International Financial Resolution Centre established at Delhi for international disputes.

'Justice delayed is justice denied' - this maxim is behind ADR and should be strengthened further -

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Q B) :- Success of the institutions of local self governance depends on the attitude of state. Discuss in the context of Constitution and recent working experience.

Local self governance or participatory grass root governance as propounded by Gandhi involves the inclusion of the public at large to make laws and implement policies.

Constitutional provisions dealing with local self governance :-

- Art 40 of Directive Principles of State Policy direct the inclusion of locals in decision-making.

- The 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment Acts, 1992 introduced local governance at panchayats and urban local bodies.

- Part IX and IX-A includes provisions for above.

- 11th and 12th schedule include the list of areas at which the local bodies have discretion.

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However, these are subject to the state discretion because :

- (1) Local governance is a states subject U/A 246 and ~~they~~ they have the power.
- (11) State Finance Commissions are the bodies that have the right to and powers to devolve the taxes and revenues to local bodies.
- (111) They are under State Election Commission, which are under the state's purview.
- (1111) The powers and areas in 11th and 12th schedule are totally at the discretion of states.
- (11111) The amendment act mention certain compulsory provisions and certain optional ones.

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कृपया इस स्थान में प्रश्न संख्या के अतिरिक्त कुछ न लिखें।

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Working of local institutions in India

However, grassroots democracy have been permeated in the Indian States with Gram Sabhas made more powerful day by day.

→ Gram Sabhas have rights under Forest Rights Act, minor forest produce, etc

→ The 5th and 6th schedule states enjoy greater powers.

→ However, the financial powers are still lacking.

— only 6% of direct revenue is in the hands of panchayats and major tax power is the states

— The Devolution Index includes:

- (I) Functions -
- (II) Funds -
- (III) Functionaries -

These are variable across regions and states.

To attain sarvodaya and democracy in true means, local bodies need to be given more power, and implemented.

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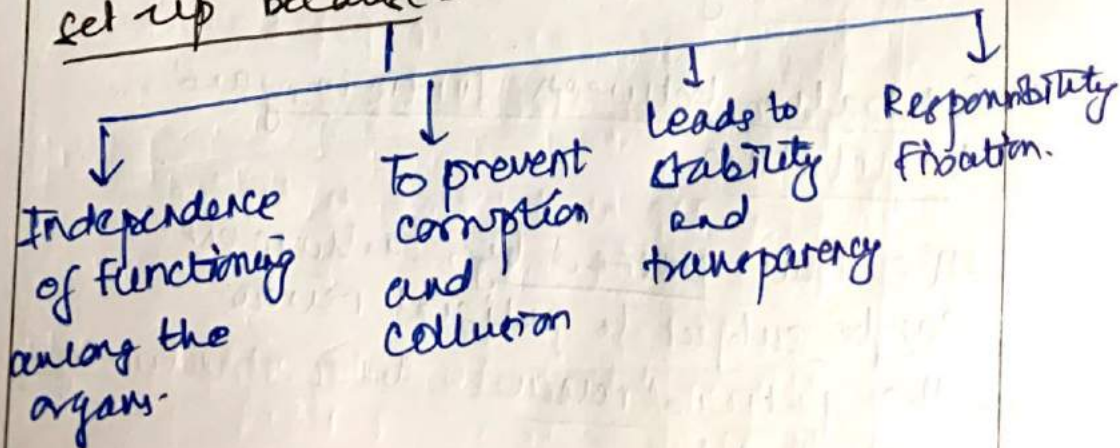
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Q14). Explain why doctrine of separation of powers is an important part of Democracy. Also, discuss this Doctrine in Indian Context. Explain the Principles of Checks and Balances.

In the Indian democracy, the 3 organs of state ~~are~~ namely Executive, Legislature and Judiciary are independent of each other in functioning and authority to certain extent. Montesquieu gave the concept of separation of Powers Doctrine to lead to efficient and effective administration.

Doctrine of separation of Powers is indispensable part of democratic set up because:-



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The USA follows perfect separation of power, with the 3 organs truly separated in water-tight compartments. However, India follows a partially-

India's context:

1) Separation between Executive and Judiciary:

- Art 50 of Directive Principles propounds separation between executive and judiciary
- the civil and criminal administration at district courts have been separated.
- there is no interference of executive in judiciary's appointment or removal.
- The judiciary plays little role in restriction of executive -

11) Separation between Judiciary and Legislature:

- The laws passed by Parliament can be subject to judicial review
- The judicial review is basic structure of constitution -
- Parliamentary functions are not interfered by judiciary.

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11) Separation between Legislature and Executive:

Although executive is a part of legislature, the executive functioning is independent of ~~ex~~ legislature -

However, due to Parliamentary form of government, both are inter-twined -

Principles of Checks and Balances:

- The legislature can keep executive under check through:

(i) Parliamentary committees

(ii) Budgets

(iii) Zero Hour, Question Hour, etc

(iv) CAG -

- The judiciary through Judicial activism and PIL can keep reasonable restrictions on executive and judiciary -

- The legislature can declare Emergency -

Thus, India does not follow complete separation of powers as in presidential form. This is to ensure check and balance for welfare state -

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Q.15: Focussing on technology without realising that e-Governance is about ushering reforms in governance has meant that potential of e-governance has not been realised. Discuss and suggest measures.

E-governance means emerging governance trends using the growing technology and IT. The rising ICT trends has focused in a shift to e-governance and m-governance, as in Digital India and National e-Governance Mission (NEGM)

However India has been focussing too much on technology and ignoring the Reforms in governance.



However, the following loopholes in governance remain:

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- 1) e-Literacy : ~~Digital~~ literacy of the masses is necessary to undertake e-governance which is lacking.
- 11) e-connectivity : When the electricity and mobile phones don't reach the masses, the internet connectivity remains far-fetched.
- 111) e-empowerment - wherein the behavioural change, motivation and attitude consideration is missing.
- 112) Inclusive Growth : If the basic governance is not focusing on growth and development of the masses, including the lower rung, the e-governance can never achieve its objectives.
- 113) Transparency and accountability is still lacking due to bureaucratic attitude and thus we need to make the system transparent and accountable.

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Measures: The following measures can be taken:

- 1) Standardisation and measurement through citizen charter and service delivery.
- 11) Communitisation of services through stakeholder approach e.g. Right to Information being made inclusive.
- 111) Digital literacy like VTSARA and Digital literacy programme to be strengthened to achieve the goal.
- 14) Accountability of civil servants to be made people centric through SPARROW
- 15) Stakeholder approach to include citizens as clients and achieve Service.

Grievance Redressal is also an important aspect to create e-governance that is inclusive and beneficial. Second ARC Report also focused on these aspects.

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Q.16: Discuss why the definition of public authorities under RTI Act is a contentious issue. Also explain the rationale behind CIC's directive that national political parties be covered by RTI Act.

The Right to Information Act, 2005 gives legislative sanction to the fundamental Right to information UPA 19(1)(a). It is a right step in the direction of shunning secrecy in governance and heading towards transparency.

Public Authorities:

Under Section 2(h) of the RTI Act, 2005, public authorities are defined as:

- i) any body created by constitution
- ii) any body created under central legislature
- iii) any body created under state legislature
- iv) any body created under the order of jurisprudence
- v) any body, their officers, chairman and member substantially controlled or financed by the government.

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Reason for contention:

However, the definition of public authorities up 2(h) has been contentious because:

- 1) The term 'substantially' has not been defined by the Act, and thus, leads to open debate and legislative hurdles.
- 11) the political parties argue to be not under the definition and thus, outside the purview of RTI Act.
- 11D) The judiciary also claims to be exempt from the checks of RTI Act.
- 11Y) However, Kerala State Cooperative Society case ruled that 'control' here means day to day operations control and not merely regulatory control.
- Y) The terms financed and control prefixed by substantially, thus breeds multiple interpretations and leads to laxity.

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Inclusion of political parties:

On a plea filed by the ADR, the Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) in Subhash Chandra Agarwal case ruled that political parties comes within the purview of public authorities due to the following reasons:

- i) The political parties like public authorities use public resources in the form of office space, air time, exemption from income tax, etc.
- ii) The political parties are an important organ of state as they form the executive, when in power.
- iii) The Right to Information Act 19(1)(a) empowers the citizens to have knowledge about the functioning of political parties.
- iv) To ensure transparency and accountability.

However, the political parties maintain that they are not intended to be included and thus, have not appointed public Information officer, thus flouting CIC orders.

The RTI is a powerful beacon light that illuminates the darkness of secrecy in governance, and thus, must be followed in letter and spirit.

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Q-17: Universal Health coverage is a worldwide goal. However, achieving the in India is challenging - Analyze. In the context, discuss the significance of Ayushman Bharat.

Universal Health Coverage is one of the constituents of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of the UN. It is essential to create a developing body politic.

It can bring many out of poverty -

Importance of Health Coverage in India

demographic dividend capitalisation -

Health is wealth leading to increased GDP.

Health is a Right to Life and dignity U/A 21.

However, it remains a challenging task for India because

- 1) Only 1.5% of GDP is spent on health and thus, the meagre amount cannot lead to the goal.
- 2) The medical facilities and infrastructure in the form of hospitals and clinics is negligibly missing.

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(11) Educated doctors, nurses with proper degrees is a major impediment.
Around 50% of doctors in rural areas are without graduation degree -

(12) Prevalance of quackery and informal medication -

(13) Lack of facilities in rural areas when 60% of Indians reside there -

Poor health has been costing 2-3% of GDP of India as per WHO -

In the above context, National Health Policy, 2017 came up and Ayushman Bharat was launched.

Ayushman Bharat scheme:

The Government in Budget 2018-19 launched Ayushman Bharat with 2 components:

↓
Health and Wellness centres
(i.e. lakh centres for primary health and non-communicable diseases) -

↓
Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna (PM-JAY)

- to provide upto ₹ 500000 per family per year to 10 crore families for secondary and tertiary health.

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Features and Significance :

- Beneficiaries** : It covers 10 crore families, about 50 crore people identified under SECE by the state and thus is inclusive in nature.
- Cooperative Federalism** : It empowers the states to choose either Trust Model or Insurance Model and contribution by Central Govt being 60%.
- Universality** as it has the feature of National portability, thus beneficial to migrants.
- Aspects of health** : The scheme covers primary, secondary and tertiary health aspects leading to systematic coverage.

Apathy from States -

Issues

Lack of Fiscal space

Lack of trained doctors

Lack of infrastructure

The scheme is a right step to increase the expenditure on health to 2.5% of GDP by 2023 and leading to fulfilling SDG-3 of universal health.

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Q:18: The strategy of combating poverty in India must rest on both effective implementation of anti-poverty programmes and employment intensive economic growth. Discuss.

'Poverty means lack of capabilities and opportunities to fulfil the needs, rights and aspirations of people' -

Amartya Sen -

Although India has come a long way in pulling many out of poverty, still around 15% of people are below poverty line. It leads to blot on democracy and an impediment to inclusive growth.

Poverty Alleviation

anti-poverty programmes

self employment and employment in jobs

Since independence India has followed a mix of both the programmes as under:

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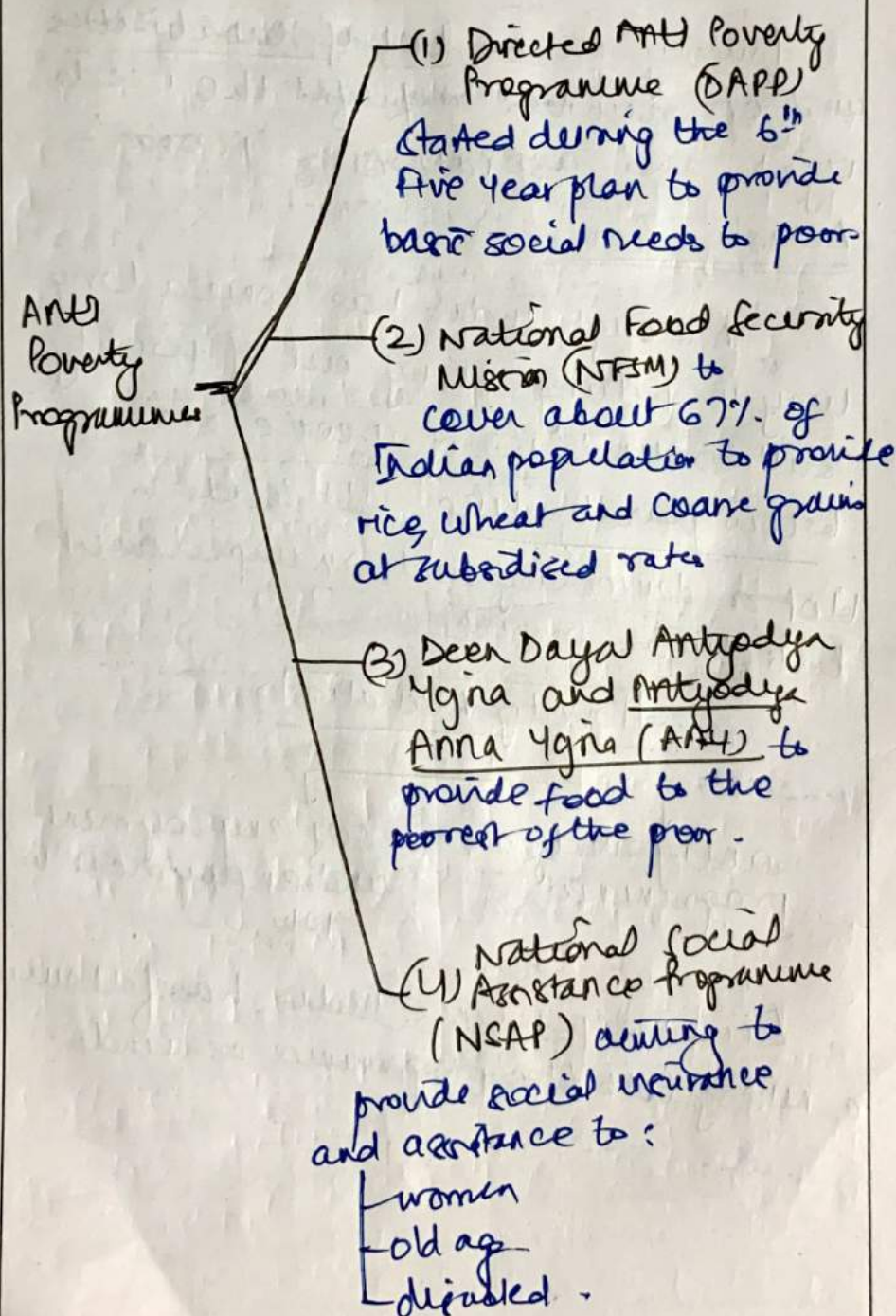
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(A) Anti Poverty Programmes:

These take the shape of subsidies, direct transfer and hand-holding of the poor as under:



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(B) Employment intensive:

However, as is a saying: 'You give a man a fish, you feed him for a day, teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.'

Thus, following employment generating programmes have been taken:

- i) National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojna to provide skill based training and employment.
- ii) MGNREGA which is statutory right to 100 days employment in unskilled rural asset creation activities.
- iii) Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) to lead to creation of small-scale and micro enterprises and attain a decent living.

As per SDG-1, India is committed to eliminate poverty by 2030. As Lincoln said, 'Poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere'. Thus, the steps need to be enhanced to reach inclusive growth.

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Q:19: Critically assess the performance of SAARC as a regional grouping. Examine if India needs to shift to BIMSTEC?

Henry Kissinger said,

'In international relations, there are no permanent enemies or permanent friends, only permanent interests.'

In the above maxim of diplomacy and foreign relations, India's policy of Neighbourhood First Policy and concentric circle approach make South Asia very important for India.

SAARC:

established in 1985, headquartered in Nepal, SAARC is South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, indicating cooperation in trade, capital, labour, environment and security between 8 countries.

BIMSTEC: is a relatively later grouping between South Asia and South East Asia, established in 1993.

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Bangladesh
Bhutan
India
Nepal
Sri Lanka
Maldives
Pakistan
Afghanistan
SAARC -

Bangladesh
Bhutan
India
Nepal
Sri Lanka
-
-
-
Thailand
Myanmar
BIMSTEC -

Performance of SAARC as a regional grouping :

1) Positive Role :

- (a) created with a view to increased inter-regional trade and economic exchange and it led to many bilateral and multilateral exchanges -
- (b) The regional security and military preparedness has enhanced barring Pakistan -
- (c) SACEP created for economic free trade agreement -
- (d) SACEP for economic environmental concern and conservation -
- (e) The SAARC satellite has been an important achievement -

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11) Negatives

However, the following concerns remain:

- Lack of mutual trust between countries like Pakistan and India, Nepal and India, etc
- The other countries perceive India as a Big Brotherly attitude, dysfunctional
- Bilateral engagements have substituted SAARC-
- Terrorism by Pakistan has brought the SAARC at standstill since 11/9 attack in 2001.

Thus, India shifted focus to BIMSTEC, however, it has its own pros and cons:

BIMSTEC benefits

- It is a connecting link between South Asia and South East Asia
- It complements India's Act East Policy.
- Mutual trust and cooperation.

BIMSTEC logs

- The BIMSTEC is extended neighbourhood cannot ignore immediate neighbours.
- BIMSTEC is relatively young than mature SAARC.
- It excludes Afghanistan and Maldives too.

Thus, though both are important in each aspect, BIMSTEC should not replace SAARC. For long term stability, SAARC must re-function with BIMSTEC.

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Q 20): Highlight reasons behind proliferation of multilateral preferential trade agreements. Do they violate MFN? Do you think such trade groupings present a threat to WTO?

WTO is an international organisation organised by Uruguay Round in 1995 to facilitate and increase international trade by removing tariff and non-tariff barriers between countries.

Two of the important instruments are Most Favoured Nations clause (MFN) and multilateral preferential trade agreements.

Multilateral Preferential Trade Agreements are free trade agreements (FTA) between regional or multilateral groupings and blocs.

eg: NAFTA (North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement),

: EU (European Union)

: EFTA (European Free Trade Agreement)

: RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership).

The following are the reasons behind proliferation of multilateral trade agreements:

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- 1) Reciprocal advantages between like-minded nations lead to mutually granting special trade reliefs (eg-NAFTA) -
- 2) Geopolitical considerations lead to such proliferation as they tend to capitalise on the geography to create trade blocs.
- 3) Similar ideology like among capitalists or among Scandinavian countries also lead to such arrangements.
- 4) Lack of consensus at the WTO as it works at the mandate of consensus, and thus they resort to individual treaties.
- 5) Political goals to create competition (eg: CPTPP, RCEP) to create a trade bloc ~~created~~ dominated by particular nations - protectionism is also a cause.

However, they do not violate MFN clause of WTO. MFN involves non-preferential treatment among trading nations and granting of national treatment to foreign traders.

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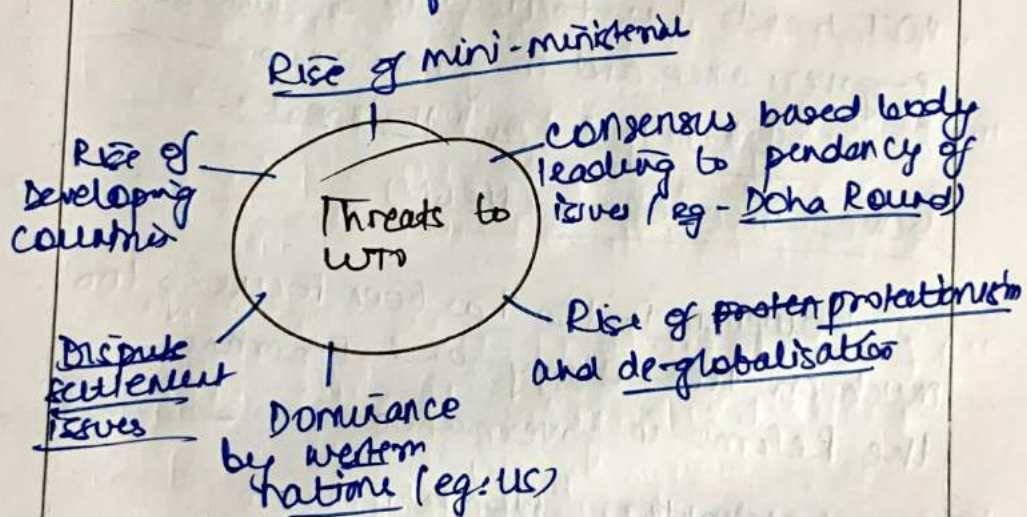
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However, MFN grants exemptions to preferential trade agreements and thus, they have proliferated.

Threat to WTO:

However, WTO is not as strong as it was before. The following are the threats.



Thus, WTO needs a restructuring so as to re-emerge as the global trade facilitator, taking the new changed global order.