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UPSC - CSE 2024

MAINS EXAM

GENERAL STUDIES -02

SUBJECT: POLITY,GOVERNANCE,SOCIAL JUSTICE & INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

MODEL ANSWERS

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1. **Examine the need for electoral reforms as suggested by various committees with particular reference to the "one nation-one election" principle.**

Electoral reforms in India focus on addressing issues such as high election costs, political instability, and frequent electoral cycles. One of the key proposals is "One Nation-One Election," which suggests holding simultaneous elections for the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. This reform aims to enhance governance, reduce electoral expenses, and streamline the democratic process.

Need for Electoral Reforms in India

Reduction of Electoral Costs

Conducting elections for different states and the national level results in significant financial expenditure. Separate elections every few months inflate costs related to logistics, security, and personnel.

One Nation-One Election would streamline the electoral process, reducing expenditure by conducting elections simultaneously.

Minimizing Governance Disruption

Frequent elections lead to governance being disrupted due to the imposition of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC), which restricts policy decisions.

Simultaneous elections would reduce frequent MCC imposition, ensuring continuous and effective governance at both state and national levels.

Curbing Election Fatigue

Citizens and political parties experience "election fatigue" due to the frequency of elections, leading to voter apathy and reduced participation.

Holding elections together would increase voter engagement by reducing the frequency of electoral events.

Focus on Policy Over Populism

Constant election cycles promote populist policies instead of long-term governance strategies.

Simultaneous elections would allow governments to focus on governance without frequent populist distractions.

Improving Coordination between Central and State Governments

The misalignment between the central and state election schedules leads to coordination difficulties, especially when different parties are in power.

Aligning the election cycles of the states and the center would foster better cooperation between different levels of government.

Challenges with the One-Nation-One Election principle

Reduced accountability: Voters may not have the opportunity to express their discontent with the government as frequently as they would with staggered elections.

Dilution of local issues: National issues overpowering local concerns can lead to marginalisation of various sections of the society with their neglected demands for rights on resources.

Imbalance of power: A national party dominating the Lok Sabha elections could also sweep the state assembly elections, which can result in lack of checks and balances on the powers of the ruling regime.

Undermining federalism: Simultaneous elections could undermine the federal structure of India by concentration of power at the centre. States may lose their autonomy as well as limited regional representation.

Less political stability: In the era of coalition governments and coalitions, there can be increased instances of horse trading and disqualifications of MPs/MLAs.

Logistical Issues: Coordinating simultaneous elections across a vast country poses significant administrative challenges

Key Committees and Recommendations:

Law Commission (170th Report, 1999): Advocated for simultaneous elections to enhance governance stability and reduce disruptions from frequent polls.

NITI Aayog (2017): Recommended phased implementation, starting with aligning some state elections with the Lok Sabha.

Election Commission of India (ECI): Stressed the need for constitutional amendments and political consensus for implementation.

Administrative Reforms Commission (4th Report, 2008): Focused on electoral reforms to curb criminalization and improve transparency.

Kovind Committee (2023): Examines legal, constitutional, and logistical challenges, aiming to provide a framework for gradual implementation to reduce governance disruptions.

The Kovind Committee's efforts are a significant step forward, but successful implementation requires strong political will, legal amendments, and broad-based stakeholder support. While simultaneous elections have potential, it's crucial to analyze their implications and consider pilot projects before large-scale implementation. By carefully considering these factors, India can improve its democracy and governance through effective electoral reforms.

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

Lok Adalats and Arbitration Tribunals are alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms designed to provide efficient and cost-effective solutions to legal disputes. While both aim to resolve disputes outside the traditional court system, they differ significantly in their structure, procedures, and scope of jurisdiction.

Key Distinctions between Lok Adalats and Arbitration Tribunals

Criteria	Lok Adalat	Arbitrational Tribunals
Nature	Established under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, Lok Adalats focus on settlement through conciliation and compromise	Governed by the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, these tribunals resolve disputes based on prior arbitration agreements between parties
Jurisdiction	They entertain civil cases (family disputes, motor accident claims, property matters) and compoundable criminal cases (minor offenses that can be legally compromised). They do not handle serious criminal cases.	They handle civil and commercial disputes (contractual issues, trade matters) but do not entertain criminal cases.
Binding Nature	The decisions are binding, with no appeal allowed. If no compromise is reached, the case may go back to court.	Arbitration awards are binding, but they can be challenged in court on limited grounds, such as procedural errors or bias.

Cost	No court fees are charged, making it highly cost-effective for the parties involved.	They can be expensive, as the parties must pay fees for the arbitrators, legal representation, and administrative costs.
Example	In 2023, a National Lok Adalat settled over 25 lakh cases across India in one day, offering speedy relief to litigants.	A major arbitration case in 2022 involved Vodafone and the Indian government, concerning a tax dispute settled under an international arbitration tribunal.

Civil -

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. vs. M/s. R.K. Enterprises (2011): A dispute over non-payment of dues was settled, with BSNL agreeing to pay Rs. 1.12 crores to the enterprise.

State of Maharashtra vs. M/s. Sai Services (2013): A dispute over payment of taxes was settled, with the company agreeing to pay Rs. 2.5 crores to the state government.

Criminal -

T.S. Ranganathan vs. State of Tamil Nadu (2012): A case of cheating and forgery was compromised through Lok Adalat, with the accused agreeing to return Rs. 25 lakhs to the complainant.

Santosh Kumar vs. State of Bihar (2010): A case of kidnapping and ransom was settled, with the accused agreeing to pay Rs. 2 lakhs to the victim's family.

Arbitration Tribunals: Primarily focus on civil cases, especially those arising from commercial contracts, consumer disputes, and trade issues. They do not typically handle criminal cases.

Tata Sons Ltd. vs. Cyrus Mistry (2017): A dispute over the removal of Cyrus Mistry as Tata Sons' Chairman was referred to arbitration, with the tribunal upholding Mistry's removal.

Vodafone International Holdings B.V. vs. Union of India (2012): A tax dispute related to Vodafone's acquisition of Hutchison Telecom was settled through arbitration, with Vodafone agreeing to pay Rs. 8,500 crores.

Lok Adalats and Arbitration Tribunals are alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms that offer efficient and cost-effective solutions to legal disputes. Lok Adalats focus on community-based mediation and conciliation, while Arbitration Tribunals provide a formal

and private forum for arbitration. Both mechanisms offer advantages in terms of speed, cost-effectiveness, and flexibility, making them attractive options for parties seeking timely and efficient resolution of their disputes.

3."The growth of the cabinet system has practically resulted in the marginalization of parliamentary supremacy." Elucidate.

The Cabinet system, inspired by the Westminster model, is a form of government where the Council of Ministers, led by the Prime Minister, exercises executive power and is collectively responsible to the Lower House of Parliament. This system has become central to decision-making and policy formulation in parliamentary democracies like India. However, the growing influence of the executive over legislative processes has raised concerns about the potential marginalization of parliamentary supremacy.

Cabinet system has resulted in the marginalization of parliamentary supremacy:

Concentration of Power: The cabinet exercises significant authority, often making decisions behind closed doors. The PRS Legislative Research (2022) reported that over 90% of bills passed lacked adequate debate, indicating limited parliamentary oversight.

Increased Use of Ordinances: The frequent issuance of ordinances undermines legislative authority. A CAG report (2021) noted that over 40 ordinances were issued in one year, bypassing parliamentary scrutiny and reflecting a reliance on executive power.

Money Bills Dominance: Many legislations are introduced as money bills, requiring only a simple majority in the Lok Sabha. The NITI Aayog Discussion Paper (2017) emphasized that this practice reduces comprehensive debate on significant issues.

Whip Culture: Party whips enforce strict discipline, ensuring members vote in line with party decisions. The Election Commission Report (2021) indicated that party discipline led to a significant reduction in dissenting votes on crucial bills.

Reduced Session Time: The Lok Sabha Secretariat (2023) reported a decrease in the number of days allocated for parliamentary sessions, limiting the time for thorough discussions and undermining the legislative process.

Lack of Accountability Mechanisms: Mechanisms for holding the executive accountable have weakened. The Supreme Court (2018) emphasized the need for greater legislative control over executive actions, which often go unchallenged.

Disproportionate Passage of Government Bills: A significant number of government bills are passed compared to private members' bills. Reports show that government bills constituted over 80% of total bills passed in recent sessions, as per the PRS Legislative Research (2022).

Judicial Observations: The Supreme Court (2020) warned that frequent reliance on ordinances undermines legislative authority, stressing the need for greater scrutiny of executive actions.

Reforms to enhance the legislature's role in governance

➔ Strengthening parliamentary committees.

➔ As recommended by NCRWC, increasing the number of sittings to a minimum of 110 days annually.

➔ As recommended by 2nd ARC, promoting a culture of constructive criticism within the legislature and limiting anti defection law application to cases of confidence in government only.

The rise of the cabinet system has significantly impacted the traditional concept of parliamentary supremacy. As power becomes increasingly concentrated in the executive branch, the role of the legislature has diminished, leading to a marginalization of parliamentary supremacy in many countries. To ensure the continued relevance of parliamentary supremacy, parliamentary democracies must strive to maintain a balance between a strong executive and a robust legislature.

4. "The duty of the Comptroller and Auditor General is not merely to ensure the legality of expenditure but also its propriety." Comment.

The Constitution of India, through **Article 148**, establishes the independent office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG). As the head of the Indian Audit and Accounts Department, the CAG plays a vital role in safeguarding the democratic system of government. Acting as the guardian of the public purse, the CAG oversees the entire financial system of the country at both the central and state levels. The CAG's primary duty is to uphold the Constitution and laws of Parliament in the realm of financial administration.

CAG ensuring legality of expenditure:

Article 279: The CAG calculates and certifies the net proceeds and his certification is final and binding.

Promote fiscal discipline: The CAG's audit reports provide an assessment of the government's fiscal discipline and financial management.

Public audit: CAG conducts legal, regulatory and propriety audits.

Eg: The CAG's report on the Commonwealth Games held in Delhi in 2010 found a loss of Rs 1,600 crore to the exchequer due to corruption in organising the games.

Beyond legality, CAG ensuring propriety of expenditure

Check on irregularities: The CAG acts as a watchdog and ensures that there is no financial irregularity in the functioning of the government.

Proprietary Concern: The CAG's report on the 2G spectrum allocation in 2010 found that the government had caused a loss of Rs 1.76 lakh crore to the exchequer by allocating licences at undervalued prices.

Raising issues of transparency: The CAG report raised concerns about the improper utilisation of funds under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), the government's flagship healthcare program.

Proprietary Concern: While the spending may have been legally allocated for healthcare, the CAG flagged the lack of transparency in fund transfers and the misuse of benefits.

Identification of beneficiaries:

Proprietary Concern: While the allocation of funds was legal, the propriety was questioned due to incorrect identification of beneficiaries, incomplete connections, and gaps in distribution, leading to inefficiencies in the delivery of benefits.

Challenges in Assessing Propriety

Subjectivity and Executive Discretion: While legal audits are rule-based, propriety audits often involve value judgments. The CAG might question expenditures that the executive justifies based on policy decisions or political priorities.

Eg: Spending on large welfare schemes may be scrutinised for inefficiencies, but governments might argue that such schemes are crucial for social equity.

Risk of Overreach: The CAG's focus on propriety can sometimes blur the lines between auditing and governance. Governments may argue that the CAG, as a financial auditor, should restrict itself to legality and not assess policy choices.

Impact on Bureaucratic Efficiency: Public officials may become hesitant to take decisions that involve innovation or financial risk, even if such decisions could potentially deliver better public outcomes.

Eg: This is particularly relevant in sectors like infrastructure, defence, and public health, where projects often involve large expenditures and time-sensitive decisions.

The CAG's role extends beyond legal compliance to encompass the broader concept of propriety in government expenditure. By ensuring that public funds are not only legally spent but also spent wisely and effectively, the CAG helps protect public interest and enhance trust in governmental operations. This emphasis on propriety is essential for good governance and effective resource utilization in society.

5. Analyze the role of local bodies in providing good governance at local level and bring out the pros and cons of merging the rural local bodies with the urban local bodies

Local bodies in rural areas and urban regions are fundamental to effective governance in India.These institutions play a crucial role in addressing the specific needs and concerns of their respective communities. The 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Indian Constitution, along with Articles 243G and 243W, respectively, provide a constitutional framework for local self-governance, empowering these bodies to deliver public services efficiently and effectively.

Local Bodies' Contribution to Effective Governance

Decentralised Governance and service delivery:

Local bodies are crucial for delivering essential services such as water supply, sanitation and infrastructure development at the grassroots level.

Eg. PRIs are instrumental in implementing programs like MGNREGA, which promotes employment and asset creation in rural areas.

Democratic participation and accountability:

Local bodies foster citizen participation through Gram Sabhas and ward committees, allowing local communities to have a say in decision-making processes and ensuring government accountability.

Efficient resource and fiscal management:

Local governments can better understand and manage local resources and budget allocations to address specific community needs.

Eg. In Kerala, local governments have successfully used the decentralized planning model to manage resources for health and education sectors, achieving positive outcomes in public health services.

Merging of rural and urban local bodies

Pros

Integrated Planning and Development: As recommended by the 2nd ARC, a merger could promote coordinated development in peri-urban areas where urbanization encroaches on rural spaces.

Efficient Resource Use: The Narasimham Committee suggested optimal resource use through pooling rural and urban resources for projects like waste management and transportation.

Reduction of Administrative Overlap: Minimize jurisdictional conflicts, improving governance and policy implementation.

Reduction of Jurisdictional Conflicts: Merging can eliminate overlaps in areas such as peri-urban zones as seen in regions like Gurgaon-Manesar, where urbanization spills into rural areas.

Cons

Loss of Local Autonomy: The Sarkaria Commission warned that rural areas might lose decision-making power if merged with urban bodies, which could prioritize urban issues over rural concerns.

Administrative Complexity: The Punchhi Commission emphasized the need for clarity in administrative functions, which might be difficult in a merged setup.

Cultural and Social Differences: The MM Punchhi Commission warned that differing social, economic, and cultural dynamics in rural and urban areas complicate integration.

Rise in taxes: Rural areas may be concerned about a rise in taxes.

Example: Residents of villages in Pudukottai district and those surrounding Manapparai near Tiruchi have opposed the proposed merger of the panchayats with the urban local bodies in the respective towns.

Consolidating rural and urban local bodies can optimize resources and boost regional development, but it must be done with caution, recognizing the distinct needs of both areas. Local governance reforms should aim to strengthen the capacity and financial autonomy of these bodies while fostering collaboration where beneficial. It's vital to maintain the unique roles of rural and urban governance to address their specific challenges, ensuring their distinct identities are preserved.

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

Public Charitable Trusts are non-profit organizations dedicated to addressing social welfare issues, such as healthcare, poverty alleviation, and social justice. Governed by the Indian Trusts Act of 1882, these trusts mobilize resources to fund initiatives aimed at promoting the public good. Their primary objective is to contribute to the betterment of society through various charitable activities, ensuring that resources are directed towards impactful and meaningful causes.

The Role of Public Charitable Trusts in Promoting Inclusive Development in India

Addressing Vital Public Issues

Public charitable trusts often work on critical social issues like healthcare, education, poverty alleviation, and environmental sustainability.

These trusts contribute significantly to tackling problems that are often underserved by governmental efforts, especially in rural or marginalized communities.

Example: Organizations like the Tata Trusts focus on improving healthcare access and educational outcomes, which are crucial for inclusive development.

Promoting Social Equity

Charitable trusts frequently target underserved sections of society, such as women, children, tribal populations, and the differently-abled.

By ensuring that these groups receive essential services, trusts help reduce inequality and make development more equitable.

Example: NGOs working through trusts often run gender-specific programs for women's empowerment, improving access to resources and opportunities.

Strengthening Grassroots Participation

Many public charitable trusts operate at the grassroots level, ensuring that local communities are actively involved in the development process.

This participatory approach not only empowers communities but also makes development initiatives more sustainable and responsive to local needs.

Example: Self-help groups (SHGs) formed with the support of charitable trusts help local women become financially independent, thereby contributing to inclusive economic growth.

Supplementing Government Efforts

Charitable trusts often complement government programs by filling gaps in service delivery or by reaching out to areas where government programs may not be fully functional.

By partnering with state and central governments, these trusts can amplify the reach and effectiveness of public welfare schemes.

Example: Trusts working on water sanitation and health programs have helped in the successful implementation of Swachh Bharat initiatives in rural areas.

Innovation and Experimentation in Development

Public charitable trusts often have the flexibility to innovate in areas where government bureaucracy may slow down change.

Trusts invest in new technologies and innovative models to tackle issues such as clean energy, digital education, and telemedicine, which in turn promote sustainable development.

Example: Trusts like the Infosys Foundation have piloted technological innovations in education and healthcare, enhancing their accessibility and effectiveness.

Leveraging Private and Corporate Philanthropy

Charitable trusts are also a crucial mechanism for channeling corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds toward meaningful development projects.

These funds allow trusts to implement large-scale projects that can have a transformative impact on communities.

Example: The Azim Premji Foundation, funded by CSR initiatives, focuses on education reform and teacher training, contributing to long-term improvements in India's educational system.

Arguments Against Public Charitable Trusts:

Lack of Accountability: Insufficient transparency; potential misuse of funds or inefficient scheme implementation.

Fragmentation of Efforts: Duplicative programs; poor coordination with government initiatives; reduces overall impact.

Misuse of Tax Exemptions: Charitable trusts misusing tax benefits; lack of strict oversight; financial irregularities.

Urban Concentration: Focus on urban areas; limited reach to rural and tribal regions; hinders inclusive development.

Public charitable trusts in India are key drivers of inclusive development, addressing areas such as education, healthcare, poverty, women's rights, environmental sustainability, and social justice. By mobilizing resources and engaging with communities, these trusts ensure that targeted initiatives reach vulnerable groups, fostering a more equitable and inclusive developmental framework.

7. Poverty and Malnutrition create a vicious cycle, adversely affecting human capital formation. What steps can be taken to break the cycle?

Poverty and malnutrition are deeply interconnected challenges that severely impact human capital formation, trapping individuals in a cycle of poor health, limited education, and reduced productivity. This vicious cycle impedes economic development and perpetuates inequality. In 2022-23, 11.28% of India's population was identified as multidimensionally poor, while the NFHS-5 (2019-21) reported alarming figures, with 35.5% of children under five being stunted and 32.1% underweight, highlighting the urgent need to address these issues for a healthier, more productive society.

Impact on Human Capital Formation:

Reduced Productivity: Poverty and malnutrition lead to poor health, reducing individuals' physical and cognitive capabilities, which affects productivity.

Education Deficiency: Malnourished children often drop out of school, leading to a lower level of education and skill development.

Poor Health Outcomes: Malnutrition weakens the immune system, making individuals more susceptible to diseases, further deepening the poverty trap.

Vicious Cycle of Malnutrition

Intergenerational Impact: Poor health and malnutrition in children lead to a lifetime of reduced opportunities, perpetuating poverty across generations.
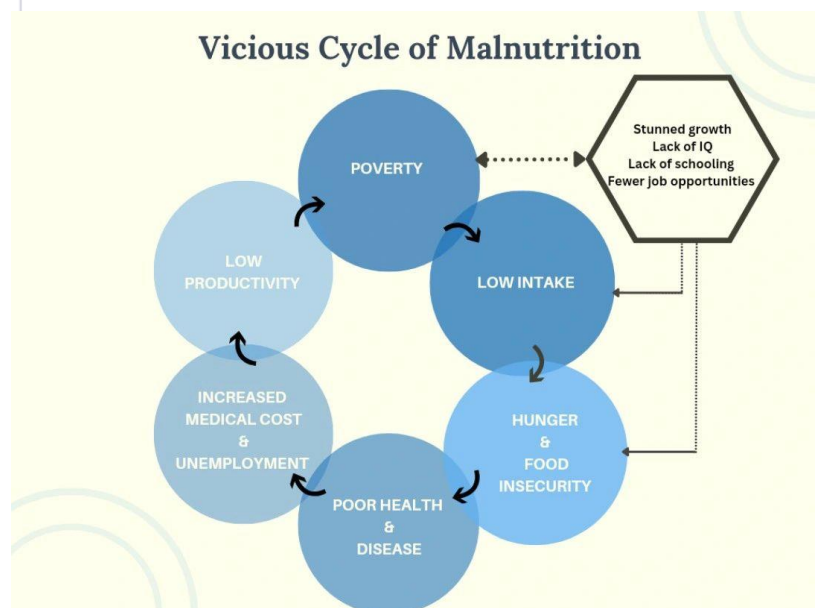
Steps to be taken to break the cycle

Food and Nutritional Security: Addressing Malnutrition by providing greater food security to low-income families.

E.g., Poshan Abhiyaan, PDS, Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY)

Access to Affordable Healthcare: To ensure better maternal and child health & nutrition, preventing malnutrition at an early stage.

E.g., Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), ICDS

Universal access to WASH: Access to clean drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) can reduce the prevalence of childhood malnutrition and stunting by preventing diarrhoea.

E.g., Jal Jeevan Mission

Education and Skill Development: Investing in education and enhancing vocational training to boost employability.

E.g., Skill India Mission, National Career Service Project

Employment Generation: Income-support measures can help lift families out of poverty, enabling them to afford better nutrition and healthcare.

E.g., MGNREGA, Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY), Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY).

Financial Inclusion: to increase access to financial services, enabling poor households to save and invest in health and education.

E.g., Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)

Community Involvement: Programs like Self-Help Groups (SHGs) empower women and encourage collective efforts in nutrition and income generation.

Feedback Mechanisms: Surveys like the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) provide valuable data on health and nutrition indicators, guiding policy and program development

Breaking the cycle of poverty and malnutrition requires a multifaceted approach that includes enhancing food security, improving healthcare, and expanding access to education. By addressing these issues through targeted interventions, we can foster better nutrition, human capital development, and sustainable economic growth. This comprehensive strategy is essential for creating a more equitable and prosperous society.

8. The Doctrine of Democratic governance makes it necessary that the public perception of the integrity and commitment of civil servants becomes absolutely positive. Discuss.

The effectiveness of democratic governance relies heavily on public trust in its institutions and individuals. Civil servants play a crucial role in maintaining this trust, as their perceived integrity and commitment directly impact the legitimacy and efficiency of

democratic governance. Therefore, fostering a positive public perception of civil servants is essential for upholding democratic principles.

The Doctrine of Democratic Governance and the Integrity and Commitment of Civil Servants

Public trust in governance: Civil servants are expected to act in accordance with the principles of transparency and accountability, as outlined in the Right to Information Act (RTI), 2005. A positive perception of their commitment strengthens the credibility of the government.

Efficient Service Delivery: When civil servants are perceived as dedicated and trustworthy, public engagement with government schemes and initiatives increases. Programs like the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana or Swachh Bharat Mission depend on the active involvement of both officials and citizens for successful implementation.

Reduced Corruption: Positive public perception can also act as a deterrent to corruption. Initiatives like the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) aim to promote integrity within the bureaucracy, and a corruption-free image can ensure better program outcomes and public satisfaction.

Collaborative Governance: Democratic governance thrives on state-citizen collaboration. Civil servants with a positive image enhance public participation, improving policy-making and service delivery.

Doctrine of Public Accountability: The Second Administrative Reforms Commission emphasized the importance of public accountability for civil servants. When officials are viewed as committed to public welfare, it enhances the legitimacy of their decisions, even in difficult situations

Limitations

Subjective perception: Public perception is shaped by diverse factors such as personal experiences, media narratives and political contexts, they differ across different sections of the society.

Eg: In India, the tribal communities may perceive civil servants as distant due to historical neglect

Media influence: Negative news, scandals and cases of corruption receive widespread coverage, this skews public perception, even when a majority of civil servants are upholding integrity and commitment.

Political interference: Civil servants often operate under political leadership, it limits their ability to act independently and in accordance with ethical standards.

Eg: Frequent political transfers and appointments based on loyalty impact public trust in bureaucracy

Way Ahead

The **Hota Committee** emphasized the establishment of a comprehensive code of ethics for civil servants to promote integrity, accountability, and transparency in public administration.

Utilizing Technology to enhance transparency in government processes. Initiatives like e-governance and open data platforms can provide citizens with real-time access to information

By adopting a performance-based remuneration system and learning from best practices like Malaysia, India can enhance accountability, reduce secrecy, and increase public trust in its civil service. This aligns with the vision of minimum government, maximum governance. By upholding ethical standards, promoting transparency, and engaging with the public, civil servants can further strengthen democratic governance and maintain a positive public perception.

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

The India-China border dispute, especially after the Galwan Valley clash in 2020, has intensified tensions between the two nations, leading to a global reassessment of dependency on China in terms of supply chains and geopolitical alliances. As China's assertive policies in the South China Sea and trade practices raise concerns, nations are increasingly seeking alternatives to reduce reliance on China.

The West is fostering India as an alternative to reduce dependence on China's supply chain

Diversification of Supply Chains:

Western countries are increasingly promoting India as a hub for manufacturing to diversify away from China, given the global disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and trade tensions between the U.S. and China.

India has a large and youthful workforce, competitive labor costs, and an evolving infrastructure, which positions it as a viable alternative to China for global supply chains.

India's Economic Reforms:

India has introduced several economic reforms such as the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, which incentivizes companies to set up manufacturing in India, thereby making it a more attractive destination for global investments.

The "Make in India" initiative aligns with Western interests in reducing over-reliance on Chinese manufacturing.

Strategic Interests in Technology and Defense:

The U.S. and European countries are actively promoting partnerships with India in the tech and defense sectors, both to reduce their dependency on Chinese technology and to enhance India's capabilities as a supply chain alternative.

Companies like Apple have started shifting their production lines to India to mitigate risks associated with China's dominance in global manufacturing.

India as a Strategic Ally to Counter China's Political and Economic Dominance

Geopolitical Partnerships:

India is increasingly seen as a counterbalance to China's political and military influence, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.

Western countries, especially through initiatives like the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue between the U.S., India, Japan, and Australia), are fostering closer military cooperation with India to counter China's growing assertiveness.

Support for India's Leadership Role:

The West, particularly the U.S., is supportive of India's aspirations for a greater leadership role on the global stage, including backing India's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

By positioning India as a democratic counterbalance to China's authoritarian model, the West aims to strengthen India's influence in international institutions.

Economic Counterweight:

Western countries are fostering trade and investment with India to build it as an economic counterweight to China.

For instance, India's active participation in forums like the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) highlights its growing economic alignment with Western powers to diminish China's economic hegemony in Asia.

Strategic Defense Partnerships:

There has been an increase in defense partnerships between India and Western countries, with India purchasing advanced defense systems from the U.S., France, and Israel.

These partnerships are designed to enhance India's military capabilities and reduce its dependence on Russian equipment, thus aligning it closer with Western strategic interests against China.

India's growing influence in Asia can contribute to a more balanced global power dynamic, reducing dependencies and fostering stability. By working closely with both the East and the West, India can create a new strategic and economic alliance. Continued collaboration

between India and the West is essential for addressing global challenges and ensuring a more equitable and prosperous world.

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

India's interactions with the Central Asian Republics (CARs) has deepened considerably, fueled by shared interests in energy, trade, and regional stability. Their strategic location, rich resources, and rising importance in global affairs have contributed to this growing relationship.

India's Evolving Diplomatic, Economic, and Strategic Relations with the Central Asian Republics (CARs)

Diplomatic Engagement
Historical Ties and Shared Culture: India and CARs share cultural and historical links through the Silk Road and Mughal connections. Since their independence in the early 1990s, India has prioritized building strong diplomatic ties with the region.

In 2022, Prime Minister Modi participated in the first India-Central Asia Summit, indicating India's commitment to deepening ties with the region.

India-Central Asia Dialogue: Institutionalized mechanisms such as the India-Central Asia Dialogue foster engagement on political and strategic issues, focusing on regional security, trade, and development cooperation.

Economic Relations
Trade and Connectivity: The main challenge has been the lack of direct connectivity, but initiatives like the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and the Ashgabat Agreement aim to improve trade routes through Iran and the Caspian Sea. India's investment in projects like Chabahar Port in Iran is crucial for enhancing connectivity with Central Asia.

Trade between India and CARs was $2 billion in 2021, a modest figure with significant growth potential.

Energy Cooperation: CARs are rich in energy resources, particularly Turkmenistan with its vast natural gas reserves. India has shown interest in projects like the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline to diversify its energy supply.

Kazakhstan supplies over 40% of India's uranium needs, crucial for India's nuclear energy program.

Security and Counterterrorism Cooperation: India's strategic interests in CARs are shaped by shared concerns over terrorism, extremism, and drug trafficking, given the region's proximity to Afghanistan. India's military and strategic ties, especially through forums like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), provide a platform for addressing common security threats.

Balancing Regional Powers: India's presence in CARs serves as a counterbalance to the influence of China and Russia in the region. This diversification strengthens India's geopolitical standing, especially through soft power initiatives like education and cultural exchange.

Challenges to India's Engagement:

China's Dominance: China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has led to significant investments in infrastructure across CARs, making it a dominant economic player. Kazakhstan-China trade reached over $25 billion in 2022, overshadowing India's economic presence.

Russian Influence: CARs remain historically aligned with Russia through military and security frameworks like the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), limiting India's influence in security matters.

While India's relationship with the Central Asian Republics has progressed, it faces challenges in fully realizing its potential. Connectivity issues, limited economic engagement, and China's influence have hindered progress. By deepening diplomatic, economic, and strategic ties, India can enhance its influence in the region, secure energy resources, and promote stability and connectivity.

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

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, a recent addition to Indian law, is designed to ensure the impartiality and credibility of public examinations. By addressing issues of cheating and malpractice, this legislation aims to create a more equitable and transparent examination system.

Aims and objectives of the Act:

Prevention of Unfair Means: The Act seeks to curb the use of unfair means, such as cheating,collusion, or conspiracy, in public examinations. It defines offenses related to unauthorized access to question papers, assisting candidates, and tampering with documents or computer systems during examinations.

Ensuring Integrity: By addressing malpractices like leaking question papers and tampering with results, the Act ensures the integrity of public exams, safeguarding the interests of genuine candidates and maintaining public trust in the examination system.

Deterring Organized Malpractice: The Act aims to deter organized groups or individuals who exploit vulnerabilities in the exam system for monetary or wrongful gains. Punishments, including imprisonment and heavy fines, are introduced to discourage such activities.

Transparency and Accountability: The Act is designed to bring greater transparency and accountability in the conduct of public exams, reassuring candidates that their efforts will be evaluated fairly, without undue influence or malpractice.

Status of organised crime: Section 11 of the Act addresses organised crimes, imposing punishments ranging from 5 to 10 years and fines up to 1 crore rupees. If any institution is involved in the commission of an organised crime, its property will be subject to attachment and forfeiture by the government.

Applicability to University/State Education Board Examinations:

Public Examinations Definition: The Act broadly covers "public examinations" which generally refer to exams conducted by recognized authorities, including: Government examination bodies.

Boards that conduct secondary and higher secondary examinations.

These include: (i) Union Public Service Commission, (ii) Staff Selection Commission, (iii) Railway Recruitment Board, (iv) National Testing Agency, (v) Institute of Banking Personnel Selection, and (vi) Departments of the central government and their attached offices for recruitment

Inclusion of Universities and State Education Boards: University examinations and those conducted by state boards are likely included under this Act, given that they are recognized public examination bodies.

Applicability to National and State Levels: The Act is likely applicable to both national-level examinations (like CBSE, ICSE) and state-level boards, as well as university entrance and qualifying exams, provided they fall under the definition of public examinations

However, The Act serves as a model draft for states to adopt, and it is expected that educational boards may consider implementing similar legislation to prevent unfair practices in academic exams at state and university levels.

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, is a vital step in safeguarding the credibility of India's public examination system. By addressing exam-related malpractices, the Act promotes meritocracy and ensures a fair and transparent examination process. While it doesn't directly cover University and State Board exams, it serves as a valuable model for future legislation to include them

12. Right to privacy is intrinsic to life and personal liberty and is inherently protected under Article 21 of the constitution. Explain. In this reference discuss the law relating to D.N.A. testing of a child in the womb to establish its paternity.

Article 21 of the Indian Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to life and personal liberty. This right has been interpreted by the Supreme Court to include the right to privacy. In the landmark case of Justice K.S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India, the Court affirmed that privacy is an essential component of life and personal liberty, thereby establishing it as a fundamental right.

Right to Privacy intrinsic in Article 21:

- Article 21 of the Indian Constitution states, "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law."

- The Supreme Court of India has interpreted this Article to encompass the Right to Privacy, establishing it as intrinsic to personal liberty and dignity.

- This right protects individuals from unwarranted intrusion into their personal lives, asserting that privacy is essential for the exercise of other fundamental rights, including those related to marriage, family, and procreation.

- For instance, the Court's ruling in Navtej Singh Johar vs. Union of India (2018) highlighted the importance of personal autonomy and privacy in the context of sexual orientation, reinforcing that every individual has the right to make decisions about their body and relationships

- The Court highlighted that privacy is tied to human dignity, forming an essential component of the right to life and personal liberty. Protecting privacy ensures individual autonomy, self-determination, and control over personal information.

- The ruling influenced the formulation of data protection laws, leading to the development of the Personal Data Protection Bill and shaping the debate on issues like the Aadhaar program

Law Relating to DNA Testing of a Child in the Womb to Establish Paternity

Relevance of DNA Testing
DNA testing is often used in cases of paternity disputes to establish biological relationships. While the technology is accurate, its application raises concerns regarding privacy, bodily autonomy, and consent.

Judicial Precedents and Guidelines
Bhabani Prasad Jena vs. Convenor Secretary, Orissa State Commission for Women (2010): The Supreme Court held that DNA testing should not be used as a routine procedure to establish paternity without considering the right to privacy of the parties involved.

The court noted that compelling a person to undergo a DNA test must be balanced with respect for personal autonomy and dignity.

Legality of DNA Testing in the Womb
Under the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994, prenatal diagnostic tests, including DNA testing for the purpose of determining paternity, are heavily regulated.

Testing must be authorized under specific circumstances, such as when it is medically necessary or if the court orders it.

Courts generally approach DNA testing cautiously, especially in sensitive cases involving children and women, to prevent potential misuse and invasion of privacy.

Balancing Privacy and Justice
The right to privacy under Article 21 can be invoked to oppose forced DNA tests, especially if they violate personal dignity.

However, courts have also recognized that justice in family law disputes may require scientific evidence, including DNA testing, but only when necessary and in accordance with legal safeguards.

Supreme Court Rulings: The Supreme Court has, in various judgments, balanced the right to privacy with the need for DNA testing to establish paternity.

Goutam Kundu vs. State of West Bengal (1993): The Supreme Court held that DNA tests should not be directed as a matter of course and should only be done if it is in the interest of justice.

Sharda vs. Dharmpal (2003): The court ruled that a matrimonial court has the power to order a medical examination, including DNA tests, if it is in the interest of justice.

Bhabani Prasad Jena vs. Orissa State Commission for Women (2010): The court emphasized that DNA tests should be ordered only when there is a strong prima facie case and the test is indispensable.

The right to privacy is a fundamental right, but it's not absolute. DNA testing for paternity involves balancing privacy with the need for justice. Courts have discretion to order DNA tests in appropriate cases, but must ensure that the process respects the privacy and dignity of all parties involved.

13. What changes has the union government recently introduced in the domain of center-state relations ? Suggest measures to be adopted to build the trust between the center and the states and for strengthening federalism.

Centre-State relations in India are a cornerstone of the country's federal structure. The interplay between the central government and state authorities significantly influences governance and policy implementation. In recent years, the Union Government has

implemented several changes aimed at redefining these relations, reflecting a shifting understanding of federalism in contemporary India.

Recent Changes in Center-State Relations

Greater central control in taxation and resource allocation: The GST reform has reduced states' flexibility in taxation policies, centralizing revenue collection mechanisms.

Financial devolution: States' share increased from 32% to 42%. The increase in states' share of central taxes has provided more fiscal autonomy to states for development initiatives.

Centrally Sponsored Schemes: The rationalization of Centrally Sponsored Schemes has allowed states more flexibility in implementation and fund allocation. For example, under PMGSY states are given flexibility in road construction standards.

Centralization of administrative powers through All India Services IAS officers: central deputation rules were modified in 2022.

Introduction of Government of National Capital Territory (Amendment) Act: It enhances central government power, creating a rift between Delhi's autonomy and federal principles.

The National education policy, 2020: The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 impacts state autonomy in education governance.

The Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022: Centralizes electricity distribution and regulation. Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu opposed the bill, arguing it restricts states' ability to regulate local electricity tariffs and policies.

NIA Amendment Bill: It expands the agency's jurisdiction, raising concerns over state sovereignty in law enforcement.

Measures to Build Trust Between the Centre and States

Promoting Cooperative Federalism: Encouraging collaboration between the Centre and the states by enhancing platforms like the NITI Aayog and the Inter-State Council to deliberate on mutual concerns.

Example: NITI Aayog's role in policy formulation for both central and state governments.

Ensuring Fiscal Federalism: Devolution of more financial resources to states through the Finance Commission. This builds trust by allowing states more autonomy in using funds.

Example: Recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission that increased the states' share in central taxes.

Regular Consultations: Periodic meetings between the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers to resolve regional issues. This enhances transparency and resolves conflicts effectively.

Example: Regular Prime Minister-Chief Minister meetings, as done during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strengthening Role of the Inter-State Council: Reviving and strengthening the role of the Inter-State Council for resolving issues that arise between states and the Centre.

Example: The Inter-State Council's recommendations on water disputes can be critical in resolving disputes like the Cauvery River issue.

Transparent Governance: Implementing transparency in schemes where both Centre and states have roles, like centrally sponsored schemes. Clarifying roles and avoiding overlaps fosters mutual trust.

Example: The implementation of schemes like MNREGA, where clear guidelines for central and state responsibilities are crucial.

Resolving Regional Disparities: Addressing regional inequalities by focusing on backward areas through special grants or programs from the central government.

Example: Special assistance to backward states like Bihar and Odisha.

Decentralization of Powers: Empowering state governments to have more decision-making powers in certain sectors, thereby reducing the Centre's overreach.

Example: The GST Council, where states have a say in tax policy decisions, promoting a more cooperative federal approach.

Measures to Strengthen Federalism in India

Clear Division of Powers: Clearer demarcation of responsibilities between Centre and states, particularly in concurrent subjects where ambiguity often leads to conflicts.

Empowering Local Bodies: Strengthening decentralization to local bodies under the 73rd and 74th amendments, ensuring that power is distributed not just between Centre and states but also within states.

Strengthening the Role of the Rajya Sabha: Strengthening Rajya Sabha, as it represents states' interests at the national level, to ensure that state concerns are adequately represented.

Implementing recommendations from the Punchhi and Sarkaria Commissions is crucial for strengthening federalism. Regular dialogue, fiscal autonomy, and state-specific policies can foster collaboration. By prioritizing cooperative frameworks, India can ensure effective governance at all levels. The Union Government's recent measures aim to promote cooperative federalism, empowering states and creating a more harmonious system of governance.

14. Explain the reasons for the growth of PILs in India. As a result of it, has the India supreme court emerged as the most powerful judiciary?

Public Interest Litigation (PIL) refers to a legal action initiated in the court during the 1980s as a revolutionary tool to safeguard the public's interest on issues like pollution, terrorism, road safety, and construction hazards. Any matter affecting the broader public can be addressed through a PIL, allowing the court to intervene and provide relief.

A new era of the PIL movement was heralded by **Justice P.N. Bhagawati in the case of S.P. Gupta vs. Union of India :** any concerned citizen or social action group, acting in good faith, can seek redress through the High Courts (under Article 226) or the Supreme Court (under Article 32).

Reasons for the growth of PILs in India

- **Relaxation of locus standi:** Broadened access to justice for marginalized groups. For example, Bandhua Mukti Morcha case (1984) allowed social activists to file PILs

- **Increased Awareness of Rights:** Public awareness of fundamental rights has risen significantly.

- **Judicial Activism:** Judges have embraced activism to expand constitutional interpretations.

- **Political and Bureaucratic Apathy:** Failure of political entities prompts citizens to seek legal recourse.

- **International Influences on Indian Law:** Global human rights movements inspire domestic PILs

- **Supportive Legal Precedents**: Previous PIL judgments encourage new filings and activism.

- **Expansion of fundamental rights interpretation:** Broader protection through PILs. For instance, Olga Tellis case (1985) recognized the right to livelihood.

- **Rise of public-spirited litigation by civil society organizations:** Common Causes PILs led to reforms in electoral processes.

Has the Indian Supreme Court become the world's most influential judiciary due to the surge in public interest litigation (PIL)?

Judicial Activism through PIL:

The rise of PILs has empowered the judiciary to address issues that go beyond traditional litigation.

PIL allows citizens to approach the Court directly for matters of public interest, thus broadening the scope of judicial intervention.

The Court has intervened in areas like environmental protection, human rights, and corruption.

Expansion of Article 21 (Right to Life):

The Supreme Court has broadened the interpretation of Article 21 of the Constitution, covering rights such as clean air, water, and education under the right to life.

This has empowered the judiciary to ensure fundamental rights are upheld in a variety of contexts, including PIL cases.

Role as Guardian of the Constitution:

Through judicial review, the Supreme Court ensures that laws passed by the Parliament do not violate the Constitution.

This authority, combined with the rise of PIL, has reinforced the Court's position as the ultimate guardian of constitutional values.

Impact of Landmark Judgments:

Cases like Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India and Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan demonstrate the Court's proactive role in safeguarding civil liberties and setting guidelines for governance.

These rulings have a far-reaching impact on governance, reinforcing the judiciary's influence.

Addressing Government Inaction:

PILs have been instrumental in compelling the executive and legislature to act on issues of public welfare.

For example, the Supreme Court has mandated action on issues like pollution control and illegal mining through PILs.

Judicial Independence:

The independence of the judiciary in India, coupled with its ability to question executive actions through PILs, has placed it in a powerful position.

The judiciary's ability to take suo moto cognizance of issues adds to its strength.

Global Comparisons:

Compared to other judiciaries like the United States, where courts are more restrained in intervening in policy matters, the Indian Supreme Court's proactive approach has arguably made it one of the most interventionist and powerful courts globally.

However, PILs have certain Limitations:

Limited Effectiveness: Even when the Supreme Court issues progressive rulings, challenges often arise in the implementation of its directives.

Dependence on government action: The effectiveness of PILs is often contingent on the government's willingness to comply with court orders, leading to potential stagnation.

Overwhelmed Judiciary: The influx of PILs can overwhelm the judicial system, resulting in delays in hearing significant cases and potentially diminishing the quality of justice.

The growth of PILs in India has empowered marginalized voices and expanded fundamental rights. While challenges remain, the judiciary's ability to translate rulings into meaningful change is crucial. By effectively addressing these challenges and ensuring equitable implementation, the judiciary can further strengthen its role as a champion of social justice and accountability.

15. Discuss India as a secular state and compare it with the secular principles of the US constitution.

India and the United States, both defined as secular states, adopt distinct approaches to secularism. India's model is rooted in pluralism and coexistence, while the U.S. emphasizes a strict separation of church and state. Understanding these differences illuminates how each country navigates religious diversity and the role of religion in public life. India, renowned for its cultural and religious diversity, has a constitution that guarantees religious freedom and ensures a secular state. This means the government treats all religions impartially.

India as a secular state

Fundamental Right: The Constitution of India guarantees freedom of religion to all citizens.Secularism is enshrined in Articles 25-28 of the Constitution. Citizens can practice, profess, and propagate their faith. For example, The recognition of festivals like Eid, Diwali, and Christmas illustrates state support for diverse practices.

Neutrality: The Indian state maintains neutrality in religious matters. Government policies do not favor one religion over others.

India as a secular state has made room for and is compatible with the idea of state-supported religious reform. Thus, the Indian constitution bans untouchability. The Indian state has enacted several laws abolishing child marriage and lifting the taboo on inter-caste marriage sanctioned by Hinduism.

Positive and Supportive Approach: The Indian state engages with religion both negatively and positively. It opposes religious tyranny which is reflected in such actions as the ban on untouchability.

The positive mode of engagement is reflected when it grants all religious minorities the right to establish and maintain their own educational institutions which may receive assistance from the state.

India as a secular state does not treat every aspect of every religion with equal respect. It allows equal disrespect for some aspects of organized religions.

Comparison Between Indian and U.S. Secularism:

India	United States
Pluralistic Secularism: Equal respect for all religions, including state involvement to manage or reform religious institutions when necessary	**Strict Separation:** Government maintains a clear line between religion and public life

Positive Secularism: Allows for state subsidies (Hajj subsidy) and managing religious sites.	**Negative Secularism:** No state financial aid for religious activities or institutions
Freedom of Religion: With accommodations for diverse religious communities and personal laws for minorities.	**Freedom of Religion**: Guarantees individual religious freedoms with minimal state intervention.
Special Provisions for Minorities: Protects minority religious communities through specific constitutional safeguards	**Uniform Application:** Equal treatment of all citizens without favoring any religious group or minority.

Way Forward:

Balancing Religious Freedom and Governance: In India, the challenge lies in maintaining a balance between religious freedom and state intervention without promoting favoritism.

The U.S. faces challenges in navigating religious pluralism while ensuring a strict separation in public institutions.

Promoting Social Harmony: Both countries should promote tolerance and understanding in increasingly diverse societies, ensuring that secular principles strengthen democratic values.

India's secularism, promoting religious equality, contrasts with the U.S.'s strict separation of church and state. These differences influence policies, inter-religious relations, and the role of religion in public life. India's commitment to secularism has been instrumental in fostering peace and harmony among its diverse population. By upholding religious freedom and equality, India continues to be a model of a secular state.

16. The citizen charter has been a landmark initiative in ensuring citizen- centric administration. But it is yet to reach its full potential. Identify the factors hindering the full realization of its promise and suggest measures to overcome them.

A Citizen's Charter is a document that outlines the government's commitments to the public regarding the services it provides or plans to provide. Originating in the United Kingdom, this concept aims to make administration more citizen-centric by improving transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to public needs. By providing clear information about services, empowering citizens with choices, and ensuring accessibility, Citizen's Charters promote a more citizen-friendly approach to governance.

The Citizens' Charter, a landmark initiative, empowers citizens by providing information about services, standards, and rights. It promotes accountability by offering a platform for grievance redressal and enhances transparency through clear service standards. By supporting e-governance, the charter streamlines services and reduces inefficiencies. It also sets timelines for service delivery and includes guidelines for addressing complaints, ensuring timely and efficient public services.

Factors hindering the full realization of Citizen Charter:

Despite these successes, challenges remain in ensuring the full realization of the citizen charter's potential -

Inadequate Public Awareness: Low awareness of citizen charters limits engagement.

Lack of Training for Officials: Insufficient training for officials hampers effective implementation.Reports indicate many officials lack knowledge of charters. This leads to inconsistent service delivery and poor citizen interaction.

Poor Grievance Redressal Mechanisms: Ineffective redressal systems diminish public trust. Citizens lose faith in the system, reducing charter utilization.

Limited Monitoring and Evaluation: Weak monitoring hinders assessment of charter effectiveness.Evaluations of charter implementation are infrequent. Without assessments, improvement areas remain unidentified, affecting service quality.

Complexity of Language and Terminology: Technical jargon alienates citizens from engaging.

Lack of Performance Incentives: Absence of incentives demotivates public officials.

Unclear Accountability Mechanisms: Ambiguity in accountability leads to negligence.

Measures to overcome these hindrance

2nd Arc has recommended - (a) Mention only deliverable promises; (b) Compensation for not meeting the set standards c) Consultation with all the stakeholders etc.

Clear vision statement: Citizen's Charter should carry a clear statement of vision framed after a Specification of time-frames.

Specification of quality standards: Charter must indicate the specific quality standards to which organisation is committed. This will enable citizens to keep the organisation accountable.

Information about processes to access services: Efforts must be made to translate charter in local language. Charter must provide information about procedures involved in obtaining the service and facilitate the citizen to obtain it.

Grievance redressal: Charter should encourage the citizens to complain their grievances and organisations should aspire to redress these. Charter should clearly lay down the grievance redressal procedures.

The Citizens' Charter can be a powerful tool for good governance, but its full potential remains unfulfilled in India. By learning from international models like Charter Mark and Malcolm Baldrige, and implementing measures to enhance public awareness, simplify communication, and establish accountability, India can transform the Citizens' Charter into an effective tool for empowering citizens and promoting transparency. The Sevottam Model offers valuable insights for making the Citizens' Charter more citizen-centric and effective in delivering high-quality public services.

17. In a crucial domain like the public healthcare system, the Indian State should play a vital role to contain the adverse impact of marketisation of the system. Suggest some measures through which the State can enhance the reach of public healthcare at the grassroots level

The marketization of healthcare in India has led to concerns about accessibility and affordability for the general population. The public healthcare system plays a crucial role in ensuring access to healthcare, especially for the underprivileged. However, the rising costs associated with privatized healthcare have made it unaffordable for many, widening the socioeconomic divide. As emphasized by the Bhore Committee (1946), the state must take a proactive role in providing comprehensive healthcare to all citizens.

Role of the State in Containing Marketisation of the Public Healthcare System

Regulation of Private Healthcare Sector
Implement strict regulations to control the prices of medical services in private hospitals.Monitor the quality and safety standards of healthcare to ensure that the private sector complements rather than competes with public healthcare.

Expanding Public Healthcare Infrastructure
Build more primary healthcare centers (PHCs) and community health centers (CHCs) in rural areas to increase accessibility. Improve the existing infrastructure of government hospitals and ensure they are equipped with modern medical technologies.

Strengthening National Health Programs
Enhance the scope of national programs such as Ayushman Bharat to cover more beneficiaries, especially in marginalized and economically weaker sections.Introduce awareness campaigns at the grassroots level to encourage people to use public health facilities over expensive private options.

Subsidizing Essential Health Services
The government should provide subsidies for essential drugs and healthcare services to make them more affordable for the general public. Provide free preventive healthcare services such as immunizations, maternal and child care, and routine health checkups to reduce out-of-pocket expenditure.

Measures to Enhance Public Healthcare at the Grassroots Level

Decentralization of Healthcare Governance: Empower local governing bodies like Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and urban local bodies to take charge of healthcare delivery at the local level. This would ensure more responsive and need-based healthcare.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP): Encourage partnerships between the government and private healthcare providers for the supply of healthcare equipment, medicines, and mobile health units in rural areas.

Health Education and Community Participation
Launch health literacy programs to educate people about preventive health practices.Involve local communities in healthcare planning and implementation, such as forming village health committees to monitor health programs.

Increase Human Resources

According to NITI Aayog (2021), India faces a shortage of 600,000 doctors and 2 million nurses. Increasing the number of medical colleges and upskilling healthcare workers through the National Medical Commission (NMC) is essential.

Increased Budget Allocation for Public Health
Significantly raise the public healthcare budget to improve infrastructure, recruit more healthcare workers, and ensure the continuous supply of medicines. Allocate funds specifically for underserved areas, ensuring equitable distribution of healthcare resources across the country.

Focus on Preventive Healthcare
Prioritize preventive healthcare measures, such as improving sanitation, clean drinking water access, and widespread vaccination campaigns. Implement nutrition programs targeting maternal health and child development to reduce the incidence of malnutrition and related diseases.

Technological Integration
Use digital health technologies like telemedicine and mobile health applications to bridge the gap between healthcare providers and patients in remote locations.Establish electronic health records for patients to streamline and improve the continuity of care.

India can strengthen its healthcare system by increasing public spending, expanding infrastructure, regulating private healthcare, and investing in human resources. This aligns with SDG 3 and Article 47. To address marketization's adverse impacts, India needs stronger public healthcare systems and policies focused on equity and universal access. The Kerala Model, with its decentralized approach, primary care focus, and grassroots implementation, can guide these efforts.

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

E-governance, the use of digital technologies in government services, aims to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability. As per Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees the right to information, e-governance plays a crucial role in promoting transparency in democratic governance. While e-governance involves the application of technology in service delivery, its scope extends beyond basic digital tools, encompassing various aspects of improving government efficiency and effectiveness.

Key Impacts of the Interactive Service Model in E-Governance:

Beyond Basic Service Delivery: E-governance isn't limited to digitizing services; it's a transformative process aimed at making government more efficient and citizen-centric.Routine applications like online payments or digital documentation are only a small part of a much larger governance system involving data integration, workflow management, and decision-making enhancements.

Strategic Integration: The integration of technology involves rethinking processes and building infrastructures like cloud-based systems or AI-driven tools to address complex governance issues.

E-governance promotes innovation in policy-making and service delivery, using technology to streamline administrative functions and reach broader audiences.

Policy and Legal Frameworks: Effective e-governance requires policy reforms and legal frameworks to ensure that digital innovations are backed by legislative support, ensuring sustainability and institutionalization.

Holistic Development: E-governance goes beyond the government itself, including collaborations with private sectors, civil society, and international stakeholders to create a more comprehensive system for addressing public needs.

E-Governance and Its Role in Ensuring Transparency and Accountability

Enhancing Public Access: E-governance platforms ensure that information is readily available to the public, facilitating transparency in processes such as tendering, budgeting, and legislative activities.

Preventing Corruption: Digital records and traceable transactions help in reducing corruption by minimizing human interaction in critical processes like public procurement, thus enhancing accountability.

Citizen Feedback Mechanisms: Interactive features such as complaint portals and feedback forums empower citizens to hold public officials accountable, fostering a culture of open dialogue and government responsiveness.

Auditable Transactions: Digital governance tools provide a clear audit trail for financial transactions, public procurement, and decision-making processes, ensuring accountability through traceability.

Standardized Processes: E-governance helps in creating standardized workflows across departments, reducing ambiguities and enhancing fairness in the implementation of government schemes and programs.

Challenges of Interactive Service Model:

Digital Divide:

Limited Rural Internet Access: TInteractive models are less effective due to poor internet infrastructure in rural areas, limiting access to e-governance services.

E.g. NSSO (National Sample Survey Office) data reveals a staggering disparity: only 24% of rural households have internet access, compared to 66% in cities.

Low Digital Literacy:

Older Populations Struggle: Older individuals and those with limited tech skills

struggle with e-governance platforms, affecting their digital service engagement.

E.g. 54% of the population aged 65–74 use the internet for any purpose, compared to 30% of those aged 75+.

Data Privacy:

Risks from Insufficient Data Protection: Interactive models involve significant data exchange, raising privacy and security concerns. Weak protection measures lead to breaches and misuse.

E.g. A significant breach of Aadhaar data occurred in 2023, when a threat actor named "pwn0001" leaked the personal information of 815 million Indians on the dark web

Bureaucratic Resistance:

Hinders E-Governance Efficiency: Resistance from traditional bureaucratic structures hinder the implementation of e-governance initiatives, impacting their efficiency and effectiveness.

Routine Application of Digital Technology in E-Governance:

Interaction with Citizens:

MyGov Portal: This platform enables direct government-citizen communication, allowing public participation and input in governance.

E-Filing of Taxes:

Income Tax Portal: Streamlines tax return filing, improving efficiency and user-friendliness while reducing paperwork through automation.

Digital Health Services:

eSanjeevani: Offers telemedicine consultations, enhancing healthcare access in

remote areas and showcasing the benefits of digital platforms in critical sectors.

Real-Time Information Access:

Public Financial Management System (PFMS): Ensures transparency with real-time information on fund allocation and usage for government schemes, aiding in monitoring and preventing misallocation.

E-governance is a multifaceted approach that extends beyond digital technology. By embracing transparency, accountability, citizen participation, data-driven decision-making, and efficiency, governments can significantly enhance their services. While the interactive service model of e-governance improves transparency and accountability, addressing challenges like the digital divide and data privacy is crucial. Investing in better infrastructure, promoting digital literacy, and ensuring robust data protection can maximize the effectiveness of e-governance.

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

Terrorism remains a severe global threat, undermining peace, security, and development across the world. A comprehensive international effort is essential to tackle this menace, with the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and its Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) at the forefront of these efforts. Established under UNSC Resolution 1373 (2001), the CTC strengthens the capacity of member states to prevent and respond to terrorism.

Terrorism has become a significant threat to global peace and security?

Erosion of State Sovereignty and Security: In countries like Afghanistan, Somalia, and Syria, terrorist groups such as the Taliban, Al-Shabaab, and ISIS exploited weak or collapsed governments to establish control over significant territories

Terrorism's Impact on Global Economic Stability:

Disruption of Trade and Commerce: The 9/11 attacks in the United States caused a direct economic loss of about $40 billion,

Impact on Tourism: The Bali bombings in 2002 severely damaged Indonesia's tourism industry for years.

Increased Defense and Security Costs: The United States increased its defense budget by trillions of dollars following the 9/11 attacks to fund the War on Terror in Iraq, Afghanistan.

Humanitarian Crises and Displacement: The rise of ISIS and the ongoing conflicts in Syria and Iraq led to one of the largest refugee crises in modern history.

Terrorism as a Driver of International Political Tensions:

Groups like Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba have created tension between India and Pakistan.

Following terrorist attacks such as the 2015 Paris attacks and the 2017 Manchester bombing, there was a noticeable rise in anti-Muslim sentiments across Europe.

Use of Technology and Cyberterrorism: ISIS used social media platforms like Twitter and YouTube to spread its propaganda globally.

IS hijacked an account belonging to a fan of the pop singer Justin Bieber and used it to promote material from the cache.

Effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council's Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC)

Global Framework for Counter-Terrorism: The CTC has played a pivotal role in establishing international legal frameworks for counter-terrorism, with resolutions like 1373, which mandates nations to prevent and suppress terrorism financing and ensure proper prosecution of offenders.

Coordination and Cooperation: The CTC has been instrumental in improving global cooperation, fostering information-sharing and intelligence exchange between countries to combat terrorist networks.

Monitoring and Compliance: The committee monitors states' compliance with counter-terrorism measures, helping to ensure uniform enforcement of international counter-terrorism standards across member states.

Capacity Building: Through its various programs, the CTC supports capacity-building efforts, providing technical assistance to nations struggling to implement counter-terrorism frameworks effectively.

Challenges with Enforcement: Despite its successes, the CTC faces challenges in enforcing its directives due to the differing political priorities of member states and the sovereignty concerns of some countries.

Evolving Terror Threats: The CTC's efforts sometimes lag in addressing evolving forms of terrorism like home-grown radicalization and cyber terrorism, as its focus has traditionally been on transnational terrorism.

Challenges Faced by the CTC and Associated Bodies

Defining terrorism: Due to the lack of a universally accepted definition it leads to inconsistencies in international responses. The United Nations has multiple resolutions addressing terrorism without a cohesive definition.

Lack of Enforcement Mechanisms: In countries like Somalia or Libya, the CTC's efforts to improve counter-terrorism measures are often ineffective.

Political Complexities and Veto Power: China's repeated vetoing of resolutions to designate certain terrorists has hampered efforts to bring global consensus on groups like Jaish-e-Mohammed.

China blocked a proposal by India and the United States to designate Sajid Mir, a key figure in the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and wanted for his role in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, as a global terrorist in June 2023.

Evolving Nature of Terrorism: new challenges such as cyber-terrorism, lone-wolf attacks, and online radicalization emerging.

In 2023, there was a 30% rise in cyber-terrorism incidents compared to the previous year.

Suggestions for enhancing the Effectiveness of the CTC and Associated Bodies:

Strengthening International Legal Instruments: creating a binding international legal framework for counter-terrorism

Enhanced Cooperation and Intelligence Sharing: improve real-time intelligence-sharing mechanisms, especially with regard to terrorist financing and movement.

Increased Focus on Preventing Radicalization: partnering with local communities, religious leaders, and civil society

Targeted Funding and Capacity Building: Greater financial and technical support should be extended to developing nations

While the UNSC's CTC has made progress in countering terrorism, challenges such as the lack of a universal definition, political differences, and resource constraints hinder its effectiveness. To build a more robust global counter-terrorism framework, it is crucial to address these challenges through reforms, enhanced cooperation, and increased resource allocation. By working together, the international community can effectively address the root causes of terrorism and prevent future attacks, ensuring a safer and more secure world for all.

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

The Maldives, an archipelago of over 1,000 islands in the Indian Ocean, holds significant geopolitical and geostrategic importance for India. Its strategic location in the Indian Ocean region makes it a crucial player in global trade and energy flows. As maritime economic activity in the Indian Ocean has intensified, so too has geopolitical competition in the region. The Maldives' strategic maritime geography positions it as a key player in this geopolitical landscape, aligning with India's "Neighbourhood First" policy.

Geopolitical and Geostrategic Importance of Maldives for India

Proximity to Major Sea Lanes: The Maldives is situated near key maritime routes, where nearly 40% of the world's oil supplies pass through the Indian Ocean. Securing these SLOCs is vital for India's maritime trade and energy imports.

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ): With an EEZ of 923,000 square kilometers, the Maldives offers India strategic depth for maritime surveillance, security operations, and potential resource exploration, strengthening its influence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Strategic Gateway to the Indian Ocean: As the Maldives lies at the center of the Indian Ocean, India can project its power and secure its maritime interests, ensuring dominance in the region. As noted by C. Raja Mohan, an Indian strategic analyst, believes India's influence in the Maldives enhances its ability to counter rising Chinese influence in the IOR.

Impact on India's Maritime Security and Regional Stability Amidst International Competition

Countering China's 'String of Pearls': Maldives is integral in countering China's String of Pearls strategy, which seeks to build a network of military and commercial facilities around India's maritime borders. Strong relations with Maldives help India secure its interests.

Enhanced Naval Presence: India's close ties with Maldives allow it to maintain a naval presence in the region, securing sea lanes and deterring piracy, smuggling, and terrorism, especially in the sensitive Indian Ocean region.

Boost to Maritime Domain Awareness: Collaboration with Maldives enhances India's surveillance and monitoring capabilities in the Indian Ocean, providing early warnings and strategic advantages over hostile naval forces.

Prevention of External Military Influence: Keeping foreign military powers, especially China, from establishing bases in Maldives is crucial for India's maritime security. This helps India maintain its dominance in the Indian Ocean and protects its vital sea lanes.

Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation: Maldives is a key partner in India's maritime diplomacy efforts, including initiatives like SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). These frameworks enhance regional stability.

Political Stability and Regional Peace: Stability in Maldives is vital for the overall security of South Asia. India's support to Maldives during political crises ensures that the country does not fall into instability, which could be exploited by external powers.

The Maldives holds significant geopolitical and geostrategic importance for India, especially in the context of maritime security, counter-terrorism, and economic prosperity in the Indian Ocean region. By strengthening its ties with the Maldives, India can protect its strategic interests in the Indian Ocean while playing a vital role in promoting regional stability and global trade security. The Maldives' strategic location makes it a lynchpin for India's maritime security and regional stability.