

1. What are the challenges and issues regarding the functioning of NGOs in India? Analyse.

Approach

Candidates are expected to write about the NGOs in India and then expected to write about the challenges and issues regarding the functioning of the NGOs in the India.

Introduction

As defined by the World Bank NGOs refers to not-for-profit organisations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development.

Body

NGOs in India –

- The term NGO in India denotes wide spectrum of organisations which may be non-governmental, quasi or semi governmental, voluntary or non-voluntary etc.
- These organisations are not a part of the government, have a legal status and are registered under the specific Act (Societies Registration Act, 1860 in India) of the government.
- Recently, the parliament has proposed some amendments to the Foreign Currency Regulation Act (FCRA), 2010. According to the government, these amendments aim to bring about transparency in the working of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

However, these new regulations put onerous conditions on NGOs, educational and research institutions that have partnerships, including of a financial nature, with foreign entities. Let us analyse the Challenges regarding the functioning of the NGOs in India –

- The new FCRA provisions, especially the one that constrains NGOs from sub-granting, threaten the spirit of collaboration in the country's development sector. This would undermine the flow of foreign funding and development aid.
- Apart from this, the proposed changes are not in sync with the ideals of environmentalism, human rights and civil liberties as these sectors receive most of the foreign contributions. Due to these issues, the International Commission of Jurists has said the new law was incompatible with international obligations and India's own constitutional provisions on rights.
- With recent Government of India crackdown on Greenpeace and several other NGOs coming under the scanner of Indian government, it is important for NGOs to achieve and maintain a high degree of transparency in not just their

work but also their financials. NGOs need to keep their income and expenditure open to public scrutiny.

Issues regarding the NGOs functioning in India –

- **Lack of Credibility:** During the last few years, numerous organisations have mushroomed which claim to work for the cause of helping the poor.
- Under the garb of being an NGO, these NGOs often mint money from donors and are also involved in money laundering activities.
- **Without serious intent:** There is nearly one NGO for every 400 people in India. However, not every NGO out there is engaged in serious social welfare work. Many are fraudulent and many are there without much serious intent.
- **Undermining Development Activities:** A report by India's Intelligence Bureau accused NGOs such as Greenpeace, Cordaid, Amnesty, and Action Aid for reducing India's GDP by 2-3% per year.
- **Lack of Transparency:** India's disproportionate number of NGOs and the sector's lack of transparency and accountability is clearly an issue that needs reforms. Further the allegations of corruption against NGOs be ignored. In the past many NGOs were blacklisted after being found to have indulged in misappropriation of funds.
- **Misappropriation of funds:** Many NGOs don't have sophisticated finance and legal teams, nor do they have the funds to conduct audits.
- **Unaccountable and undemocratic functioning:** CBI records filed in the Supreme Court show that only 10% of the total registered NGOs under the Societies Registration Act file annual financial statements.

Way forward –

- A regulatory mechanism to keep a watch on the financial activities of NGOs and voluntary organizations is the need of the hour.
- A National Accreditation Council consisting of academicians, activist, retired bureaucrats should be made to ensure compliance by NGOs.
- The disruption caused by the COVID-19 crisis, is bound to have a deep impact on NGO funding. Therefore government should frame guidelines in the manner in which these organisations can revive there legitimate funding base.

Conclusion

The recent Centre for Policy Research survey found most of IAS officers surveyed considered NGOs and civil society as critical partners in the pandemic response. Thus NGO acts as social mediator within different levels of society by various agents to change social and behavioural attitudes within the prevailing social environment for achieving desired results of change in society.

2. In the development process, how critical is the role of non-government actors? Illustrate.

Approach

Candidate can define the non-government actors and then with the help of some examples and data, role in the development process can be stated.

Introduction

Non-state actors include organizations and individuals that are not affiliated with, directed by, or funded through the government. These include corporations, private financial institutions, and NGOs, as well as paramilitary and armed resistance groups.

Body

Importance of non-government actors –

- Globalization has increased the influence of the private sector with mixed results for the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. The economic production of many of the world's largest corporations exceeds the GDP of many countries.
- Transnational corporations, with operations in various countries, wield enormous power (even over countries' domestic economic policies) that challenges traditional state-based mechanisms of accountability.
- Development does not only mean economic development but also includes promoting social equality, gender equality, improving quality of life etc., It is not possible for government alone to effectively undertaking such complex development activities.
- There is essentiality of other groups or organizations to support the government on various fronts. This essentiality paved way for the emergence of civil society. Non-Government organizations (NGOs) being a major arm of civil society thus have a crucial role in the country's development process.
- Social service is associated with India since ancient times. It is said that even Mahatma Gandhi after attaining independence wanted Indian National congress to be transformed into a Public service organization. Although such proposal was rejected, later many of staunch Gandhi followers did setup large number of voluntary orgs across various parts of the country to carry of the constructive works on Gandhian principles.

Development process and non-government actors -

- The GOI during the sixth Five year plan with its famous "GARIBI HATAO" slogan did recognize the importance of NGOs in the development process of India. In the seventh FYP, it gave a task of developing "self-reliance communities" to

NGOs for promoting rural development. Later in the eighth FYP, government sought to promote nationwide network of NGOs.

- In its ninth FYP, it envisaged the primary role of in promoting PPPS in the country. The tenth FYP envisaged the need and importance of NGOs in developing agricultural sector by promoting awareness among the farmers about various modern farm techniques and government initiatives for their benefit. Moreover, government has also been promoting the development of NGOs through financial aid and assistance programmes.
- NGOs with the support given by the government has been accelerating its development activities by taking up specific issues like Poverty alleviation, child rights, caste stigma and discriminations, women rights, child labour, rural development, water and sanitation, environmental issues etc.
- In the last two decades the role of NGOs have become proactive in the social sector development-education, health etc. NGOs have played a crucial role in sending the school dropouts back to the school especially in rural areas thus upholding the Right to education.
- In health sector we can witness several institutes performing outstanding feat by providing last mile delivery of health services to the most backward regions in India, like SEARCH in gadchiroli district of Maharashtra. They were able to reduce child and maternal mortality by devising new techniques, which was later adopted all over India.
- The most highlighted success of NGOs could be seen in their achievement in influencing government to bring out various development-oriented policies and laws. Few of such laws and policies include: Right to Information, Integrated child development scheme(ICDS), Integrated child protection scheme(ICPS), MNREGA, Juvenile justice, Nirmal gram initiative, Rastriya swathya bhima yogna (RSBY)
- However, many NGOs in India have come under the red scanner and their functioning have to be seen with suspicion. This is majorly because of loss in credibility and lack of accountability with NGOs in India.
- The recent report of Intelligence bureau (IB) stated that-the working of few NGOs in the name of protests against the government activities have become detrimental to the nation development. It also mentioned that the protests of 'foreign funding NGOs' led to loss of 2-3% of country's GDP. The report has brought the discussions and debates about NGOs accountability into fore.
- It is true that NGOs must raise voice to protect the rights of people and protest but it is also equally important for them to provide the alternatives for the government to ensure development. Instead of blocking the foreign funds it is necessary for government to ensure further transparency in categorizing the NGOs based on their funds sources.

Conclusion

Non-government actors are essential part of development process as they ensure transparency and effective implementation of government policies. They can provide a viable and people friendly alternatives as they work on bottom up approach and

represent voices of marginalised. As an effective form of pressure group NGO's are vital for democratic functioning of a nation but at the same time vigilance on non state actors is important to protect national security and not get pressurised by external forces.



3. What role do panchayats play in the socio-economic development of rural India? How can their participation be made more effective and result oriented? Suggest.

Approach

Explain the role and suggest how their participation be made more effective and result oriented.

Introduction

The Panchayats are expected to play an important role in rural development in India, particularly after independence. Plan documents of both the central and state governments and various committees have emphasized the importance of these bodies in the polity.

Body

ROLE OF PANCHAYATS IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL INDIA –

- The implementation of rural development programs through the Panchayat Raj institutions has a drastic change in the socio economic conditions of the rural people in the selected areas.
- The implementation of rural development programs has affected even the social and political affairs of the people of the selected area.
- In the economic front of the rural development programs have created an improvement in economic position of the selected area, as a result of implementation of rural development programs most of the people gain additional income.
- From the created assets which has resulted into deprivation in selected areas. After the implementation of rural developments programs, efforts have been made to strengthen village and cottage industries, as a result most of the people have become employed in various agriculture and allied activities like animal husbandry, sheep/goat rearing, handicrafts, small business and other activities. This has brought vigorous change in socio economic setup of the selected Gram Panchayat.
- The implemented rural programs like SJGSY, housing schemes and power schemes have created various gainful activities for poor in selected area to be placed above the poverty line.
- Furthermore in the newly built houses and provided power connection for houses, it indicates that there is a cumulative process for infrastructure development of rural area.
- As an exceptionally results some beneficiaries undergone losses of assets even by adopting rural development programs, but it is insignificant on other hand poor people who have not cover under the schemes are leading a measurable life.

SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE THEIR PARTICIPATION MORE EFFECTIVE AND RESULT ORIENTED –

- For India's Panchayati Raj system to be more effective, we need a new approach to training its three million elected representatives.
- A well-designed capacity building and training programme, done in a time-bound manner, with clearly defined outcomes, could be the key to filling that gap in effectiveness of panchayati raj.
- There should be a concrete state policy for capacity building and training of Gram Panchayat members in several states.
- There is a shortage in the number of qualified trainers, due to which not all GP members get to attend the required number of training sessions, or receive training on all required areas.
- Further, there are infrastructural gaps at training centres, such as absence of computers and satellite communication facilities, or poor amenities for residential training. Providing adequate resources to overcome these issues will make the participation of panchayat more effective.

Conclusion

The role of panchayat Raj institutions as instruments of rural reconstruction and development needs no emphasis. They have been reorganized with wider powers and financial resources not merely as institutions of political participation but institutions of social and economic development. Panchayat Raj has come to be associated with two broad images. First, it is a government by itself and second it is an agency of the state government. In the integrated exercise of planning for social and economic development, co-ordinate roles, the present set up is a three-tier representative structure of government where the administrators, elected leaders and local population participate in the developmental effort.

4. Sri Lanka has immense strategic importance for India. Do you agree? Comment in the light of the evolving geopolitics in the Indian Ocean region.

Approach

Students are expected to write about the strategic importance of Sri Lanka for India in context of evolving geopolitics in the Indian ocean region, also it is important to mention about the challenges in the relationship between India and Sri Lanka and India's historical and cultural connect also needs to be briefly mentioned.

Introduction

Sri Lanka, an island nation in the Indian Ocean, is separated from India by the Palk Strait – a bare 22 miles of water. It is of prime importance for India's security and the security of the Indian Ocean. This island nation lies astride the major sea lanes of communication from Europe to East Asia and the oil tanker routes from the oil producing countries of the Gulf to China, Japan and other Pacific countries. In the military sense it is important to the United States as these same sea routes are used for transference of naval power from the Pacific Ocean to the Indian Ocean and the Gulf. India too has a vital strategic stake in Sri Lanka for her own security interests. An unfriendly Sri Lanka or a Sri Lanka under influence of a power unfriendly to India would strategically discomfit India. Sri Lanka is also strategically important to India in terms of her Indian Ocean strategy and in terms of networking of partners for her aims of establishing an Indian Ocean Rim Community.

Body:

Strategic importance of Sri Lanka for India –

- The relationship between India and Sri Lanka is more than 2,500 years old. Both countries have a legacy of intellectual, cultural, religious and linguistic interaction. In recent years, the relationship has been marked by close contacts at all levels. Trade and investment have grown and there is cooperation in the fields of development, education, culture and defence. Both countries share a broad understanding on major issues of international interest. In recent years, significant progress in implementation of developmental assistance projects for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and disadvantaged sections of the population in Sri Lanka has helped further cement the bonds of friendship between the two countries.
- Sri Lanka has by and large been friendly disposed towards India despite the complications caused by the minority Tamils of Northern Sri Lanka involved in a long insurgency and terrorism demanding an independent state of Eelam spearheaded by the LTTE. India too has in the past before the IPKF operations of the 1980s had on a number of occasions extended military assistance to ward off security challenges to the Government of the day.

- To counter China, good relations with Sri Lanka and other countries in the Indian Ocean region are very essential. Therefore, strengthening multilateral organizations like SAARC, BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic cooperation) and IOR-ARC (Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation) is a necessity. Sri Lanka, being an important member of these organizations, can never be neglected or sidelined in the foreign policy.
- Sri Lanka has long been a priority destination for direct investment from India. Sri Lanka is one of India's largest trading partner in SAARC. India in turn is Sri Lanka's largest trade partner globally. Trade between the two countries grew particularly rapidly after the entry into force of the India-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement in March 2000. According to Sri Lankan Customs, bilateral trade in 2016 amounted to US \$ 4.38 billion. Exports from India to Sri Lanka in 2016 were US\$ 3.83 billion, while exports from Sri Lanka to India were US\$ 551 million.
- Sri Lanka lies in the immediate vicinity of India and is strategically placed in the Indian ocean region which accounts for the most of the ocean trade thus its importance for India is a priority, Also in order to counter the the Chinese spread and string of pearls manoeuvre co operation with Sri Lanka gains more prominence.
- As the US is becoming more involved in South Asia, the question of its impact on India-Sri Lanka relations is one worth considering. Maldives and the US recently signed a Defence Agreement "to deepen engagement and cooperation in support of maintaining peace and security in the Indian Ocean."
- Though the US has continued to bring attention to humanitarian issues and "urge progress on reconciliation" in its conversations with members of Sri Lanka's new government, the emphasis of its equation with Sri Lanka has shifted to the Indo-Pacific, crucially 'a free and open Indo-Pacific.' In this respect they see Sri Lanka as a valuable partner, one that "will contribute to regional stability and prosperity as a hub of the Indo-Pacific region." This is reflective of the changed reality of a current and post-pandemic world.

Challenges on this front –

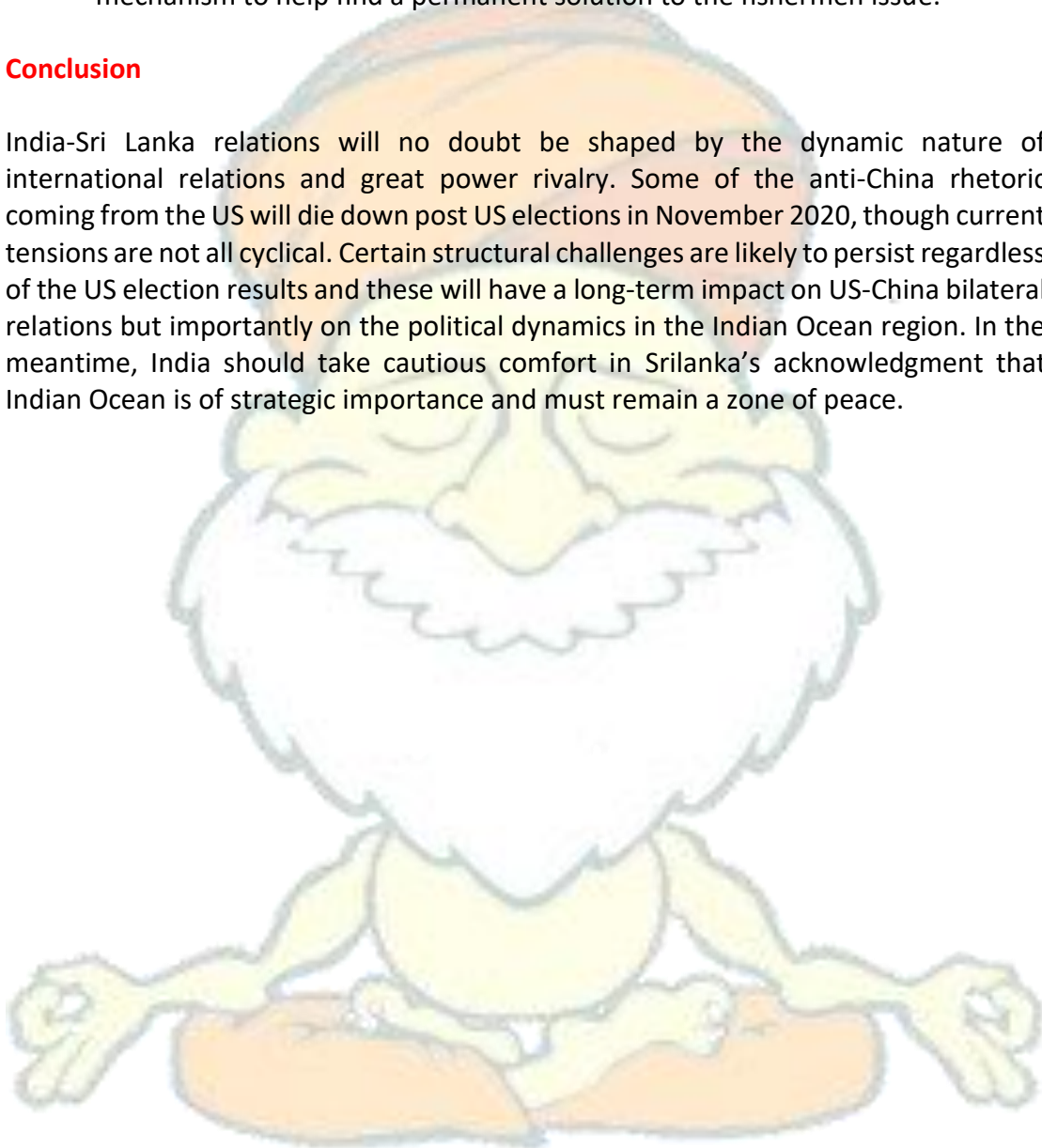
- Grumbling Chinese assistance to neighbourhood is because the Chinese combine investments with politics. Therefore, more important is to find alternative approaches that could combat both Chinese approaches. It is because China will not stop monetary and political interventions to dominate the global and regional order. In recent years, China has extended billions of dollars of loans to the Sri Lankan government for new infrastructure projects, which is not good for India's strategic depth in Indian Ocean Region.
- Fishermen issue-Given the proximity of the territorial waters of both countries, especially in the Palk Straits and the Gulf of Mannar, incidents of straying of fishermen are common. Indian boats have been fishing in the troubled waters for centuries and had a free run of the Bay of Bengal, Palk Bay and the Gulf of Mannar until 1974 and 1976 when treaties were signed between the two

countries to demarcate International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL). However, the treaties failed to factor in the hardship of thousands of traditional fishermen who were forced to restrict themselves to a meagre area in their fishing forays.

- India and Sri Lanka have agreed to set up a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Fisheries between the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare of India and Ministry of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development of Sri Lanka as the mechanism to help find a permanent solution to the fishermen issue.

Conclusion

India-Sri Lanka relations will no doubt be shaped by the dynamic nature of international relations and great power rivalry. Some of the anti-China rhetoric coming from the US will die down post US elections in November 2020, though current tensions are not all cyclical. Certain structural challenges are likely to persist regardless of the US election results and these will have a long-term impact on US-China bilateral relations but importantly on the political dynamics in the Indian Ocean region. In the meantime, India should take cautious comfort in Sri Lanka's acknowledgment that Indian Ocean is of strategic importance and must remain a zone of peace.



5. Examine the role of democracy in economic development.**Approach**

A simple and straightforward question where in the candidate needs to examine the role of democracy in economic development through multiple arguments and substantiation of the same.

Introduction

Democracy is a form of political system which provides agency to every stakeholder and is often held to be the ideal political system, conferring growth and prosperity on nations' citizens; however, this paradigm of thought has come under increasing debate. While many consider a positive correlation between democracy and economic growth, others have opined neutral or even negative impacts.

Body

Among the various systems of government, popular perception and contemporary trends hold 'democracy' to be the 'ideal'. In 1960, 39% of nations were considered to be a democracy; by 2010 that proportion had risen to 61%. However, the somewhat simplistic yet prevailing belief that democracy improves people's lives, and in particular their material wealth, has come under increasing scrutiny –

- Many studies have linked democracy with neutral or poor economic outlook owing to poor election practices, political gridlock, delays due to the checks and balances, politicians focused on their own re-election, and wealth redistribution through taxation, which they argue lowers the efficiency of wealth creation.
- However, regardless of the nature of the correlation between growth and democracy, the link between democracy and growth may in fact be tangential, and that it is the efficacy and stability of governing processes (i.e., policy making) rather than democracy itself that matters for economic progress.
- China enjoys its economic growth in the absence of liberalization reforms, and continues to play a major role in global economic development. Yet at the moment, China's economic growth is not conditioned by democratization.
- To make the leap to sustained economic growth, a developing country's government must be able to resist the pressures of special-interest groups, which are widely encountered in a democracy. Here, an authoritarian government is better placed to do this than a democratic one. E.g. – Rise of Singapore and other East Asian countries in the last few decades.
- Many studies have shown that the various measures of democracy do not have a statistically significant impact on economic growth. Instead, measures of the quality of institutions, political stability, openness, distance from the equator, and macro-economic policy exert a statistically significant effect on growth.

But at the same time, estimates suggest that a country that switches from non-democracy to democracy achieves about 20 percent higher GDP per capita over the past three decades. Here, democracy's intricate and inevitable links to economic development can be seen from the following points –

- There are many positive impacts in terms of the growth effects of democracy. Democracy allows people to replace governments that hinder economic output, provides predictability and stability, and promotes income redistribution, which in turn increases political stability and reduces extreme poverty.
- Countries that have democratized within the last 60 years have generally done so not at random moments, but at times of economic distress. That sheds light on the growth trajectories of democracies: They start off slowly while trying to rebound from economic misery.
- Also, if a country stays on a democratic path over an extended period of time, it develops economically, which helps further consolidate democracy, leading in turn to additional economic growth.
- Not only do democracies do better than authoritarian regimes, but their growth is also less volatile. Studies have found that volatility in economic growth was lower for democratic countries than for authoritarian countries.

Further, democracy helps in economic development of the following factors –

- Development that leads to significant and continuing improvement in the quality of life for the poor and the near-poor (that is, the majority of the population in most developing societies),
- development that serves to broaden the distribution of economic assets and incomes,
- development that leads to improvement in conditions of health and safety in the workplace,
- Development that leads to improvement in “quality of life” issues for all: improved access to health care, clean water, education development that leads to sustainable environmental change and resource use, and development that leads to improvement in gender equity over time.

Conclusion

Jagdish Bhagwati had opined, ‘there is no “cruel dilemma” of nations being forced to choose between democracy and economic progress’, which throws light on the all-inclusive nature of democracy but this is not to suggest that democracy is infallible and that it cannot be improved and made more effective. Ensuring that political democracy is practised robustly and contributes to capacity building and economic freedom is a continuous and ongoing national endeavour. But democratic polity does offer a better framework, compared to autocracy, for economic progress.