Q1. India is going to have a new parliament. Where does the proposed design of the building take inspiration from? Discuss.

Approach

As the directive here is discuss it is necessary to write in detail all aspects of the proposed design of the new parliament building also there should be a brief mention of the importance of the parliament in a democracy like India and the role parliament has played in making a largest successful democracy of the world also how this new building will fulfil country's aspirations.

Introduction

Parliament is a central feature of a successful democracy. It is a place where people's aspirations are given a shape. Old parliament building gave India a direction where millions were taken out of poverty and rights and dignity was ensured. Old Parliament building gave a new direction to India after independence. New building will be a witness to building of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

Body

Need for a new parliamentary building –

- The idea of a new structure for Parliament is not a recent one — two former Speakers highlighted this need as the number of parliamentary staff, security personnel, media visitors, and parliamentary activities have seen a steep rise. During a Joint Session, the Central Hall is jam-packed and a few MPs have to sit on additionally-arranged chairs.
- Since Parliament is a heritage building, there are severe limitations to the structural repair, alteration and modifications that can be made. The existing Parliament building lacks several safety features such as earthquake-proofing, a standard fireproofing system and also has inadequate office space.
- Article 81 of the Indian Constitution provides for the delimitation of parliamentary constituencies. Since the last delimitation exercise was conducted based on the 1971 census, the ongoing freeze on increasing the state-wise distribution of seats will end in 2026. Subsequently, the number of MPs will undoubtedly increase, which poses an urgent demand for appropriate arrangements for the upcoming legislators

Proposed design and inspiration –

- Under the Central Vista redevelopment project, the new Parliament building is an indigenous design compared to the old building which was designed by Edwin Lutyens and Hebert Baker who were both British.

- The new parliament building will have a triangular shape to reflect the importance of triangles being a sacred geometry in various religions signifying India's multireligious and secular traditions.
- The interiors will have three national symbols as their main themes-Lotus, peacock, and Banyan tree.
- The ceiling of the parliament has fresco paintings like that in Rashtrapati Bhawan taking inspiration from the traditional temples and designs.
- The interior walls will have shlokas inspired from the old parliament building.
- Dholpur stone will be used which again oozes traditional design along with the artistry of our multicultural society.
- Also, the new building will be a state-of-the-art structural design with all the new technological features which will withstand the aspirations for another 150 years.
- The new building will be environment friendly with 30% its energy needs to be fulfilled from renewable sources.

Concerns –

- Central Vista has been accorded the highest Grade 1 heritage status by the Unified Building Bye-Laws of Delhi. Grade 1 classified buildings cannot be changed, and "no intervention can be made unless it is in the interest of strengthening and prolonging the life of the buildings."
- The Opposition, environmentalists, architects and citizens have raised many concerns even before the pandemic brought in extra issues. They have questioned the lack of studies to ascertain the need for the project and its impact on the environment, traffic and pollution. But, several key approvals for the proposed Parliament building have been pushed during the lockdown. This led to allegations of a lack of transparency.
- They have questioned the lack of studies to ascertain the need for the project and its impact on the environment, traffic and pollution.

Conclusion

India has imbibed democratic values and these are a part of our cultural ethos —be it the 12th-century Anubhava Mandapa of Bhagwan Basava or Buddhism from the sixth century BCE onwards, which taught liberty, equality and fraternity to the world. B R Ambedkar, chairman of the Constitution's draft committee, lucidly elaborated these facts during the Constituent Assembly debates. The US's present parliamentary building was constructed within 25 years of its independence; it took 70 years to build its parliament. In 1988, Australia proudly dedicated its new parliament building in Canberra. Thus, it is imperative to undertake this historical exercise to develop our post-colonial people's Parliament. This glorious project will depict India's democratic tradition and represent India as the mother of democracy in a real sense.

Q2. Do you agree with the assertion that building heritage is an ongoing process? In this context, share your views on the proposal to build statues of historical personalities like Shivaji Maharaj.

Approach

You need to provide your view with regards to efforts for building heritage as being an ongoing process in the first part while in the second part, you need to share your views on the proposals to build statues of historical personalities like Shivaji Maharaj. Also, views should be properly substantiated rather than just being comments.

Introduction

The Indian sub-continent is endowed with the richest and the most diverse stock of cultural and architectural heritage, with a significant proportion of them constituting living monuments. Traditional construction materials and practices are still used in renovation of heritage structures along with a recent focus towards constructing new heritage structure's to fulfil the needs and aspirations of present times, some of which are reflected in construction of grand statues.

Body

Yes, building heritage is an ongoing process as –

- The modern understanding of heritage is fluid and dynamic. At its core, it represents a holistic understanding that perceives heritage as "a social and political construct encompassing all those places, artefacts and cultural expressions inherited from the past."
- They are seen to reflect and validate our identity as nations, communities, families and even individuals, and thus are worthy of respect and protection as well as new efforts towards rejuvenating these ideas.
- Today heritage is perceived far more broadly than was the case by previous generations —including the pioneers of the preservation movement — as is its protection and safeguarding for future generations which also necessitates new heritage structures for the future generations to highlight our age.
- Further, building heritage doesn't necessarily mean they won't serve public utility or be a wasteful expenditure as every heritage structure of past served some practical function in its days and same will be the case in present times with aesthetic considerations of its times.

Every society decides what is and isn't heritage. Since every collective decision involves politics, the construction of heritage too is deeply political. Political considerations also involve prioritising competing interests, which need to be balanced, where –

- Limited resources need to be allotted to safeguard and conserve present heritage structures rather than constructing new ones.
- Socio-economic condition of vast section of our population in present times also raises questions on allocation function in terms of monetary costs for building new heritage.

In this context, the proposal to build statues of historical personalities like Shivaji Maharaj can be understood from the following points –

- People care for heritage like statues because it contributes to and enhances our collective self-understanding. Further, it helps in focusing on personalities which embody our civilizational heritage as well as virtuous human conduct.
- Statues affirm our collective identity, is a source of pride. It is that part of history which is continuously brought to life by artefacts, integrated with our lived collective experience. And because it directly touches identity, it evokes strong feelings.
- Statue construction involves ethics too. It is the valued past of societies: intangible, preserved say, in narratives, music or performances but also tangible, materially embodied in statues where a grander scale helps in identifying with the noble virtues of the historical personality involved.
- Integral to the construction of statue then is an assessment of what must be remembered and forgotten, what calls for respect and celebration and what is a 'stain' remembered only to be prevented in future. Raj Ghat is not only a place where we remember Gandhi but also where we mourn his assassination by one of his own countrymen.
- Heritage is a way of addressing and rectifying past wrongs. The Holocaust memorial in Berlin and Washington's Vietnam memorial are both gestures towards reparation, monuments of public apology.

But at the same time, there are multiple concerns with regards to recent spree of announcements to build statues across India, some of these concerns are –

- The major problem is recouping the investment from tourism. The Taj Mahal, India's most famous moment, draws in millions of dollars in revenue each year, but even should the Shivaji Maharaj statue achieve the same benchmark, it will take decades to break even.
- Aside from the cost of construction, the expenditure for ongoing maintenance will be a vacuum on government revenue. Funding for the project will aggravate the already troubled debt situation.
- Public display of the heritage of only a few is a source of profound estrangement and exclusion for others. Heritage is often linked to cultural domination that invites resistance. It follows that heritage is that which brings comfort or unease, to which people are either attracted or repulsed.
- In societies where caste hierarchies abound, the continual denial of public recognition to Dalit symbols leads to demands of greater inclusion of their heritage. And when after struggles for recognition, Ambedkar's statues finally

make their way into public spaces, many see vandalism during times of social tension.

- With one of the largest stocks of heritage structures in the world, lack of adequate quality and quantity of manpower is a serious bottleneck in India in addressing the task of understanding and protecting heritage structures from natural hazards, ageing and weathering effects. Thus, focus should be on conservation of existing heritage structures and statues.

Also, our persistent obsession with political power, begs the question of why is there no movement to erect statues of M.S. Subbulakshmi, Kumar Gandharva, or Begum Akhtar for their massive contribution to our cultural heritage?

Conclusion

People must have the first priority in cultural heritage, not objects. A holistic understanding of the heritage is at stake, where the complexity of heritage should be taken into account and a balance should be brought in public discourse to ensure effective utilization of public funds as well as highlight the role of historical figures through appropriate means.

Q3. Do you think unbridled freedom on social media platforms can undermine democracy? Critically comment.

Approach

As the directive in the question is critically comment it is necessary to mention both positive and negative aspects of freedom on social media undermining democracy. Also answer should depict multi dimensionality of points covering all aspects the way social media impacts democracy in both positive and negative ways.

Introduction

Public participation is the bedrock of a successful and vibrant democracy. Debates, discussions and a healthy exchange of ideas go a long way in strengthening the foundations of democratic systems. Countries across the globe took to newer modes of public communication even as their democracies kept evolving.

Social media has been the new tool in the hands of people it has played a big role in changing the way democracies used to function earlier by giving access to every individual to have his say and change the discourse.

Body

Is unbridled freedom on social media undermining democracy?
Arguments in favour –

- The rise of polarizing and divisive content has been a defining moment of modern politics, which is fed by fake news propagation through social media channels.
- Further, dissemination of fake news through social media, among populations with low-to-no levels of critical digital literacy is a big challenge.
- In India, the spread of fake news has occurred mostly with relation to political and religious matters. However, misinformation related to COVID-19 pandemic was also widely circulated.
- Fake news spread through social media in the country has become a serious problem, with the potential of it resulting in mob violence
- Social media has enabled a style of populist politics, which on the negative side allows hate speech and extreme speech to thrive in digital spaces that are unregulated, particularly in regional languages
- The impact social media platforms are having on influencing elections in the US are also evident. In addition to social media posts, many voters have reported receiving text messages and emails that are nothing but disinformation campaigns about the presidential candidates and what they stand for.
- Recent incidents of disinformation campaign against the Agriculture reform laws and citizenship amendment act, on social media understated the real objectives behind such reforms.

Arguments against –

- Democratization of Expression: Social media has made Indian politics more inclusive by allowing citizens, who were traditionally excluded from politics due to geography and demography, to gain direct entry into the political process.
- It has also allowed for a diversity of viewpoints and public engagement on an unprecedented scale
- Making political communication people-centric: Social media has been increasingly used by Indian political actors for routine political communication between elections to provide unmediated and direct communication to connect citizenry.
- Social media can be used for greater political participation, The Election Commission of India recently launched an app to encourage voter mobilisation.
- Increasing access to political information through the mass media may enable citizens to monitor incumbents' behaviour, and use this information in voting decisions. Exposure to debates improve voters' political knowledge and the alignment between voters' reported policy positions and those of the candidates they voted for.

Conclusion

In recent years internet has expanded exponentially to every corner of the world. With rise in social media and its penetration, a wave of 'mediatisation' of Indian politics i.e., the media's ability to set political agendas has expanded, and elections have been transformed into an image contest between prominent personalities. As media and politics grow ever more intertwined, media exposure has impacted voting behaviours and opinions. This Demand strong measures and regulation by the government.

Q4. What role does a predictable tax policy play in ease of doing business? Discuss. In this light, examine the critical issues affecting the sentiments of investors and businesses in India.

Approach

The question can be addressed in two parts where the first part should discuss the role of predictable tax policy in ease of doing business while the second part should examine important issues affecting the sentiments of investors and businesses in India.

Introduction

To foster economic growth and development governments need sustainable sources of funding for social programs and public investments. To achieve the common goal of a prosperous, functional and orderly society, taxation is not only for public goods and services; it is also a key ingredient in the social contract between citizens and the economy, where a predictable taxation policy helps in overall improvement in compliance.

Body

- The ease of doing business in any country is influenced by a number of factors. A material consideration among these is the stability and predictability of a country's taxation system, together with the ease of discharging a taxpayer's tax obligations.
- Over the years, the Indian taxation landscape has been characterized by ambiguous legislation posing interpretational challenges, an aggressive revenue administration that has sought to interpret taxation provisions in a manner prejudicial to the taxpayer. For example, recent verdicts in favour of multinationals like Vodafone and Cairn Energy are cases in point.
- The uncertainty regarding retrospective taxation is an issue on the minds of investors and there is a real danger it will undermine the message that India is open for investment. It is imperative for India to have a non-adversarial tax administration which is both investor and assesse friendly.
- Governments must provide a fiscal climate within which electronic commerce can flourish, weighed against the obligation to operate a fair and predictable taxation system that provides the revenue required to meet the legitimate expectations of citizens for publicly provided services.
- Rules that enhance the predictability of economic interactions and provide contractual partners with essential protections against arbitrariness and abuse.
- Such rules are much more effective in shaping the incentives of economic agents in ways that promote growth and development where they are reasonably efficient in design, are transparent and accessible to those for whom they are intended and can be implemented at a reasonable cost.

- The quality of the rules also has a crucial bearing on how societies distribute the benefits and finance the costs of development strategies and policies

Although the current government has attempted to convey to investors across the world that theirs is a government where the decisions will be fair, transparent and within the four corners of the law, there are many issues which are affecting the sentiments of investors and businesses in India, some of these are –

- In a recently conducted USISPF survey of CEOs of MNCs to gauge investment sentiments of businesses in India, unanimously listed good governance, transparency, predictable tax policy framework, ease of doing business, infrastructure and cost advantage as reasons for choosing alternate countries for their investments.
- Delayed Administrative Mechanisms: A study mentions that in India, it takes over 250-254 hours annually to complete tax procedures for businesses. Another bottleneck faced by the Indian economy has been the lack of uniform policies amongst Indian states.
- Dispute Resolution: Similarly, delays in dispute resolution which take up to 1445 days to be resolved as opposed to only 164 days to resolve a dispute in Singapore, have also dampened India's attractiveness for MNCs.
- Quality infrastructure is critical for the sound functioning of an economy because it plays such a central role in determining the location of economic activity and the kinds of sectors that can develop. India lacks quality infrastructure, except few regions.
- Productivity of capital: Long-term changes in technology can influence the attractiveness of investment. In the late nineteenth century, new technologies meant firms had a strong incentive to invest in this new technology because it was much more efficient than previous technology. If there is a slowdown in the rate of technological progress, firms will cut back investment as there are lower returns on the investment.
- A healthy workforce is vital to an economy's competitiveness and productivity—investing in the provision of health services is essential for both economic and moral reasons. In this regard, the Global Hunger Index necessitates India improve vastly.
- Basic education increases the efficiency of each worker, and good-quality higher education and training allow economies to move up the value chain beyond simple production processes and products.

Conclusion

Recent times have seen improvement in India's overall efforts towards facilitating investors and businesses, which is evident from WTO's Trade Policy Review (TPR) which appreciated India's goods and services tax, reforms on taxation, trade facilitation and improving the ease of doing business, and liberalised regimes for FDI and intellectual property rights.

Q5. What role has community engagement by ASHA workers played behind India's successful COVID response? Discuss.

Approach

As the derivative is discuss so it necessitates a debate where reasoning is backed up with evidence to make a case for and against an argument and finally arriving at a conclusion.

Introduction

Asha workers (an acronym that translates as "hope" in Hindi), along with the volunteer Anganwadi workers, and the more qualified ANMs, form the backbone of community healthcare in India. They are hired by the states and their salaries paid by funds from the central and state governments. Nearly all of them are women. Recently the second report of a WHO-established independent panel to study global responses to the pandemic said that Community engagement by ASHA workers has been a successful strategy in enhancing India's national response to Covid-19. It has highlighted how the deployment of "a cadre of million women social health activists" has helped India's Covid-19 surveillance.

Body

ROLE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY ASHA WORKERS BEHIND INDIA'S SUCCESSFUL COVID RESPONSE –

- While many Indians have shifted to work-from-home during the lockdown, not much has changed for ASHAS. If anything, they have additional COVID duties over and above their regular tasks.
- Their core responsibilities such as distributing iron tablets, checking on immunisation schedules of babies and pregnant women, undertaking periodic checks on tuberculosis (tb) patients, among others, have been supplemented with additional duties of contract tracing, spreading awareness on prevention of COVID, keeping a close watch on incoming migrant workers to ensure they follow quarantine protocol and reporting suspected COVID cases.
- Despite the lockdown and other curbs on movement, ASHAS are performing their duties to the fullest. They are working tirelessly to prevent COVID transmission while also ensuring that the delivery of other health services remains uninterrupted.
- Asha workers are volunteers who receive honorariums and incentives in lieu of their work. However, 64 per cent respondents claim to have received no incentives for the COVID-related responsibilities undertaken by them. Only 43 per cent ASHAS are receiving their monthly honorariums on a regular basis.

- In a major exercise, 1.6 lakh accredited social health activists (ASHAS) have tracked in two phases over 30.43 lakh migrants who returned to Uttar Pradesh during the covid-19 lockdown and assisted the state government in contact tracing and community surveillance
- With the surge in the cases of covid-19 in the country and the influx of migrant population from hotspot areas, one of the major challenges in Uttar Pradesh was to cater to the healthcare needs of returnees and arrest the spread in its rural population. ASHAS have played a critical role in supporting the state's covid-19 management during this crisis.
- ASHAS have played a critical role in sensitising the communities about the preventive measures to be adopted such as regular hand washing with soap and water, importance of wearing masks when out in public spaces, and maintaining adequate physical distancing.
- ASHAS have assisted the Panchayati raj department in development of the community quarantine centres, in buildings like Anganwadi centres and primary schools. They have ensured adoption of Arogya Setu app at the community level through awareness generation and supporting in its installation
- As a result of their efforts, there has been enhanced awareness about essential and non-essential healthcare services and how to access these. The ASHAS are provided basic protective gear like masks, soaps and sanitizers as they go about their duties.
- The report cited ASHA workers in India for successfully using community engagement to respond to the pandemic.
- Community engagement has been a successful strategy to enhance national responses. This has included the deployment of community health workers; for example, India has drawn on a cadre of a million women social health activists.
- Asha workers were recruited under the national rural health mission (NHRM) that was launched in 2005. These workers act as a bridge between public healthcare and various communities. They are usually tasked with antenatal and care for new-born babies, encouraging immunisation, family planning and treating basic illnesses.
- Nearly 1 million other accredited social health activists (ASHAS) assigned to rural villages and small towns across India are on the front lines of the country's fight against corona virus.
- Every day, these activist goes door to door in search of potential covid-19 cases, working to get patients tested or to help them find treatment.

Conclusion

India's ASHA program is likely the world's largest army of all female community health workers. They are the foot soldiers of the country's health system. They have also played an essential role in India's efforts to eradicate polio and increase immunization, according to numerous studies.

Q6. What are the key privacy issues emerging with respect to social media platforms? Discuss.

Approach

The focus has to be on the privacy issues regarding the social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and other channels. The answer has to largely include the personnel data protection concerns and ways social networking platforms should use to ensure personal data protection.

Introduction

Back in 2016, it is claimed that the Trump-Era started at the back of using the data provided by Facebook to Cambridge Analytica forcing people to develop views in sync with their demand. The privacy issues of social media platforms have been raised many times since, till the recent culmination of change in privacy policy of a popular messaging application-WhatsApp (Facebook Subsidiary). In the backdrop of these issues there has been a continuous effort towards data protection in India as well, Government of India also came up with white paper on data protection and a bill on data protection is initial stages of becoming a permanent law.

Body

Social networks have become a part of human life. Starting from sharing information like text, photos, messages, many have started share latest news, and news related pictures in the Media domain, question papers, assignments, and workshops in Education domain, online survey, marketing, and targeting customers in Business domain, and jokes, music, and videos in Entertainment domain. Because of its usage by Internet surfers in all possible ways, even we would mention the social networking media as the current Internet culture. While enjoying the information sharing on Social Medias, yet it requires a great deal for security and privacy.

Issues with privacy –

- **Data mining –** Every one leaves trail behind while using any of the social media networking platform. Every time someone creates a new social media account, they provide personal information that can include their name, birthdate, geographic location, and personal interests. In addition, companies collect data on user behaviours: when, where, and how users interact with their platform. All of this data is stored and leveraged by companies to better target advertising to their users. Sometimes, companies share users' data with third-party entities, often without users' knowledge or consent.
- **Phishing Attempts –** Phishing is one of the most common ways criminals attempt to gain access to sensitive personal information. Often in the form of an email, a text message, or a phone call, a phishing attack presents itself as a message from a legitimate organization. These messages trick people into

sharing sensitive data, including passwords, banking information, or credit card details. Phishing attacks often pose as social media platforms.

- **Identity Theft –** Identity theft is a type of attack on social networking platforms which the adversary attempts to collect personal information of social media users so that he can impersonate the victim of the attack in order to gain some benefits or harm the victim.

- **Cyber terrorism –** The biggest challenge for internal security of nation through social networking site is cyber terrorism. Social networking sites also invite fraudsters to take excellent opportunity to become wealthy by applying deceiver schemes. Internet media is a major resource for developing serious crime. As Internet is growing explosively, online criminals try to present fraudulent plans in many ways.

- **Organised crime –** Social networking sites also pose major challenge in financial and organized crime which destabilizes the system. The organized criminal groups have found in social networks a forum to position themselves in the popular culture as an alternative lifestyle. Nowadays, the Internet reveals all the things that used to be hidden, and has become the platform of organized criminal groups to prove their power and profits with impunity. The international media has given the opportunity to take a look at the lifestyles of the so-called "narcojuniors", that is second generation of drug traffickers that have inherited the leadership of large criminal organizations.

- **Criminal Activity and Money laundering –** Internet Media is a major resource for developing serious crime. As Internet is growing explosively, online criminals try to present fraudulent plans in many ways. Social networking sites also pose major challenge in financial and organized crime which destabilizes the system. It creates threat to a company's security because of what employees might disclose and they are on prime target for cyber criminals.

- **Hacking –** Hackers use computer programs to attack the target computer. By using Social Media, hackers breach the national security and steal important data of defence or other strategic sectors. This can kneel the whole country without using Arms and Ammunition.

Conclusion

In a globalised society media becomes a lethal weapon against the enemy, and the populace as well. Information, as an element of soft power, is a strategic instrument within the context of grand strategy. There should be judicious use of social media. But we will have to mull steps to check its misuse for creating Internal security threat to Nation. Social Media, with all its benefits and the potential for more, is definitely a boon to our world, however misuse or irresponsible usage can have negative effects on an Internal security. We need to guard against the negative impact of the social media, which ought to be used in the correct manner for creative or productive purposes so that it is progressive to mankind and society at large, rather than regressive.

Q7. What according to you have been the two most landmark amendments to the Indian Constitution in the 21st century? Substantiate.

Approach

As the derivative is substantiate so it necessitates an explanation in which you have to give evidence or provide information to prove that something is true

Introduction

Under Article 368 of the Indian Constitution, the Parliament is empowered to amend it and its procedures. Amendments to the Indian Constitution are not easy to produce and require compliance with other provisions. Article 368 grants Parliament some powers allowing it to amend it while keeping its fundamental form just the same. In 73 years of Indian Independence, the constitution has been amended 104 times.

Body

THE TWO MOST LANDMARK AMENDMENTS TO THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION IN THE 21ST CENTURY –

1. THE CONSTITUTION (86TH AMENDMENT ACT-2002) –

- Provides Right to Education until the age of fourteen and early childhood care until the age of six.
- One of the most important amendments, the government directed private schools to take 25% of their class strength from economically weaker or disadvantaged groups of society through a random selection process with the help of the government funding.
- This initiative was taken to try and provide elementary education to all. Moreover, the local and state governments were made to ensure its proper implementation.
- In order to make the right to free and compulsory education a fundamental right, the Act inserts a new Article, namely Article 21A, which confers the right to free and compulsory education on all children aged between 6 and 14 years.
- The Law amends the Constitution in Part-III, Part -IV, and Part-IV(A).

2. THE CONSTITUTION (101ST AMENDMENT ACT-2016) –

- Goods and Services Tax (GST) commenced on 8 September 2016 with the enactment and subsequent notices of the 101st Constitution Amendment Act, 2016.
- The constitution incorporated ARTICLE 246-A, 269-A, 279-A. The amendment allowed amendments to the constitution's 7th cycle.

- Union List entry 84 earlier contained duties related to cigarettes, alcoholic liquors, marijuana, Indian hemp, medicines and drugs, medicinal and bathroom arrangements. Petroleum oil, high-speed gasoline, engine spirit (petrol), natural gas, and air turbine power, cigarettes, and cigarettes goods should be listed following the amendment.
- Entry 92 has been removed (newspapers and ads published therein), they are now under GST. Entry 92-C (Service Tax) is now deleted from the list of unions.
- Entry 52 (entry tax for in-state sale) has now been removed from the State register.
- Entry 54, Taxes on the export or purchasing of products other than newspapers, according to the provisions of Entry 92-A of the List I have now been supplemented by Taxes on the selling of petroleum oil, high-speed gasoline, motor spirit (petroleum), natural gas, aviation turbine fuel and alcoholic spirit for human consumption, but not including the sale or distribution in the form of inter-State commerce or commerce Reference 55 (Taxes on Advertising) was omitted.
- Entry 62 (Luxury taxes, including taxes on entertainment, entertainment, betting and gambling) has now been replaced by these taxes only to be levied by local authorities.

Conclusion

Article 368 is vague on whether or not the parliament has the right to change the basic structure, but this still does not mean this Article 368 imposes the restriction on the modification of the basic structure and Part III of the Constitution. Although having provisions to amend the constitution was progressive to the fathers of our nation, it is important that such provisions are not misused. Misuse could lead to undue legislative or executive authority that could rip apart the fabric of our society. Indians may not always know all the procedural details of this lengthy and imperfect document, but they know the core — that it's not the whims of political greed that governs them, but the constitutional words. And on Republic Day, this is worth celebrating.

Q8. What are the latest amendments made to the provisions related to citizenship? What are your views on these amendments? Discuss.

Approach

The question demands a thorough explanation of all the amendments made to citizenship act since it was enacted from 1955, also vies need to expressed in a balanced, forward looking and logical manner.

Introduction

Citizenship signifies the relationship between individual and state. Like any other modern state, India has two kinds of people—citizens and aliens. Citizens are full members of the Indian State and owe allegiance to it. They enjoy all civil and political rights. Citizenship is an idea of exclusion as it excludes non-citizens. Citizenship is the status of a person recognized under law as being a legal member of a sovereign state or belonging to a nation. In India, Articles 5 – 11 of the Constitution deals with the concept of citizenship.

Body

Citizenship at the commencement of the Constitution –

- Articles 5 to 11 talk about citizenship for people at the commencement of the Constitution, i.e., on November 26th, 1949. Under this, citizenship is conferred upon those persons who have their domicile in Indian Territory and who was born in Indian Territory, whose either parent was born in Indian territory; Who has ordinarily been a resident of India for not less than 5 years immediately preceding the commencement of the Constitution.
- Citizenship is regulated by the Citizenship Act, 1955. The Act specifies that citizenship may be acquired in India through five methods – by birth in India, by descent, through registration, by naturalisation (extended residence in India), and by incorporation of territory into India.

Amendments:

- The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 1986 – As per the law amendment, it is no longer adequate to be born in India to be granted Indian citizenship. At the time of birth either one of the parents has to be an Indian citizen for the person to become a citizen of India.
- The Citizenship Amendment Bill, 1992 – The Act provides that a person born after January 26, 1950 but before the commencement of the Act shall be a citizen of India if the father is Indian at the time of birth; after the commencement of the Act, the person shall be Indian if either of the parents is Indian. Also replaces references to "male persons" with "persons".

- The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003 – The Act was passed by the Parliament in December 2003, and received presidential assent in January 2004. It is labelled "Act 6 of 2004". The Act amended The Citizenship Act, 1955 by introducing and defining a notion of "illegal migrant", who could be jailed or deported.
- Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2016 – In 2015 and 2016, the central government issued two notifications exempting certain groups of illegal migrants from provisions of the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920.These groups are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Paris's and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, who arrived in India on or before December 31, 2014.This implies that these groups of illegal migrants will not be deported or imprisoned for being in India without valid documents. The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 was introduced in Lok Sabha on July 19, 2016 to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955. It seeks to make illegal migrants belonging to the same six religions and three countries eligible for citizenship.

Views-

Citizenship act has been constantly amended since 1986 because of the very reasons of the issues in some parts of the country like assam since 1971with the formation of Bangladesh as a separate country from erstwhile east Pakistan with the influx of refugees in large numbers in the immediate neighbour states like Assam, west Bengal, Tripura etc but with recent amendment of 2019 there has been protests in large numbers against the provisions like providing citizenship to particular minority groups like Hindus Sikhs Buddhists in India coming from the countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, this with the formation of national register of citizens the fear among minority groups in India particularly among Muslims because they think it is politically directed towards them with serious negative intentions.

Concerns-

-

  It contradicts the Assam Accord of 1985, which states that illegal migrants, irrespective of religion, heading in from Bangladesh after March 25, 1971, would be deported. Critics further argue that the extensive exercise of updating the National Register of Citizens (NRC) will become Null and Void due to this Amendment act.
- There are an estimated 20 million illegal Bangladeshi migrants in Assam and they have inalienably altered the demography of the state, besides putting a severe strain on the state's resources and economy.
- It is argued that it is violative of Article 14 of the Constitution (which guarantees the right to equality and applicable to both the citizens and foreigners) and the principle of secularism enshrined in the preamble of the constitution.

- India has several other refugees that include Tamils from Sri Lanka and Hindu Rohingya from Myanmar. They are not covered under the Act.

Governments stand –

- The government claims that these persecuted migrants will be eligible to apply for citizenship only after intense assessment and recommendation of district authorities and state government.
- The government has also clarified that Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh are Islamic republics where Muslims are in majority hence, they cannot be treated as persecuted minorities.
- The beneficiaries under the Citizenship Amendment Bill can reside in any state of India the burden of these persecuted migrants will be shared by the entire country and not only Assam. Moreover, these migrants were earlier given protection against legal action in the years 2015 & 2016. Long term visa protection was also granted to them. Thus, the proposed amendment will only extend these benefits further to make these persecuted migrants eligible to apply for citizenship.

Conclusion

While addressing the rights of Chakma refugees, the Supreme Court in NHRC vs. State of Arunachal Pradesh case provided equal protection before the law and rights under Article 21 (Right to life) to all immigrants including those who are considered as illegal. With the passage of this legislation, then by means of naturalization, these persecuted immigrants would be entitled to enjoy the benefits of rights guaranteed under the constitution of India, including equality, free of speech and expression, life, vote, work, food, etc. Hence, the law should not limit itself to minorities from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, but also include refugees from persecuted minorities of all religions who have made India their home.

Q9. India's test series win against Australia must have taught you some lessons in ethics. Can you discuss a few?

Approach

A straightforward question where you need to bring out the ethical lessons you learnt from the recently concluded India-Australia Test series where India won against all odds.

Introduction

Ethics is very important in all spheres of life and in cricket as well. So much so that in cricket there are worldwide rules to ensure the game is played with a sense of fairness. In fact, Cricket is one of the few sports where the Rules are described as 'Laws' and this signifies how important uniformity and fairness is in cricket. In this regard, the recent Border-Gavaskar trophy gives us many ethical lessons.

Body

To defeat Australian cricket team in their own backyard is a monumental accomplishment. To do so without more than a half-dozen first-choice players, and from the spirit-shattering 36 all out in the first Test, has few parallels. It also brings out many ethical lessons, which have gone into the win of Indian cricket team, some of which are discussed below –

- The fortitude of this Indian team will be spoken about for many years. The world has been witnessing to their indomitable spirit, their unshakeable character. This becomes important when seen in context of the Adelaide debacle (first test), where India used this initial calamity as a springboard to victory.
- Categorical Imperative: A "categorical imperative" to achieve the "far nobler end" of performing our various duties. To inculcate the categorical imperative, one has to become a moral person. On the Indian side, Ravindra Jadeja was seen padded up with a dislocated thumb. Earlier, Jaspreet Bumrah, though not completely fit, bowled with full heart. These actions reflected their commitment to 'duty', and thus on their moral personality. As Kant says, performing one's duty with 'good will' is the supreme morality.
- Some members of the spectators in the Sydney Cricket Ground used racist language against cricketers Mohammed Siraj and Jaspreet Bumrah. It is not only morally repugnant but also goes against the universal values of human rights of respecting the dignity of an individual. But Indian team didn't cow down and played the match even when the umpire suggested that the team may leave the ground if they felt the crowd's behaviour was hostile.
- Even on the field, one of the great Test players of the Australian team, Steve Smith, was caught removing Pant's guard mark, an act that can be considered a moral misconduct. It reflects very poorly on the moral aptitude of Smith. In

face of such attitude, the resolve of Indian team to play good cricket was not lost in fact, it strengthened.

- We also saw some of the Australian players mocking the grave injuries faced by the Indian players. This reflects not only the moral bankruptcy of the individuals, but also the absence of humanism in them. One of the Indicators of Human-hood for Joseph Fletcher is the concern for others, which was clearly absent in some of the Australian players.

- As young people, it is important to remember that our national philosophy, through our Constitution, is "to develop humanism". More than that, it is the Indian philosophy to treat everyone with dignity and have compassion for all. This match showed us how not to be. What not to do to develop a "moral personality". This was reflected from the Australian teams conduct.

- There was the clarity of thought in decision-making, both from the management group and from the captain and the players. These decisions were made with the team's framework in mind, never mind if they weren't always conventional. The final test's strategies debunked the myth that we have been besieged by the T20 generation. Of all the life-lessons, this was significant - desist from being judgmental.

- Further, in the third test at Sydney, with gruelling injuries to key players, India still managed to draw the test match, all thanks to grit and resilience shown by Ravichandran Ashwin and Hanuma Vehari in the last two sessions of the match.

- The test series also showed that instead of fancy qualifications, teams win due to hard work, resilience, team spirit and a will to win can lead to success. It also showed that it is the team that matters. Most importantly, it also brings great leadership lessons: the quality of calmness and ability to give credit to the team. This was aptly displayed by Indian team's captain Ajinkya Rahane.

Conclusion

Cricket is a gentleman's game. It is important to strive to ensure it remains so. The present Indian test team, which won the series down under, ensured that cricket remained a gentleman's game in spite of multiple provocations where highest level of ethical conduct was displayed by the Indian team which helps in the overall striving towards making the game nobler and competitive.

Q10. What do you understand by the 'efficacy' of a vaccine? How is it measured? Explain.

Approach

As the derivative is explain so it necessitates an explanation in which you have to make something clear or easy to understand

Introduction

Efficacy of vaccine is the percentage reduction in a disease in a group of people who received a vaccination in a clinical trial. It differs from vaccine effectiveness, which measures how well a vaccine works when given to people in the community outside of clinical trials.

Scientists can calculate how well a vaccine candidate works by looking at the difference in new cases of the disease between the group receiving a placebo and the group receiving the experimental vaccine. This is called efficacy of vaccine. For example, Pfizer reported an efficacy of 95% for the COVID-19 vaccine. This means a 95% reduction in new cases of the disease in the vaccine group compared with the placebo group.

Body

MEASUREMENT OF EFFICACY OF VACCINE –

- In the clinical development of a vaccine, an efficacy study asks the question, "Does the vaccine work?"
- 'Efficacy' is defined as the percentage by which the rate of the target disease is reduced among those who are vaccinated compared to those who are unvaccinated under ideal and controlled circumstances.8 Hence, efficacy is typically measured in the context of a placebo-controlled randomized clinical trial as the 'per protocol' efficacy (that is, only in individuals who followed the recommended schedule), as the intention is to establish the biologic performance capacity of the product under optimal conditions.
- Relative Risk Reduction (RRR) or Vaccine Efficacy (VE): It is also called 'prevented fraction among the vaccinated' as it measures the proportion of the disease incidence among vaccinated persons which was prevented by vaccination, or equivalently 'preventable fraction among the unvaccinated', as it measures the proportion of the disease incidence among unvaccinated persons which is theoretically preventable by vaccination. Iv RRR=VE=1-RR=1-Iu.
- Vaccine efficacy (VE) has been alternatively called rate fraction, etiologic fraction, and an attributable fraction. The expression describes the fraction of cases prevented by the vaccine. VPDI, in contrast to VE, is not a fraction, but an incidence. Mathematically VPDI is equal to Iu ×VE. This latter formulation emphasizes that VPDI encompasses both VE and the background incidence of

the disease syndrome in question.18 Vaccine efficacy can sometimes fail to capture the complete public health impact of vaccines and can be relatively low when preventable disease burden is high. In this regard, measures beyond efficacy (like VPDI) may be more appropriate and could have a role for both vaccine licensure and policy recommendations.

Conclusion

Very few vaccines are 100% effective. But many routine vaccines have very high levels of effectiveness. While vaccine effectiveness can inform scientists how much it can reduce new cases in those who have the vaccine, scientists can also use this to work out how many people need to have the vaccine to reach herd immunity. The advantages of a vaccine efficacy have control for all biases that would be found with randomization, as well as prospective, active monitoring for disease attack rates, and careful tracking of vaccination status for a study population there is normally a subset as well, laboratory confirmation of the infectious outcome of interest and a sampling of vaccine immunogenicity. The major disadvantages of vaccine efficacy trials are the complexity and expense of performing them, especially for relatively uncommon infectious outcomes of diseases for which the sample size required is driven up to achieve clinically useful statistical power.
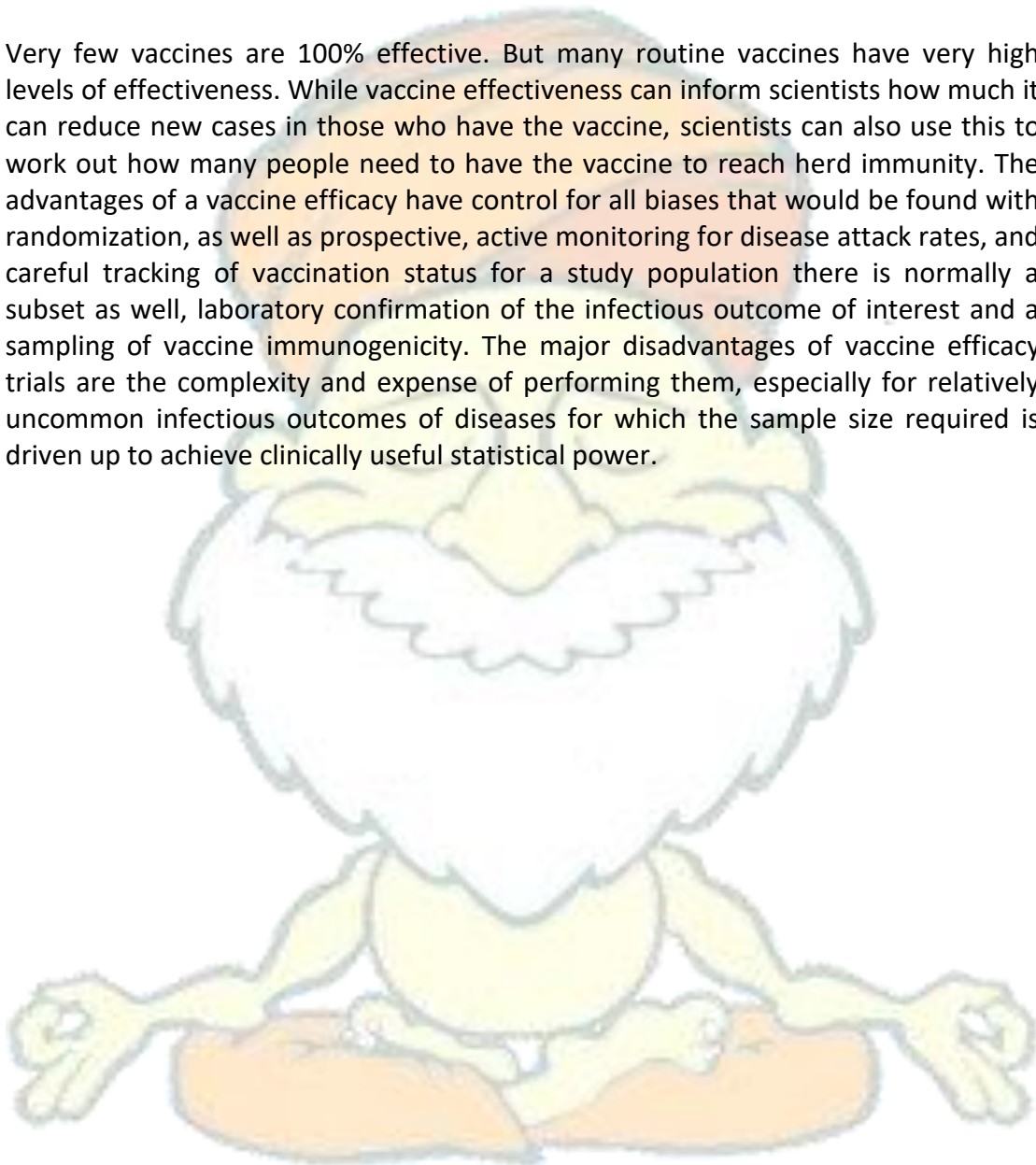
Q11. What according to you should be the key priorities of this year's budget? Discuss.

Approach

The question demands a thorough explanation of the priorities of the Indian economy which must be reflected in this year coming budget, also priorities need to be mentioned in a detailed manner with their impact on the economy as a whole. Brief mentioning of budget cycle is also important.

Introduction

India has emerged as the fastest growing major economy in the world and is expected to be one of the top three economic powers in the world over next 10-15 years with the backing of its robust democracy and strong partnerships. India's GDP (at constant prices- 2011-12) was estimated at 33 trillion (US$ 453 billion) (-23.5 percent) for the second quarter of 2020-21, against rupees 35.84 trillion (US$ 490 billion) in the second quarter of 2019-20. With this decline in the growth because of double whammy of low supply and demand due to COVID-19 and the previous issues concerning the economy, the budget has to push for some immediate recovery.

Body

Priorities for the upcoming budget –

- Prospects of Higher Fiscal Deficit creates fear that Indian public debt may becoming unsustainable. It is important that alongwith higher government borrowing, strong commitment to debt sustainability by setting up a fiscal council, public debt management agency and a deep and liquid bond market is the need of hour.
- Need for better estimates and transparency: The most important number that determine the entire budget is the expected nominal growth rate which becomes the base for tax projections, when the nominal growth is overestimated as it was in the last year, tax officials are given unrealistic targets and they try to meet these targets through tax demands, raids thus creating fear among the investors. Both direct taxes such as income and corporate taxes and indirect taxes such as GST depend on nominal GDP. Thus, there is a need of realistic assessment of nominal growth rate.
- The system of accounting followed by the government is based on cash paid out which creates a problem such as delayed payment to the private parties which helps the government to show lower expenditure so that its borrowings are contained. There is a need to move from cash-system to accrual-based system of accounting. This may add more transparency and will lend credibility to the numbers of the government which has rather been in questioned in the past.

- With the slowdown in the GDP growth debt dynamics are at the risk of being unsustainable. For sustainability of the debt, the rate of growth of debt must not be faster than the rate of growth of economy. With debt growing at the interest rate, if interest rate is higher than the growth rate of the economy, there is a risk of debt becoming unsustainable. The debt to GDP ratio growing every year is a real risk which needs to be contained.

- Improve Agricultural Infrastructure to Strengthen Competition: Government should massively fund the expansion of the APMC market system, make efforts to remove trade cartels, and provide farmers good roads, logistics of scale and real time information. Empowering State Farmers Commissions: Rather than opting for heavy centralisation, the emphasis should be on empowering farmers through State Farmers Commissions recommended by the National Commission for Farmers, to bring about a speedy government response to issues.

- With schools, colleges and universities being closed from one year, the education sector is one the worst affected by COVID-19. Online education did cover some losses but the digital divide was clearly witnessed in the rural parts of the country. Therefore, the budget should priorities Digital Infrastructure in rural areas, promote MOOC courses, improve the technological back-ends of major institutions and impart digital training to the SSA teachers.

- Apart from capital expenditure, the budget is also expected to increase the grants for creation of capital assets, health expenditure and grants to states under certain schemes

- The focus on high quality spending with a large multiplier effect in terms of demand and job creation and funding for large infrastructural projects is the need of hour.

- With global trade up to its minimum due to disruption in the supply chain mechanism because of the COVID-19 pandemic India has an opportunity to fill the void created by pandemic and trade war between china and USA, by increasing exports and investments as India provides opportunity to be the suitable investment destination because of availability of cheap labour force and maximum ease of doing business.

Conclusion

India is today transitioning from a situation where it opened its doors to liberalisation and globalisation to one where it has to rearm itself to become a competitive manufacturing hub, a self-reliant country that can face war and pandemics, and a comfortable investment destination where the world can relocate to capitalise on its huge and talented manpower and geographic advantages. One cannot look at it as a crude strategy to close down China and replace it with India. It is more of a strategy to make India equally attractive, to make the world believe in the regulatory stability in our country and to revive the nation and truly put it in on the world map.

Q12. What are your views on the ongoing farmers protest over the farm bills? Substantiate your views.

Approach

Candidate is required to give a brief about background of protests, what are the farmer's demands, what is the objective behind. With the analysis of current agrarian crisis and farm reforms views can be put suggesting a way forward in the end.

Introduction

Since 26th November 2020, the borders of Delhi have been witnessing a huge agitation being carried out by farmers, most of them from Punjab and Haryana. The farmers are protesting against 2 Farm Bills that the Rajya Sabha recently passed: (1) the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, and (2) the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020.

Body

The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020: This Bill allows the farmers to sell their produce outside the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) regulated markets. So, the farmers clearly have more choice on who they want to sell.

The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 – This Bill makes provisions for the setting up of a framework for contract farming. The farmer and an ordained buyer can strike a deal before the production happens. According to PRS India, a "Standing Committee on Agriculture (2018-19)" observed the APMC laws needed reforms as cartelization had begun to crystallise due to a limited number of traders in mandis.

What are objections of farmers?

- There was no consultation undertaken by the central government at the time of promulgating the ordinances, and subsequently while pushing the bills through the Parliament.
- The global experience across agricultural markets demonstrates that corporatisation of agriculture without a concomitant security net in the form of an assured payment guarantee to the farmers results in the exploitation of farmers at the hands of big business. This posses threat to small and marginal farmers who constitutes 86% of total farmers.
- Dismantling of the APMC mandis, which have stood the test of time and have provided farmers the remuneration to keep themselves afloat.

- The farm laws open the field to an alternate set of markets/private yards, where the buyer will have no statutory obligation to pay the minimum support price (MSP).

What can be negotiated?

- According to Harish Damodaran agriculture economist, Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act has to do with providing a regulatory framework for contract cultivation. This specifically concerns agreements entered into by farmers with agri-business firms.
- There is little rationale for objecting to an Act that merely enables contract farming. Such exclusive agreements between companies and farmers are already operational in crops of particular processing grades, for example potatoes, tomatoes.
- contract cultivation is voluntary in nature and largely for crops not amenable to trading in regular APMC or meant for exports. Act formalises contract cultivation through a "national framework" and explicitly prohibits any sponsor firm from acquiring the land of farmers – whether through purchase, lease or mortgage. Hence this provision is reformative in nature.
- When it comes to APMC, Farmers, for their part, would want no restrictions on the movement, stocking and export of their produce. In case of marketing — especially dismantling of the monopoly of APMCs — farmers, especially in Punjab and Haryana, aren't very convinced about the "freedom of choice to sell to anyone and anywhere.
- The reason for this contention is Much of government procurement at minimum support prices (MSP) of paddy, wheat and increasingly pulses, cotton, groundnut and mustard happen in APMC. In a scenario where more and more trading moves out of the APMCs, these regulated market yards will lose revenues.
- Additional demand of making MSP legal right will cause a big burden on fiscal calculations. FCI which is responsible for procurement at MSP is debt ridden with total debt of $5.8 billion which is out of proportion.

Conclusion

Way ahead can only be found if farmers and government compromise to find a middle ground. Elephant in the room is legal right of MSP, which is economically not prudent and should be negotiated hardly. Earlier laws related to agriculture were product of the times when drought and external calamities were regular. New farm laws are in coherence with changing times, for next revolution in agriculture a leap of faith has to be taken with a compromise made by both parties.

Q13. What role should electronic media play in a democracy like India? Are you satisfied with the present status of media in the country?

Introduction

In the words of Benito Mussolini- "Democracy is a kingless regime infested by many kings who are sometimes more exclusive, tyrannical and destructive than one, if he be a tyrant". It is the fear of being exposed by the media before the public that most of the politicians keep themselves under control to some extent". Freedom of speech and expression subject to reasonable restrictions is a fundamental right guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. The recent years saw a greater interface between the common man and media. It is the media which has become a part of the life of those people of India, who are mostly dependent on it for various wants including information and entertainment. Media keeps the peoples awakened and there is no denying the fact that it has become one of the major instruments of social change

Body

WHAT ROLE SHOULD ELECTRONIC MEDIA PLAY IN A DEMOCRACY LIKE INDIA –

- The media should work as a watchdog of the government and carry every report of the action of administration thereby keeping the people informed about the day-to-day happenings taking place around them.
- The media is considered as fourth pillar of democracy. It should make us aware of various activities like politics, sports, economic social and cultural activities etc. It should act like a mirror which shows the bare truth and sometimes it may be harsh.
- The media should also expose loopholes in the democratic society, which ultimately helps government in filling the vacuums of loopholes and making a system more accountable, responsive and democratic friendly. Thus, the democracy without media is like a vehicle without wheels.
- Media should act as a bridge between the people and the government and also a very powerful tool with the ability to make and break the opinion of the people. It has the capacity to swing perceptions or evoke emotions. This is why it has gained faith of the public.
- The media should help to shape the democratic society by giving emphasis to issues that are at one point in time, would have been considered strictly private such as child birth, child care, domestic violence, and sexual harassment.
- Media in exercise of freedom of expression is essential to communicate the thoughts, views, ideas, philosophy, ideals and activities. Communication keeps society together and cohabitate. For healthy growth of civilization world, the free flow of information and ideas is essential.
- Modern Methods of interpersonal Media communication include seminars dramas, public meeting and workshops etc. these are effective media

methods to address small and medium gatherings, which can be used as grounds for advocating the Human Rights and building public opinion.

- In any democratic country the media plays a vital role in creating moulding and relating public opinion. Over the years the media became so powerful that it soon acquires the status of forth state as it was aptly described by the British politician Edmund Burke.
- Media today touches almost every aspect of our public life. Media should play a very important and crucial role in enlisting and educating the people and aiding public involvement through advocating issues and transferring knowledge, skill and technologies to the people.

SATISFACTION WITH THE PRESENT STATUS OF MEDIA IN THE COUNTRY –

The present status media in the country is not at all satisfactory. The jingoism of a major section of the media is not new, nor is it unique to India. All democracies, at one time or another, get swept up by the rhetoric of revenge and war. People in the United Kingdom know this only too well. But what makes the blood lust of the Indian media especially alarming is the coming together of **three broad trends** that have adversely affected the independence and integrity of the news industry by allowing the government, the ruling party and big business houses a greater than ever role in shaping and determining the agenda of the media.

- The first is the increasing unviability of the existing business model as the move to digital reading habits has further undermined the revenue base for all but the biggest players. This has both increased the dependence of the media industry on advertisers and made them more vulnerable to government pressure of one kind or another.
- The second is the effective use of social media as a disciplining device whenever individual reporters or editors or even media houses stray too far from the officially mandated line.
- The third is the growing resort to legal means – sedition law, the Official Secrets Act, SLAPP suits etc – as well as extra-legal means as a way of penalising individuals and media who refuse to fall in line.

Conclusion

The Media is considered as fourth pillar of democratic society. For better working of democracy free press is must. But it does not mean an unrestrained press. The question here arises how and who to control press. The simple answer is there shall be an uplifting the standards of journalism can only be solution. Every reporter must honourably and wilfully make an effort not to fall in any trap and raise the standard of journalism. India being a democratic country, where the decision of the masses is supreme, mass media is in instrumental in ensuring that the people make informed decisions. Further, it is through the media that the masses are able to voice their opinions. Appreciation of the role of the media in good governance is essential to societal development.

Q14. What is vaccine diplomacy? How is it shaping India's image and stature in the world? Examine.

Approach

Candidate is required to define vaccine diplomacy, give current stature of India in pharmaceutical industry. How India overcame covid-19 challenges and developed vaccine. In the latter half geopolitics of south Asia and vaccine diplomacy of India with new dynamics can be given.

Introduction

India is known as pharmacy of the world. It is the largest producer of generic medicines, accounting for 20 percent of their global production. It meets 62 percent of the global demand for vaccines. Since the coronavirus pandemic began, the country has been at the forefront of supplying medicines and generic drugs to others.

Body

India received requests from more than 100 countries for hydroxychloroquine (once thought to help treat COVID-19) and paracetamol (a painkiller), and sent supplies to Brazil, the United States, and Israel. By May 2020, India was spending $16 million on pharmaceuticals, test kits, and other medical equipment for about 90 countries.

What is vaccine diplomacy? Vaccine diplomacy is the use of vaccines to increase a country's diplomatic relationship and influence of other countries.

- The Covid-19 pandemic has thus far afflicted around 96 million people worldwide. The death toll has crossed 2 million.
- The 1918 'pneumonic' pandemic led to the death of an estimated 50 to 100 million people worldwide. An estimated 17-18 million people died in India. There has, in present times, been a global effort since April 2020, to jointly address the challenges posed by the Covid-19 virus.
- The pandemic is now at a stage where the largest number of cases and casualties are in some of the most advanced countries. The US has suffered the largest number of fatalities in the world, with over 24 million cases and 4 lakh deaths.
- The affluent western world, notably the US and Europeans, are focused almost exclusively on their own problems. There appears to be relatively little interest or intent in helping developing countries
- New Delhi has set itself the target of immunising 300 million of its citizens by July, from both its AstraZeneca and Bharat Biotech Industries.
- While initial exports were scheduled for Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia and Morocco, commitments have also been made for larger supplies to SAARC neighbours like the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan and

Nepal. This is an occasion for India to earn the long-term goodwill of its immediate neighbours.

- One hopes this exercise is carried out imaginatively, for also strengthening our relations with other countries in our extended neighbourhood, across the Indian Ocean.

- Even before multilateral organizations got on board, New Delhi also consistently supported measures to temporarily suspend COVID-19 vaccine intellectual property rights—which would mean it could produce generic versions at lightning speed whenever a vaccine was created—and sponsored a WHO resolution calling for international cooperation to ensure global access to the vaccine.

- While commercial overseas shipments are likely to start around March, India has already sent 3.2 million free doses of the vaccine Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives.

- India's vaccine diplomacy puts it in direct competition with China—which has made no secret that vaccine distribution is wrapped up in its broader geopolitical ambitions.

- It has even explicitly included vaccine distribution in its broader Health Silk Road initiative, which aims to bolster China's international soft power.

- Vaccines are the single most powerful health interventions developed by modern medicine. Universal, equitable, and affordable supply of vaccines for low- and middle-income countries are needed more than ever.

Conclusion

India is guiding vaccine efforts worldwide while developed nations are struggling India can become a leading example of not using vulnerable times to further its own narrow interests but to help global community overcome this crisis. India has no doubt has earn the goodwill of international community but has improved its stature in south Asia.

Q15. Bailing out distressed airlines is a bad economic precedent. Do you agree? Critically comment.

Approach

Since question is asking you to critically comment so it demands forming opinion on main points but in the end, you have to provide a fair judgement.

Introduction

Last year several airlines told the Treasury Department they would take funds from a $25 billion bailout as the industry faces the looming threat of bankruptcy amid global travel limitations due to the coronavirus pandemic. That bailout is sparking an inevitable debate about moral hazard—when a business engages in riskier behaviour because it's protected from the consequences—and the future of the airline industry.

Body

BAILING OUT DISTRESSED AIRLINES IS A BAD ECONOMIC PRECEDENT –

- While the airline industry is always fast to request a bailout, such a bailout is rarely appropriate.
- As far as bailouts go, it is preferable to extend loans to firms than outright grants.
- To give the big carriers tens of billions with no strings is to subsidize capital that was very well-compensated and imposes that cost on our kids and grandkids.
- Nevertheless, before the government considers any sort of bailout for the airlines, airlines should always first go through the bankruptcy process.
- It's investors who are powerful and want to be bailed out. Investors knew when they made their investments that they would have to weather a storm or two.

BAILING OUT DISTRESSED AIRLINES IS NOT A BAD ECONOMIC PRECEDENT –

- The concessions are greater than some airlines were hoping to make, but the industry is struggling and access to cash is crucial as passengers avoid flying and demand refunds on previously booked flights.
- Airlines would still operate in bankruptcy, but the question is: What will they look like after bankruptcy. Plus, the airline industry has a big problem even if it comes out of this pandemic financially unscathed. How will it convince passengers—or even its own employees—that it's safe to fly again?

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly hurting the airline industry. The hardship is the product of both direct government action prohibiting or restricting flights and consumers' unwillingness to fly owing to their fears of being infected by the virus or infecting others. Cancelled and postponed flights mean sharp declines in revenues but not a reduction in fixed costs. Passengers aren't booking many new flights, so there's little revenue coming in. Further, as airlines cancel flights, the costs of refunding tickets that have already been purchased also mount.

However, even if one is sympathetic to the idea of helping industries in times of crisis, the critical question to ask is, are there more effective ways to resolve a company's financial problems than a taxpayer-funded bailout?

Q16. What role do States play in extending the welfare measures of the Union to the intended population? Explain. What are the current challenges on this front? Discuss.

Approach

In the first part of the question, the answer should mention about the role of states in implementing and helping the centre for the welfare of the people. It entails, the effectivity of State Governments in the implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Central Sector Schemes. In the second part, the challenges with respect to these welfare measures need to be mentioned. Finally, the conclusion should hinge upon improving the Centre-State relations to effectively extend the welfare measures of the Union.

Introduction

The Indian Constitution provides a strict demarcation between the legislative competences of the Union and the States. Yet, the Union, which also has far greater control over the nation's finances than the States, plays a leading role in determining welfare priorities for the nation through schemes and budgetary allocations (Article 246). In order to provide a uniform framework for the holistic development of the country as a whole, the Union Government does provide budgetary allocations and schemes. These schemes- Central Sector Schemes, Centrally Sponsored Schemes aim at the social and economic welfare of the Indian republic, but need effective coordination of the Indian states being a part of the quasi-federal set-up.

Body

For the first fifty years of the Indian republic, social and economic welfare was primarily administered through ad hoc measures known as schemes. In the early 2000s, there was a shift to "rights-based welfare." The Government of India codified several important aspects of social welfare into statutes. These included Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA), the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTEA) and the National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA). This was welcomed by the academic community, who described it as a "new social contract" between Indians and the State.

Role of States – In the present federal set-up of India, the seventh schedule of the Constitution provides a tight-model of distinction of powers between Centre and States. However, ultimately it is the states which work at the grassroot level for the development of their respective states. The fourteenth Finance Commission substantially enhanced the share of the States in the Central divisible pool from 32% to 42%. which was untied and can be spent by the States as desired. However, doing so it delinked many schemes which were previously centrally funded, thus sharing the burden of the welfare between Centre and States.

- In case of Centre Sector Schemes like Bharatnet, PMSAMPADA even though the Central government is primarily responsible for funding and implementation. The collaboration and concurrence of the state governments is equally needed for the effective implementation. As such, states like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh are way ahead in providing internet facilities in the rural areas as compared to Bihar, Jharkhand and Odisha.
- In the Centrally Sponsored Schemes, states have even a greater role to play to ensure that the particular scheme is effective in carrying out its desired objectives. For instance, case of MGNREGA where the devolution is 60:40 between Centre and States, the role of state governments is paramount for the effectivity of the scheme. States like Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Kerala have had nearly 90% efficiency when it comes to enhance the output, while Jharkhand, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have just been 60% effective.
- Schemes like Public Distribution System, Mid-Day Meal Scheme have directly been under the State Government Implementation and therefore the comparative performance of the states, depend on the manpower, effective funding and the resources the state government attempt to spend on these schemes.
- National Health Rural Mission under NHM provides for development of the quality health-care at the primary health-centers in villages which is directly overseen by the State Governments. Therefore, State Governments are critically important in ensuring that there is effective disposal of the centrally mandated welfare for the intended population.

Challenges at the Front – The Union Government plays a prominent role in determining State level development priorities through CSS. These are grants made by the Union for a specific purpose, i.e., the scheme guidelines, to be implemented by the States. However, there are certain challenges –

- Article 282 of the Constitution confines the Union's power to making grants on the state subject, implying that the implementation should be left entirely to the states. However, with Centrally Sponsored Schemes, the states are left with little discretion with respect to how these are to be implemented.
- With the central schemes on the anvil, the state governments actually depend on the Central Government funds. Recently, the delaying of the funds in schemes like MGNREGA, PDS have witnessed the tussle between Centre-State relations.
- Parliament has limited powers and wide discretion under Article 282, meaning that it is not bound to make consistent, predictable grants to States year after year. That is problematic with states being highly dependent on the Centre for these welfare schemes.
- Even at the Third-Tier government, the Centre Government has again at the loggerheads when it comes to Finance Devolution and implementation. Even these grassroot level governments are indirectly dependent on the Central Government which again creates problems for the effective implementation.

- The scope of economic and social rights in India is properly within the domain of the legislature, and the States ought to play a pivotal role on matters within their competence. By making Union grants variable and highly discretionary, States are unable to plan for consistent and predictable welfare measures — such as those provided by statute — year after year.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the Union should still play an important role in determining national priorities for development. One way to do so is to encourage the creation of clear entitlements through statute wherever possible, as in the case of MGNREGA and NFSA. Another possibility is to provide a greater share of Union assistance through block grants and to allow States a greater role in designing welfare measures implemented at the State. In any event, there is an urgent need for greater cooperation between the Union and the States of India to create a strong, rights-based welfare system for its citizens.
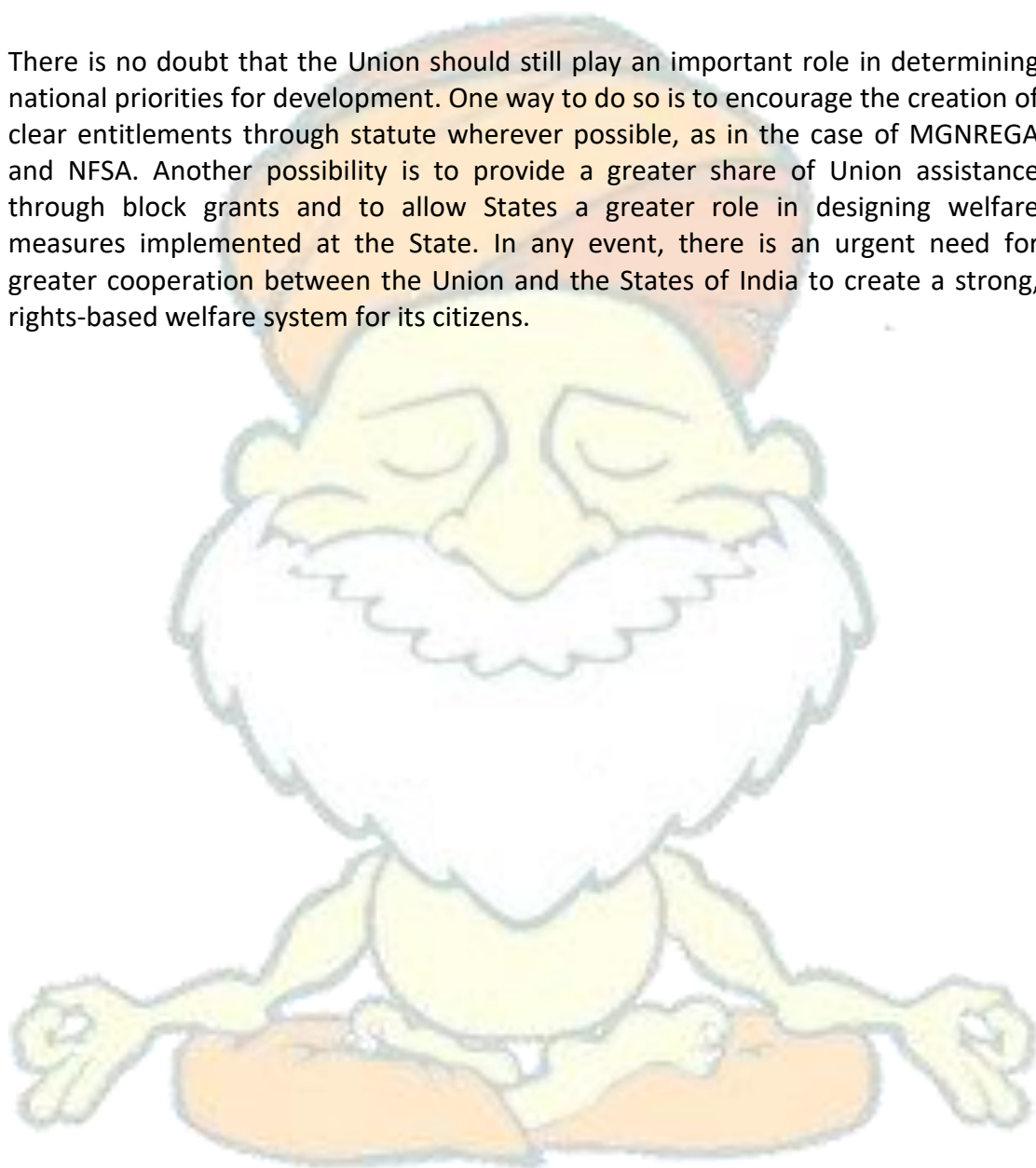
Q17. China's duality of cooperation and competition is a tough diplomatic challenge for India. Do you agree? Share your views.

Approach

Candidate is required to understand the dynamics of India- china relationship. While presenting an overview of recent events, student can outline historical phases in Indo- china relations giving a possible way forward for future engagement.

Introduction

China and India's emergence as global powers is unprecedented in modern history. Sino-Indian bilateral relations are defined by a complex balance of competition and cooperation. Traditionally, China has oriented itself toward North East Asia and the Pacific, while India has focused on the South Asian subcontinent. Their remarkable economic growth and military expansions have led to more frequent and sustained political interactions. This engagement has elements of both rivalry and cooperation.

Body

Year 2020 marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and China. The rise of Asia is marked by the emergence of the two civilizational states which have dominated the world economic system for over a millennium.

India China relations have evolved historically in broadly five phase –

1. first phase of Accommodation and partnership(1954–58), the leaders of the older generation of the two countries jointly advocated the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and the slogan of "Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai"
2. In the second phase this honeymoon period came to a close in 1959, when the border dispute came to the fore and the Dalai Lama fled Lhasa, Tibet, to take refuge in India. Thus, the second phase was characterised by the collapse of partnership and the road to war (1959–62).
3. The third phase of post-war peace (1963–87) was characterised by growing distrust between the two nations and the freezing of the diplomatic ties. Communist China came to be seen as an aggressive neighbour that sought to humiliate a democratic, non-aligned India. It took almost three decades for China-India relations to recover.
4. In the fourth phase (1988–97), the two nations tried to reconcile their differences in the backdrop of the end of the cold war and the growing strategic concerns in the global hegemonic system dominated by the USA. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing in 1989, and his meetings with Deng Xiaoping, marked the beginning of a new phase.
5. The last phase is characterised by Triangular Diplomacy, in which the relations between the two nations have been increasingly determined by the

entry of USA into the arena. In this phase, India has been trying to balance its security concerns with the developmental cooperation with China.

Major Issues of Conflict and competition –

- India China border dispute is one of the major issues of conflict between the two neighbours. The border issue is rooted in the disputed status of the Mac Mohan line which defines the border between India and China.
- India China border can be broken down into 3 sectors -the western sector which is a disputed one (Aksai Chin), the central sector which is the undisputed sector and the eastern sector in which the dispute is over the Arunachal Pradesh.
- To resolve the border dispute, in the year 1989 India and China formed a joint working group for confidence-building measures and agree to mutually settle the border.
- In 2003 India and China signed the declaration to appoint a special representative to explore the framework of a boundary settlement from the political perspective.
- In the year 2013 both Indian China signed the border defence cooperation agreement in October to maintain peace and tranquillity on the line of actual control. But the recent Galwan clashes has deteriorated major developments made in the past.

Areas of Cooperation –

- India and China have cooperated on various economic issues like the setting of BRICS. The trade and economic relationship between India and China has seen rapid growth in the last few years.
- Trade volume between the two countries at the beginning of the century, the year 2000, stood at US$ 3 billion. In 2008, bilateral trade reached US$ 51.8 billion in 2018, bilateral trade reached an all-time high of US$ 95.54 billion. But the covid-19 pandemic has severely affected economic cooperation.
- Engagement with china on platforms like Shanghai cooperation organisation, ASEAN, New development bank are examples strategic engagement of India.
- Over the areas of expanding influence in the neighbourhood, India china relations are characterized by competition. Geoeconomically, India has proposed cotton route and Mausam project as an alternative to Chinas One belt road initiative.
- India and china have conducted informal summits such as Wuhan and the Mamallapuram summit which had brought stability and momentum to the relations in the backdrop of Doklam crisis.

What will the future be like?

- China's increasing activities and influence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region through the Belt and Road Initiative and beyond, and an unbalanced

economic relationship have ensured that the Sino-Indian relationship remains a fundamentally competitive one.

- India is trying to enhance its military, nuclear, space, and technological capabilities, as well as its infrastructure. Establishing or enhancing partnerships in India's extended neighbourhood, as well as with like-minded major powers — including Australia, France, Japan, Russia, and the United States — that can help balance China.

Conclusion

India remains one of the most important factor for the rise of asia. To contain china and to keep rise of China peaceful, India is the only option. This geopolitics dominates Indo- china relations. The Asian Century and the vision of a stable and peaceful world order can be materialised by Sino Indian cooperation in geopolitical and competition in geostrategic dimensions.

Q18. What are the most typical challenges of urban governance in Indian cities? Discuss. What measures have been taken to address those?

Approach

Since question is asking you to discuss so there has to be a written debate where one has to use skill at reasoning, backed up by deliberately selected evidence to make a case for and against an argument, or point out the advantages and disadvantages of a given context.

Introduction

The pace and growth of urbanization in India poses enormous challenges to urban governance. Though planned urbanization is needed for the industry and services sectors and also for rural rejuvenation, the lack of empowerment of cities is constraining their ability to translate the urban development agenda into action.

Body

THE MOST TYPICAL CHALLENGES OF URBAN GOVERNANCE IN INDIAN CITIES ARE –

- A federal framework that has not empowered its third tier despite amending the constitution in 1992 for doing so.
- A missing link in the institutional framework for metropolitan planning and governance.
- Inadequate capacity at the local government level to respond to the challenges of urban planning and management in a rapidly evolving urban scenario is the other crucial challenge faced by Indian cities.
- Though metropolitan planning committees (MPCs) and district planning committees (DPCs) have been formed in some states, even there they have not forged links with city planning authorities. They have also not been effective as regional planning agencies.
- A political system that is heavily biased toward the rural sector.
- The political economy of development in India has remained dominantly concerned with the development of rural areas implicitly assuming that urban areas can take care of themselves.
- Accountability rests with the urban local bodies but it is not backed by either adequate finances or the capacity for planning and management
- State finance commissions did not meet the standards set by the central finance commission. They have not challenged the state level political resistance to devolve and urban local governments have remained hamstrung by the lack of funds and are having to function with unfunded mandates.
- There is evidence of deterioration in almost all of the major financial indicators of empowerment for urban local governments in India from their already very low levels.

- In addition to the lack of financial devolution, there is a lack of financial autonomy both in mobilizing resources and in setting user charges to cover costs.

MEASURES THAT HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO ADDRESS THOSE –

- A reasonable definition of smart cities would be where residents demand good governance and the government, through better administration or high technology, is able to deliver high-quality services in a transparent and accountable manner.
- This would require spelling out the dimensions of institutional reform together with the high-tech infrastructure plans. No smart technology can deliver in the absence of smart governance.
- The funding offered by the Government of India for all of the missions is a very small part of what is needed. The rest is expected to come from the state governments and also from the private sector under public–private partnership projects.
- City governments should be empowered through effective devolution and capacity building and state governments provide an enabling environment; cities will be in a position to translate the ambitious urban development agenda into action.

Conclusion

India has been among the fastest growing economies in the world for close to 2 decades. Faster growth has obvious implications for the pace and nature of urbanization. The combination of rising aspirations and growing middle classes on the one hand and inadequate planning for the inevitable increase in urbanization on the other is creating a situation that is socially, financially, and environmentally unsustainable. The challenge facing India's planners and policymakers is how to radically improve the quality of life in cities so that they can continue to accommodate future growth while ensuring better living conditions for their residents and synergetic development of the rural sector. The reform in the institutions of urban governance is crucial in addressing this challenge.