

**1. What are the key challenges in using digital solutions to address poverty and associated issues? Illustrate.**

**Approach-**

Candidates need to write about poverty and related issues which government is trying to curb. Candidates have to link and write about challenges in curbing such issues with use of digital solutions.

**Introduction**

Reducing poverty has become an international concern as SDG 1 targets to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. Still a big part of the population in India is living Below the Poverty Line. As per Tendulkar Committee this estimation is around 21.9% of the total population of the country.

**Body**

- Digital divide: Even in the era of science and technology, there is still huge gap exists between users and nonusers of e-govt. services. In fact, in India, majority of the masses, who living below poverty line and they deprived of govt. services. In contrast, some portion of people are immensely using the e-services of government . However, this gap needs to be made narrow, then only ,the benefits of e-governance would be utilized equally.
- Use of local language: The access of information must be permitted in the language most comfortable to the public user, generally the local language. There already exist technologies such as GIST and language software by which transliteration from English into other languages can be made.
- Information: Reliability of the digitally published information when rules, regulations, and requirements get changed on daily basis remains questionable.
- Communication: The absence of interpersonal communication with and by the governmental agencies can leave many stakeholders unattended and disappointed.
- Infrastructure: Before Internet literacy, Internet infrastructure to interconnect computers and users on the Internet is an essential requirement. This infrastructure includes physical hardware, transmission media, and software; without this, e-governance is a remote service.
- Gender Divide: Women are still lagging. Men are 90% more likely to own a mobile phone than women. Even among women owning mobile phones they have no access to internet connectivity.

- Burden on poor: Digital “solutions” create additional bureaucracy for all sick persons in search of these services without disciplining the culprits. Along with paper work, patients will have to navigate digi-work. Platform- and app-based solutions can exclude the poor entirely, or squeeze their access to scarce health services further.

### Conclusion

Hence, if these challenges are addressed carefully then it will not just only help to achieve better success for e-governance but also will ensure improvement in governance processes and outcomes with a view to improve the delivery of public services to citizens. The resultant benefits are less corruption, increased transparency, greater convenience, revenue growth, and cost reductions.



**2. What are the key observations from the ongoing trend of urbanisation in India? What potential challenges are they going to create in the future? Analyse.**

**Approach**

Students are expected to write about the basics of urbanization and associated trends in India. Then highlight the potential challenges to be created in future.

**Introduction**

Urbanisation is an increase in the number of people living in towns and cities. Urbanisation occurs mainly because people move from rural areas to urban areas and it results in growth in the size of the urban population and the extent of urban areas.

**Body**

Trends in urbanisation:

- India's level of urbanization increased from 17.6 per cent in 1951 to only 23.7 per cent in 1981 and 27.8 per cent in 2001.
- Consistent with its low per capita income India ranks among the last thirty in the list of countries listed according to their urbanization levels.
- Currently, India's population stood at 1210 million in 2011, with an urbanisation level of 31.1% (Census of India 2011).
- Over 75% of the urban population of the country is in 10 States: Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Kerala.

Potential Challenges:

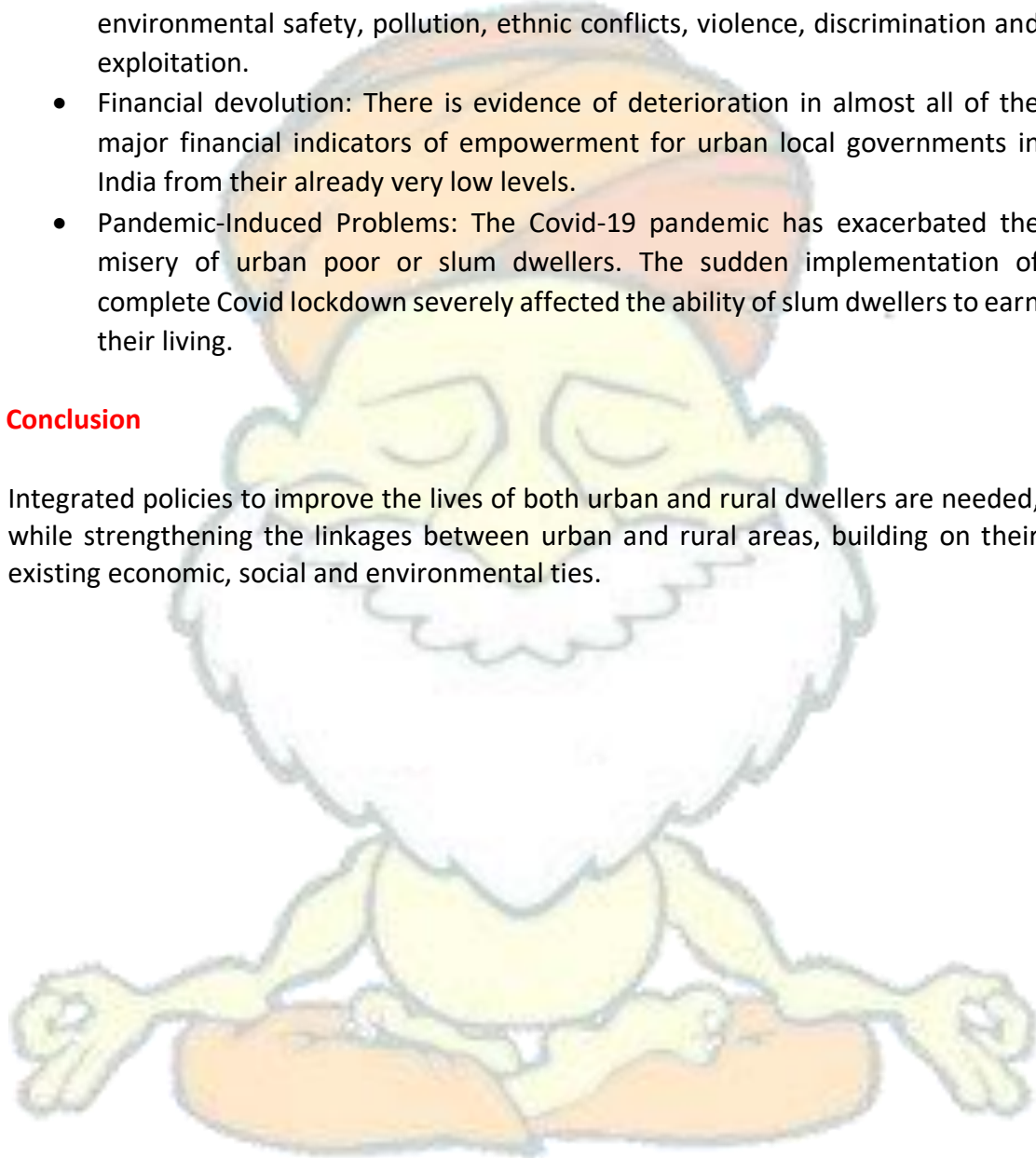
- Excessive Population Pressure: On the one hand, the rural-urban migration accelerates the pace of urbanisation, on the other, it creates excessive population pressure on the existing public utilities.
- Overflowing Slums: There are about 13.7 million slum households in the country sheltering a population of 65.49 million people across the country.
- Inadequate Housing: Among the numerous social problems of urbanisation, the problem of housing is the most distressing.
- Weak Regulations by umbrella authorities: State governments, which retain effective control over urban development rather than city administrations,

have failed to operationalise the umbrella authorities to regulate transport and other issues.

- Expensive Mass Transport: There is valid criticism that the existing paradigm is one of “exclusionary urbanisation”, which makes Metro and bus services expensive for the majority.
- Absence of protection from disasters and hazards in the fields of environmental safety, pollution, ethnic conflicts, violence, discrimination and exploitation.
- Financial devolution: 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.
- Pandemic-Induced Problems: The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the misery of urban poor or slum dwellers. The sudden implementation of complete Covid lockdown severely affected the ability of slum dwellers to earn their living.

### Conclusion

Integrated policies to improve the lives of both urban and rural dwellers are needed, while strengthening the linkages between urban and rural areas, building on their existing economic, social and environmental ties.



**3. In your opinion, what should be India's response to the Russian aggression in Ukraine? Substantiate your views.**

**Approach-**

Candidates need to give his opinion regarding What India's response to the Russian aggression in Ukraine should be and he should substantiate it or provide evidence to support or prove the truth of it.

**Introduction**

In the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine, the situation is both fluid and volatile. A session of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was held to try to resolve the Ukraine crisis caused by Russia's invasion of its neighbour. The United States backed resolution to censure Russia was supported by United Kingdom and France. China, another permanent member absented itself from the voting. India and the UAE also did not vote. India called for an immediate cessation of violence and a return to dialogue."

**What India's response to the Russian aggression in Ukraine should be:**

By abstaining from any overt criticism of Russia, India seemed to revert to its erstwhile stance of neutrality, if not equidistance from Cold War antagonists, America and Russia. It's in best favour of India to maintain "independent, neutral and balanced" position during the vote due to the following reasons:

- India's long-standing friendly relations with Russia cannot be denied or dumped overnight.
- Russia, besides being an established friend, remains India's major arms supplier and strategic partner.
- As member of the Security Council and one of the world's largest countries and economies, India has an additional, mediative role to play, which it cannot compromise or squander by taking sides in a hasty, premature, or precipitous manner.
- By abstaining, India retained the option of reaching out to relevant sides in an effort to bridge the gap and find the middle ground with an aim to foster dialogue and diplomacy.
- Firstly, India is dependent on both Russia and Ukraine for a lot of its energy supplies. A developing economy like India would obviously be on the receiving end if the war continues for a long period.
- Undoubtedly, the war in Ukraine has put the foreign policy makers of India in a tough situation where they face a dilemma of whether to stick to its non-

aligned path of neutrality or whether to voice its concerns against the Russian aggression that is unprecedented in Europe after the Second World War.

- All these factors have created enormous pressure on the Indian leadership as they need to act proactively as the crisis unfolds.
- The best option for India, considering its stakes in the war, should be to avoid getting entangled in favour of a particular side and continue its balancing act. India's multi-vector foreign policy doesn't allow it to choose sides in a particular crisis as it requires the support of both Russia and US on a number of issues- getting permanent membership of the UNSC is an example in this case. An independent foreign policy will also provide the space for India to meditate on the crisis and play a major role in solving it peacefully via multilateral platforms.
- India's stance will also depend on what course the Russian military action takes in future. If Putin chooses to escalate the crisis horizontally or vertically then it would become increasingly difficult for India to stay non-aligned, especially if the US chooses to impose extraterritorial sanctions.

### Conclusion

Dialogue is the only answer to settling differences and disputes, however daunting that may appear at this moment. It is a matter of regret that the path of diplomacy was given up. We must return to it. For all these reasons, India has chosen to abstain on this resolution and shall continue to do so.

