

Q.1) Evaluate the Supreme Court's use of Article 142 in ensuring 'complete justice' in matters of State legislation. Does this amount to judicial overreach or necessary constitutional evolution? (150 words, 10 marks)

Introduction

Recent Supreme Court actions under Article 142—like resolving inter-state water disputes, canceling illegal mining leases, and handling state political disqualifications—have renewed debates on whether such use is judicial overreach or a necessary tool for “complete justice.”


Body

Scope and Purpose of Article 142

- **Constitutional Mandate:** Allows Supreme Court to deliver “complete justice” where statutory remedies are inadequate; invoked in over 3,500 judgments.
- **Landmark Uses:** *Vishaka* guidelines on sexual harassment (1997), *MC Mehta* pollution control cases, Bhopal gas tragedy compensation (1991).
- **State Legislation Context:** Quashed illegal mining leases (*Common Cause*, 2017), banned liquor sale near highways to reduce 1.68 lakh annual road fatalities (2022).
- **Checks and Balance:** Orders are binding but temporary; replaced once laws are enacted (e.g., POSH Act replaced *Vishaka* guidelines).
- Focuses on **substantive justice**, bypassing procedural hurdles to protect rights and environment.

Arguments of Judicial Overreach

- **Legislative Encroachment:** Policy decisions like Diwali firecracker ban and liquor sale restrictions bypass state assemblies.
- **Federalism Concerns:** Interventions in Delhi administrative control and Karnataka mining bans reduce state autonomy.
- **No Explicit Limits:** Broad interpretation risks undermining separation of powers.
- **Democratic Deficit:** Judicial decrees lack legislative debate and accountability.
- **Case Example:** 2017 liquor ban cut state excise revenues by up to 30%, criticized as judicial policymaking.



VICE PRESIDENT DHANKHAR'S REMARK ON ARTICLE 142

VICE PRESIDENT DHANKHAR'S CRITICISM

- Vice President Dhankhar criticized the ruling, describing Article 142 as a "nuclear missile" that undermines democratic processes.
- He raised concerns about judicial overreach, warning against the judiciary acting as a "super Parliament" without appropriate checks and balances.

SUPREME COURT'S APRIL 8, 2025, RULING

- The Supreme Court emphasized that **Governors cannot indefinitely withhold assent to state bills**, setting a three-month deadline for the President to act on reserved bills.
- The ruling aimed to **reinforce democratic governance and federalism**, ensuring timely decision-making in the legislative process.

LEGAL PROVISIONS: ARTICLE 142

- Article 142 grants the Supreme Court powers to ensure complete justice, even beyond existing laws when necessary.
- It has been used in **landmark cases** such as *S.R. Bommai*, *Indira Sawhney*, and the *Ayodhya Verdict*, allowing the judiciary to address issues where laws may be inadequate or silent.

CONCERNS REGARDING ARTICLE 142

- Concerns around Article 142 include potential **judicial overreach**, as it allows the judiciary to step into areas traditionally reserved for the executive or legislature.
- The lack of judicial accountability, since judges are unelected, and its impact on federalism, particularly in state matters, raises questions about the balance of powers.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

Supporters argue that Article 142 is crucial for **ensuring timely justice and preventing constitutional paralysis**. However, critics are concerned about the judiciary's expanding powers, which may blur the lines between branches of government and challenge the separation of powers, emphasizing the need for balance.

Vice President Dhankhar raises concerns over judicial use of Article 142 in recent Supreme Court verdict.

Arguments for Constitutional Evolution

- **Living Constitution:** Courts adapt constitutional principles to new contexts (*Manoj Narula*, 2014).
- **Filling Legal Gaps:** Protected rights before laws existed (e.g., bonded labor, transgender rights in *NALSA*, 2014).
- **Rule of Law:** Ensures justice where executive/legislature fails (Bhopal gas tragedy relief).
- **Basic Structure Protection:** Upheld federalism and secularism in *S.R. Bommai* (1994).
- **Interim Measures:** Often temporary, leading to future legislation (e.g., *Vishaka* → POSH Act, migrant relief → labor codes).

Conclusion

The Law Commission's 229th Report suggested clear rules for using Article 142 and stronger legislative checks. Adopting these steps can balance judicial innovation with democracy and federalism, ensuring justice without disturbing India's constitutional balance.

Q.2) Despite constitutional guarantees, India's free legal aid system remains underfunded and underutilized. Discuss the challenges and suggest reforms to enhance its effectiveness. (150 words, 10 marks)

Introduction

Article 39A guarantees free legal aid, but with India spending barely 0.08% of its budget on it and over 80% of prisoners lacking proper representation (*NALSA* 2023), access to justice remains critically inadequate.

Body

Challenges in India's Free Legal Aid System

- **Insufficient Funding:** The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) receives only about ₹150 crore annually (Budget 2023–24), which is less than 0.01% of total government expenditure, leading to inadequate infrastructure and outreach.
- **Low Awareness:** As per NALSA reports (2022), only about 15% of eligible beneficiaries are aware of free legal aid services, particularly in rural and marginalized communities.
- **Poor Quality of Representation:** Many legal aid lawyers are inexperienced or underpaid (average honorarium ₹1,500–₹5,000 per case), leading to ineffective defense and low conviction challenge rates.
- **Delayed Justice:** With over 5 crore cases pending in Indian courts (2024), free legal aid cases face long delays, undermining the principle of timely justice under Article 21.

FREE LEGAL AID includes:

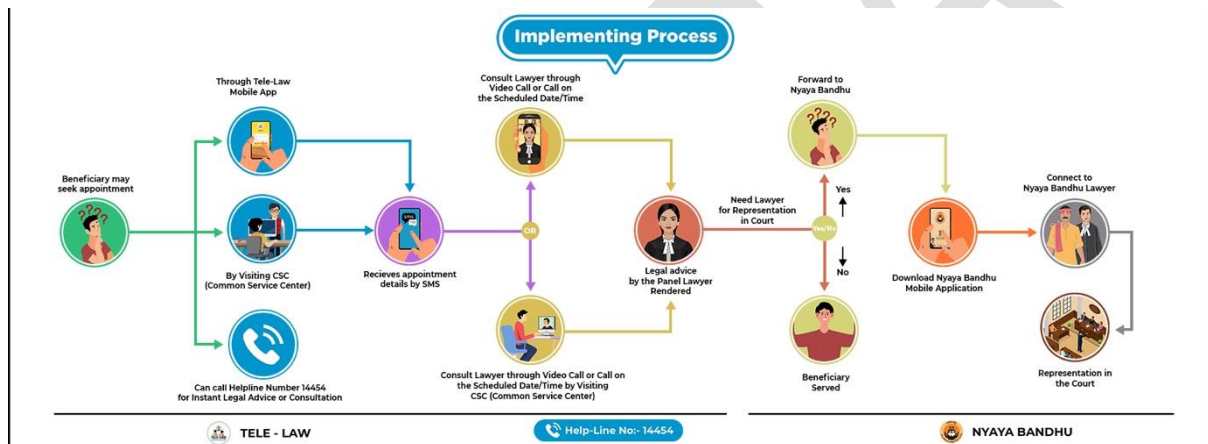
- 1 An Advocate representing you in court or other legal proceedings.
- 2 Legal Services Authority paying process fees, expenses of witnesses and all other charges payable or incurred in connection with any legal proceedings.
- 3 Preparation of pleadings, memo of appeal, paper book including printing and translation of documents in legal proceedings.
- 4 Drafting of legal documents etc.
- 5 Supplying certified copies of judgments, orders, notes of evidence and other documents in legal proceedings.
- 6 Giving aid and advice regarding welfare laws and schemes in India.



- **Underutilization of Lok Adalats:** While over 1 crore cases were settled in Lok Adalats in 2023, many remain unutilized due to lack of follow-up legal support and awareness campaigns.

Reforms to Enhance Effectiveness

- **Increased Budgetary Allocation:** Expanding funding to at least 0.1% of GDP for legal aid services, ensuring adequate infrastructure, legal literacy campaigns, and technology-driven outreach.
- **Professionalization and Training:** Introducing full-time, well-compensated legal aid counsels with mandatory skill-building programs, as recommended by the Justice Srikrishna Committee.
- **Technology-Enabled Access:** Establishing online portals, AI-based grievance redressal, and mobile legal clinics to reach remote areas (e.g., "Tele-Law" initiative has already provided advice in 20 lakh cases).



- **Legal Ed:** Integrating legal awareness into school curricula and Panchayat-level awareness programs under schemes like Nyaya Bandhu to empower citizens about their rights.
- **Institutional Reforms:** Making State and District Legal Services Authorities autonomous with measurable performance metrics and mandatory audits to enhance transparency and accountability.

Conclusion

Free legal aid is key to ensuring equality under Articles 14 and 21. The **UNDP Global Study on Legal Aid (2023)** highlights that India's system ranks low in accessibility and quality, underscoring urgent reforms in funding, professional capacity, and outreach to achieve true justice for all.

Q.3) Discuss how inadequate fiscal autonomy and overlapping administrative roles affect the efficiency of urban and rural local governance in India. Suggest reforms to improve functional clarity and accountability. (150 words, 10 marks)

Introduction

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments created Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies to realize Gandhiji's vision of Gram Swaraj. Yet, limited fiscal powers and overlapping administration hinder effective grassroots governance and inclusive local development.

Body

Impact of Inadequate Fiscal Autonomy

- **Dependence on Grants:** Over 60% of municipal revenue and 50% of rural local body funds come from state and central transfers, limiting independent planning and prioritization of projects.
- **Low Revenue Generation:** Property tax contributes barely 0.5% of GDP in India (OECD avg. 1.1%), reducing capacity to maintain urban infrastructure and provide essential services.
- **Delayed Fund Release:** States often delay or divert devolved funds, weakening the autonomy envisaged under Articles 243H and 243X.
- **Inadequate Financial Powers:** Many PRIs lack authority to levy and revise taxes (e.g., water cess, trade license fees), leading to under-resourced local administration.
- **Impact on Services:** Urban areas face sanitation and waste management deficits; rural areas lag in water supply and health services due to financial constraints (NITI Aayog report 2023).

Effect of Overlapping Administrative Roles

- **Parallel Bodies:** State agencies (e.g., Development Authorities, Water Boards) often override elected local councils, leading to fragmented governance.
- **Ambiguous Functions:** Subjects in the 11th and 12th Schedules (e.g., health, education) are partially controlled by line departments, weakening local accountability.
- **Dual Control of Officials:** District collectors and municipal commissioners report to state governments, diluting control of elected representatives over administration.
- **Weak Planning Coordination:** Multiple agencies handling urban transport and rural development cause duplication and inefficiency (e.g., metro projects managed by parastatals, not municipal bodies).
- **Reduced Citizen Participation:** Confusion over responsibilities discourages community engagement and trust in local governance.

Reforms for Functional Clarity and Accountability

- **Strengthening Fiscal Devolution:** Implement 15th Finance Commission's recommendation for higher untied grants and property tax reforms. The **Second**

Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) and **Rangarajan Committee** also urged predictable, formula-based fund transfers to empower local bodies.

- **Exclusive Administrative Jurisdiction:** Clearly demarcate functions between Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), and parastatal agencies as suggested by the **Punchhi Commission** on Centre–State relations to avoid duplication and ensure single-point accountability.
- **Empowering Local Cadres:** Establish an independent Panchayat and Municipal Services cadre, as proposed by the **Second ARC** and **Ashok Mehta Committee**, to professionalize local administration and reduce state-level bureaucratic dominance.
- **Institutionalizing Planning:** Activate Metropolitan and District Planning Committees as envisaged in Articles 243ZD and 243ZE; supported by **Balwant Rai Mehta Committee** and **High Powered Expert Committee on Urban Infrastructure (2011)** for integrated regional planning.
- **Digital Transparency and Citizen Audits:** Following **Second ARC's e-Governance Report** and **World Bank recommendations**, deploy online platforms for fund tracking, social audits, and participatory budgeting to strengthen citizen oversight and curb corruption.

Conclusion

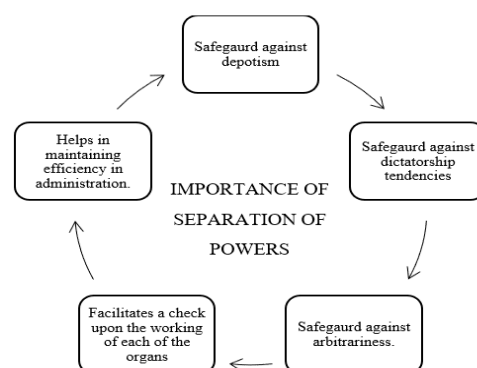
As L.M. Singhvi, architect of the Panchayati Raj framework, stated, *“Democracy must not only reach the people, it must stay with the people.”* Strengthening fiscal autonomy and functional clarity is crucial to fulfil this vision of enduring grassroots democracy.

Q.4) Examine how the doctrine of separation of powers operates differently in India and the USA. Discuss its implications for judicial review and executive accountability. (150 words, 10 marks)

Introduction

The doctrine of separation of powers, proposed by Montesquieu, is a cornerstone of modern democracies. It ensures a balanced distribution of legislative, executive, and judicial functions, preventing concentration of power and safeguarding liberty and rule of law.

Body

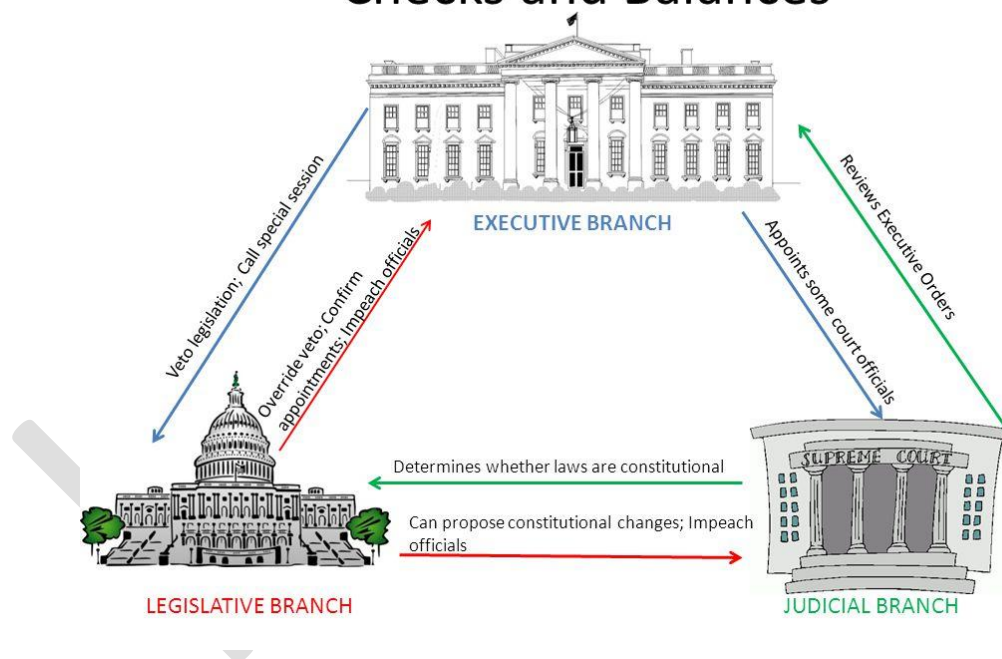


Separation of Powers – India vs USA

Aspect	India	USA
Constitutional Basis	No explicit mention; implied through functional separation (Articles 50, 121–122, 211).	Explicit separation of powers among legislature, executive, and judiciary in the Constitution.

Executive-Legislative Link	Fusion of powers – Prime Minister and Council of Ministers drawn from legislature; collective responsibility to Parliament.	Strict separation – President is independent of Congress and not a member of legislature.
Judicial Appointments	Collegium system evolved via judicial interpretation; executive has consultative role.	Federal judges appointed by President with Senate confirmation, ensuring institutional checks.
Overlap of Functions	Functional overlaps common – e.g., Ordinance powers (Art. 123), judicial law-making (Vishaka guidelines).	Rigid separation with fewer overlaps; exceptions in war powers and executive orders.
Checks and Balances	Flexible system; judiciary often reviews executive and legislative actions (Kesavananda Bharati, Puttaswamy).	Strong checks – Presidential veto, Congressional oversight, judicial review (Marbury v. Madison).

Checks and Balances



Implications for Judicial Review

- **India:** Flexible separation allows expansive judicial review. Courts can strike down constitutional amendments violating the Basic Structure Doctrine (Kesavananda Bharati, 1973) and issue guidelines filling legislative gaps (Vishaka, 1997).
- **USA:** Judicial review, established in Marbury v. Madison (1803), is powerful but rarely invalidates constitutional amendments, respecting rigid separation of powers.
- **Impact:** Indian judiciary often steps into policy spaces, whereas US courts act primarily as constitutional interpreters within stricter boundaries.

Implications for Executive Accountability

- **India:** Executive is directly accountable to Parliament through collective responsibility, Question Hour, and no-confidence motions; judiciary supplements this by reviewing executive actions (Vineet Narain, 1997).
- **USA:** Executive accountability is episodic—through impeachment, Congressional oversight, and judiciary's power to check executive orders; however, independence from legislature can lead to policy deadlocks.
- **Effectiveness:** India's fused system allows continuous scrutiny but risks judicial overreach; US model ensures independence but slows consensus-building.

Conclusion

According to the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index, effective separation of powers is key to accountable governance. India's cooperative model allows stronger judicial checks, while stricter separation in other democracies prioritizes institutional independence.

Q.5) Discuss the constitutional position, powers, and functions of the Vice-President, especially as Chairman of the Rajya Sabha. (150 words, 10 marks)

Introduction

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar's sudden resignation in July 2025, the third mid-term exit ever, highlights the importance of this constitutional post. As Rajya Sabha Chairman, his departure raises concerns about stability and smooth functioning of Parliament.

Body

Constitutional Position

- **Election:** Elected by members of both Houses of Parliament (Article 66), unlike the President who is elected by an electoral college including state assemblies.
- **Eligibility:** Must be a citizen of India, at least 35 years old, and eligible for Rajya Sabha membership.
- **Tenure:** Holds office for five years and can be re-elected; may resign or be removed by a resolution passed by a majority in Rajya Sabha and agreed to by Lok Sabha.
- **Succession Role:** Acts as President during the latter's absence or vacancy (Article 65).
- **Constitutional Safeguards:** Vice-President cannot hold any other office of profit during tenure (Article 66(4)).

Powers of the Vice-President

- **Constitutional Authority:** As per Articles 63–65, the Vice-President is the second-highest constitutional office and assumes the President's role during absence or vacancy, ensuring continuity in governance (e.g., during presidential foreign visits).

- **Ex-officio Chairman of Rajya Sabha:** Holds powers to preside over sessions, interpret rules, and maintain order in the Upper House, crucial during high-tension debates (e.g., farm laws repeal session 2021).
- **Tenth Schedule Role:** Exercises authority to decide on anti-defection cases in Rajya Sabha, shaping political stability (e.g., disqualification petitions of MPs in recent defections).
- **Quasi-Judicial Power:** Can adjudicate questions of privilege and disciplinary matters, reinforcing parliamentary decorum and integrity.

Functions of the Vice-President

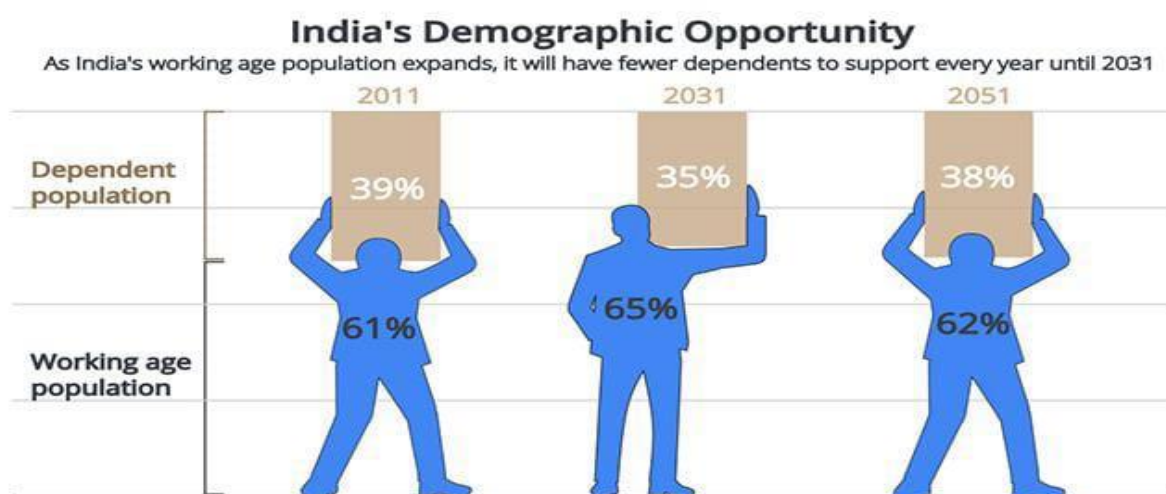
- **Legislative Facilitation:** Ensures smooth functioning of Rajya Sabha proceedings, maintaining productivity (Rajya Sabha recorded 89% productivity in Budget Session 2023).
- **Committee Oversight:** Leads the Rules Committee and refers bills to specialized committees for in-depth examination (e.g., Personal Data Protection Bill 2023).
- **Link Between Government Branches:** Acts as a vital link between the legislature and executive, coordinating legislative agendas and joint sessions with Lok Sabha.
- **Promoting Democratic Consensus:** Plays a key role in building bipartisan support for significant legislations, as seen in the passage of the Women's Reservation Bill (2023) with unanimous approval in Rajya Sabha.

Q.6) India's demographic dividend presents a unique opportunity for economic transformation. Discuss the challenges and strategies needed to empower youth to harness this potential. (150 words, 10 marks)

Introduction

With 68% of its population in the 15–64 age group and a median age of 28.2 years (2023), India has one of the youngest workforces, offering huge growth potential if jobs and skills improve.

Body

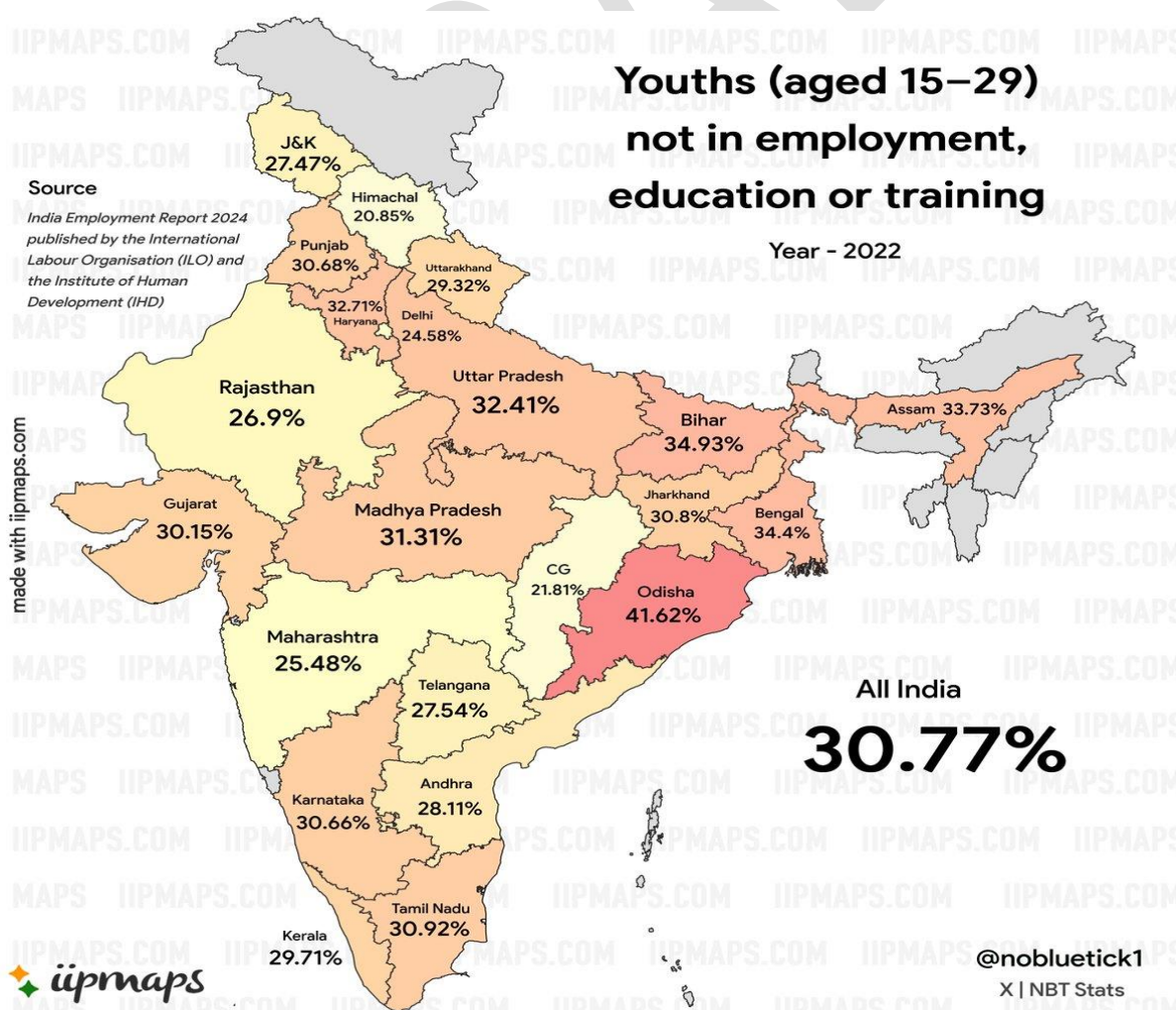
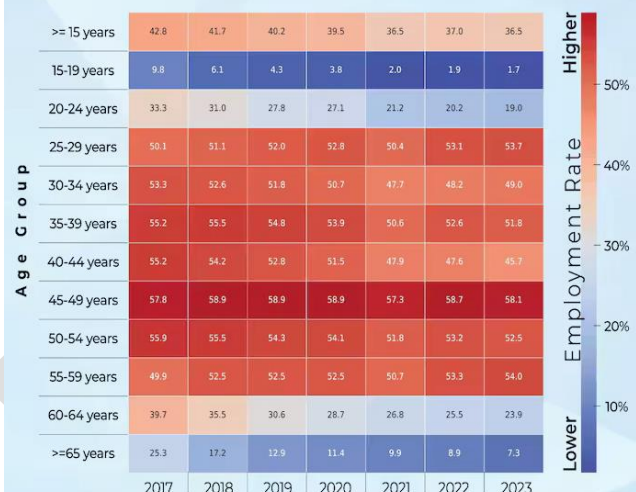


Challenges in Harnessing Demographic Dividend

- **Skill Gap:** Over 50% of youth lack market-relevant skills (India Skills Report 2023), leading to a mismatch between education and industry needs.
- **Youth Unemployment:** Youth unemployment remains high at 12% (PLFS 2023), with underemployment and informal jobs dominating.
- **Educational Quality:** Learning outcomes in schools and higher education rank low globally; only 27% of graduates are deemed employable in core sectors.
- **Gender Disparity:** Female labour force participation is just 25% (World Bank 2023), constraining full utilization of demographic potential.
- **Regional Imbalances:** States like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have higher youth

Seniors Getting More Employment Options

Employment Rates Increasingly Favour India's Elders



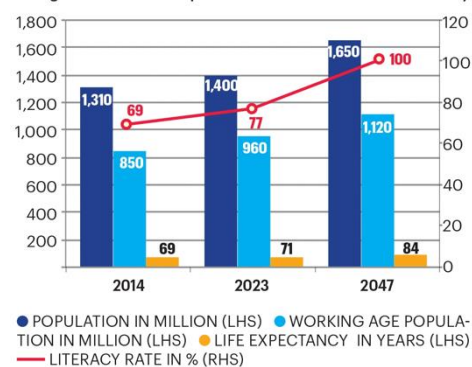
populations but lower industrial and service sector opportunities, causing migration stress.

Strategies to Empower Youth

- **Skill Development:** Skill India and PMKVY have trained over 1.4 crore youth since 2015. Expanding apprenticeships and localized hubs can address the 50% skill mismatch (India Skills Report 2023).
- **Entrepreneurship and Start-ups:** With 112 unicorns in 2024, Start-up India and Mudra loans (₹20 lakh crore to 38 crore beneficiaries) boost entrepreneurship; rural incubation centres can widen access.
- **Educational Reforms:** NEP 2020 targets 50% higher education enrolment by 2035. Atal Tinkering Labs (10,000+) and vocational education from grade 6 enhance STEM and digital skills.
- **Female Workforce Participation:** Rising to 29% in 2023, aided by maternity benefits and PM-ROJGAR incentives; more policies needed for safe, inclusive workplaces.
- **Regional Job Creation:** PM Gati Shakti and Make in India drive infrastructure and manufacturing growth, with the PLI scheme expected to generate 60 lakh jobs by 2026 in high-youth states.

TARGET FOR 2047

- India's working age population would be around 1.12 billion by 2047, the single-largest workforce of any country globally
- Targets include basic parameters such as universal literacy



Conclusion

India's demographic dividend can fuel development by 2047, but without adequate jobs and skills, it risks becoming a demographic disaster. Aligning youth empowerment with SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work) is essential for sustainable growth.

Q.7) Discuss the importance of integrating structured food and nutrition education in India's school curriculum. How can it help address the dual challenge of malnutrition and childhood obesity? (150 words, 10 marks)

Introduction

India faces a dual nutritional burden—over 35% of children under five are stunted (NFHS-5, 2021) while childhood obesity rises. CBSE's recent mandate for 'Sugar Boards' in schools highlights the urgent need for structured nutrition education.

Body

Importance of Structured Food and Nutrition Education

- **Early Habit Formation:** Childhood is crucial for developing healthy eating habits; school-based education can instil lifelong nutrition practices.

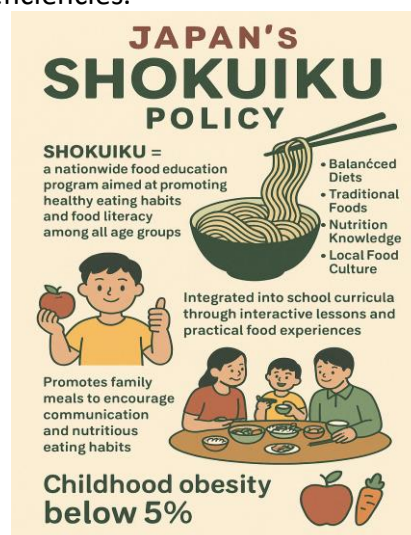
- **Awareness of Balanced Diets:** Helps students understand macro- and micronutrient requirements, tackling both undernutrition and overnutrition.
- **Reducing Hidden Hunger:** Educates children on sources of iron, iodine, and vitamins, reducing micronutrient deficiencies that affect 70% of school-age children (UNICEF).
- **Empowering Future Parents:** Knowledge gained in school extends to households, improving community-level nutrition literacy.
- **Supporting National Missions:** Complements schemes like POSHAN Abhiyaan and PM POSHAN (Mid-Day Meal), ensuring behavioral change alongside food supplementation.

Addressing Malnutrition and Childhood Obesity

- **Behavioural Change:** Structured nutrition education in schools can reduce junk food consumption; a UNICEF study (2023) shows a 25% improvement in healthy eating habits when integrated with daily learning modules.
- **Link with Physical Education:** Combining nutrition classes with Fit India Movement activities and yoga sessions enhances physical fitness and reduces childhood obesity, which currently affects 8.5% of urban schoolchildren (ICMR 2023).
- **Monitoring Growth:** Programs like Poshan Abhiyaan can incorporate regular BMI, height, and anaemia checks in schools. Tamil Nadu's "Amma Unavagam" model shows how school meal monitoring can detect and treat malnutrition early.
- **Promoting Traditional Foods:** Educating children about traditional, locally sourced foods (e.g., millets promoted under the International Year of Millets 2023) encourages sustainable eating practices while combating nutrient deficiencies.
- **Community Participation:** Collaborations with Anganwadis and Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) have improved child nutrition outcomes in states like Kerala, where parental workshops complement school-based health education

Conclusion

Integrating nutrition education with schemes like Poshan Abhiyaan mirrors Japan's Shokuiku policy, where early food literacy has kept childhood obesity below 5%. Similar structured education can help India tackle malnutrition and rising obesity, fostering healthier generations.

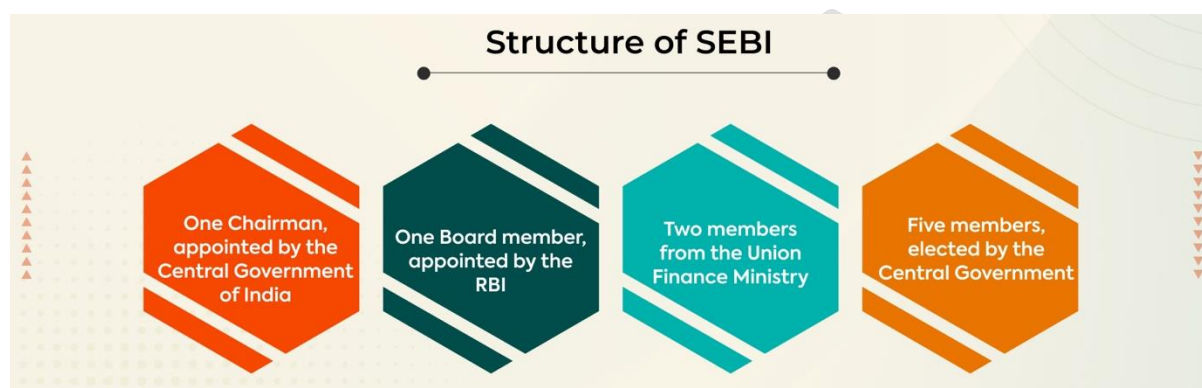


Q.8) Discuss the role of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in protecting investors from market manipulation and fraudulent practices. Refer to the recent measures and actions taken by SEBI. (150 words, 10 marks)

Introduction

Established under the SEBI Act 1992, SEBI regulates India's securities market to protect investors, curb fraud, and ensure transparency. Recent actions highlight its expanded vigilance against insider trading, market manipulation, and fraudulent practices.

Body



SEBI's Role in Investor Protection

- **Insider Trading Control:** Strengthened 2025 insider trading rules; fined entities for using unpublished price-sensitive information in the HDFC-HDFC Bank merger.
- **Market Manipulation Crackdown:** Banned traders like Sanjiv Bhasin for front-running, impounding ₹11.37 crore; NSE settled ₹40.35 crore for data misuse.
- **Global Enforcement:** Impounded ₹4,843 crore from Jane Street for derivatives manipulation, signaling strict action against foreign market manipulators.
- **Surveillance and Reporting:** Uses IMSS and DWBIS systems for real-time monitoring; mandated mutual funds to adopt anti-front-running mechanisms.
- **Investor Grievance Redressal:** Through SCORES and nationwide awareness campaigns, SEBI resolved nearly 90% of investor complaints in FY 2023–24.



Recent Measures and Actions

Reform / Measure	Impact (with Data/Examples)
T+1 Settlement Cycle	Implemented across all stocks by Jan 2023, making India the second-largest market (after China) with T+1 settlements. It reduced settlement risks and improved liquidity, benefiting ~85% of retail investors.
Enhanced ESG Disclosures	SEBI's 2023 Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) covers top 1,000 listed companies. Improved ESG transparency aligns Indian markets with global benchmarks, deterring greenwashing.
Market Rumour Regulation	Introduced in 2023 to counter speculative trading. Companies must clarify rumours within 24 hours; e.g., clarifications during Adani Group's market volatility in early 2023 boosted investor confidence.
Debt Fund Oversight	Post Franklin Templeton crisis (2020, ₹26,000 crore worth schemes frozen), SEBI mandated stress tests for debt schemes, reducing redemption risks and improving investor protection in mutual funds.
Consent Orders and Tribunal Review	In 2024, 30% of SEBI enforcement cases resolved via consent orders, speeding up settlements. Securities Appellate Tribunal handled 1,121 appeals (2024), enhancing accountability and legal recourse.

Conclusion

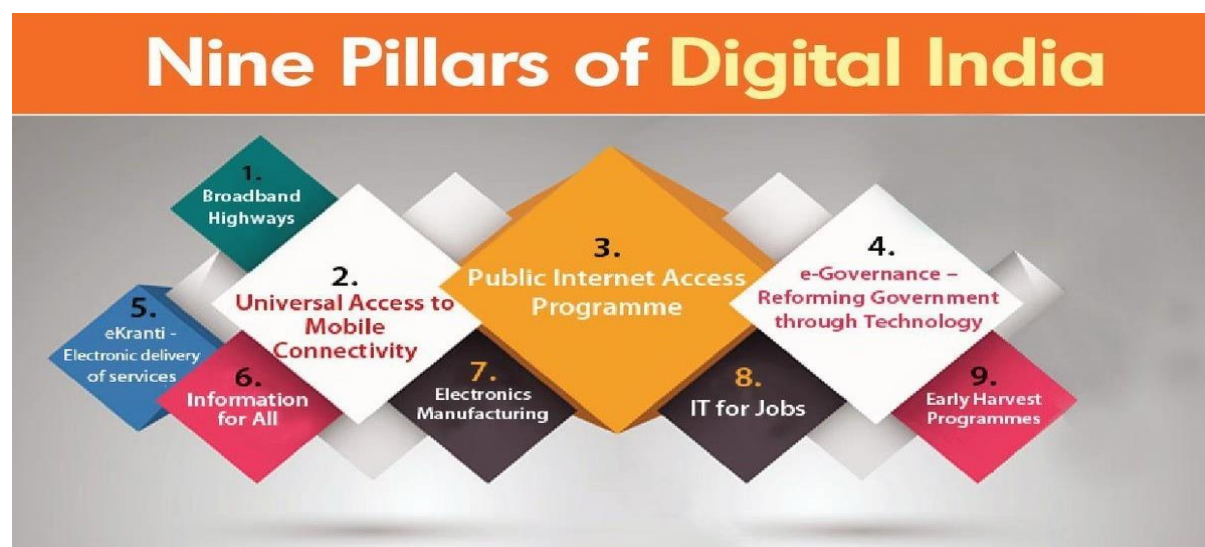
With record IPOs, over 13 crore Demat accounts, and rising retail investment, India's markets are rapidly expanding. SEBI's stronger surveillance and reforms are crucial to ensure transparency, protect investors, and support India's journey toward becoming a global investment hub.

Q.9) 'People's trust in public governance has increased due to use of digital technology'. Critically evaluate with help of examples. (150 words, 10 marks)

Introduction

Digital governance initiatives under the Digital India Mission have transformed public service delivery in India. Platforms like Aadhaar, UPI, and DigiLocker have improved transparency and efficiency, leading to greater trust in governance, though challenges remain.

Body



How Digital Technology Increased Trust

- **Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT):** Aadhaar-linked DBT has eliminated over **90 million fake beneficiaries**, saving the exchequer **₹2.2 lakh crore by 2024** (Ministry of Finance), ensuring subsidies like LPG (PAHAL scheme) reach genuine beneficiaries.
- **Unified Payments Interface (UPI):** Facilitated **120 billion transactions worth ₹180 trillion in FY 2023–24**, making digital payments integral to government schemes like PM-Kisan, reducing middlemen and corruption.
- **Online Grievance Redressal:** Platforms such as CPGRAMS and RTI portals resolved **8.2 lakh public grievances in FY 2023–24** with a 90% resolution rate, improving responsiveness in public service delivery.
- **E-Governance Portals:** Services like UMANG, DigiLocker (with **250 million registered users**), and Passport Seva Kendra cut down documentation delays and reduced the need for intermediaries, boosting citizen trust in governance.
- **Digital Public Infrastructure:** GST Network (GSTN) expanded to **14 million registered businesses**, improving tax compliance. ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce) is enabling fairer e-commerce, reducing platform monopolies and enhancing market transparency.

Limitations and Concerns

- **Digital Divide:** Around **42% of rural households lack internet access** (NSS 2023), leading to uneven access to e-services and benefits of digital governance.

- **Data Privacy Risks:** Aadhaar data breaches (2018 and subsequent leaks) raised concerns about misuse of personal information; data protection law implementation remains in progress.
- **Algorithm Bias:** In states like Jharkhand, biometric mismatches in PDS (Public Distribution System) excluded thousands from ration benefits, highlighting flaws in automated targeting.
- **Limited Digital Literacy:** According to a 2022 survey, **only 38% of rural Indians are digitally literate**, causing dependency on middlemen for digital transactions and service access.
- **Cybersecurity Threats:** The Reserve Bank of India reported a **15% rise in UPI-related fraud cases in 2023**, emphasizing the need for stronger cyber safeguards in financial and welfare platforms.

Conclusion

Digital tools have improved governance and citizen trust. But, as noted by the Srikrishna Committee and MeitY's AI Task Force, bridging digital gaps, protecting data privacy, and enhancing cybersecurity are vital for sustainable and inclusive trust.

Q.10) How does the concept of 'my terrorist vs your terrorist' undermine global counter-terrorism cooperation? Analyse implications for India's security strategy. (150 words, 10 marks)

Introduction

The phrase 'my terrorist vs your terrorist' refers to countries acting against some terror groups while ignoring others for political reasons. Recent global disagreements over listing certain terrorists at the UN show how this weakens global action and complicates India's fight against cross-border terrorism.

Body

Undermining Global Counter-Terrorism Cooperation

- **Double Standards in Designation:** Countries differ on proscribing terror outfits (e.g., Masood Azhar and Hafiz Saeed), weakening UN's consensus-based sanctions regime.
- **Safe Havens:** States provide covert support to groups serving strategic interests while condemning others (e.g., Pakistan's support to cross-border militancy despite pledges at FATF).
- **Fragmented Intelligence Sharing:** Selective cooperation in platforms like Interpol and UN Counter-Terrorism Committee delays actionable intelligence against transnational networks.
- **Politicized Multilateral Action:** Veto powers in UNSC often block sanctions, as seen in repeated delays in listing certain individuals as global terrorists.
- **Undermined Norm-Setting:** Differing definitions of terrorism hinder adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT).

Implications for India's Security Strategy

- **Cross-Border Terrorism:** Persistent attacks in Jammu & Kashmir highlight failure of global mechanisms to hold state sponsors accountable.
- **Diplomatic Balancing:** India faces challenges in building consensus at UN forums due to geopolitical rivalries (China blocking terror listings).
- **Dependence on Bilateral Cooperation:** India increasingly relies on bilateral counter-terrorism agreements (e.g., US, Israel) for intelligence and technology sharing.
- **Regional Security Architecture:** SAARC's counter-terror framework remains ineffective due to divergent member-state perceptions of terrorism.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** India enhances internal capabilities through initiatives like NATGRID and NIA while pushing for CCIT to standardize global responses.

HITTING HURDLES



Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism is a draft proposed by India in 1996, that has yet to be adopted by the UN General assembly

What does it call for?

- ➔ **Universal definition of terrorism:** No good terrorist or bad terrorist
- ➔ Ban on all groups regardless of country of operation, cut off access to fund and safe havens
- ➔ Prosecution of all groups, including cross-border groups
- ➔ Amending domestic laws to make cross-border terror an extraditable offence

Why has CCIT been blocked?

- ➔ **US+allies:** Concerns over definitions of terrorism, including acts by US soldiers in international interventions without UN mandate
- ➔ **Latin American countries:** Concerns over international humanitarian laws and HR being ignored
- ➔ **OIC:** Concerns that convention will be used to target Pakistan, and restrict rights of self-determination groups in Palestine, Kashmir etc

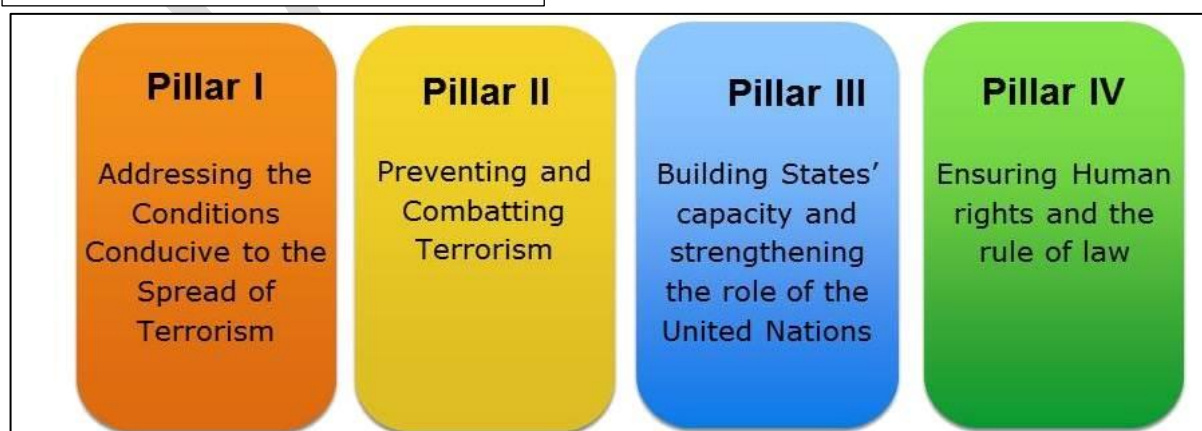
 **Terror striking every day now -Turkey, Somalia, Afghanistan, Kenya & Bangladesh. Mere condemnation & commiseration @un won't do. Need CCIT**
 — Syed Akbaruddin, India's ambassador to UN, on Twitter



Conclusion

Selective counter-terrorism weakens global unity. A global pact like the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism can set common rules against all terror groups. India, a long-standing advocate of this pact, must lead global efforts to build consensus and strengthen collective security.

UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy



Q.11) "Socialism and secularism are the spirit of the Constitution." Discuss with relevant provisions and judicial judgements. (250 words, 15 marks)

Introduction

Socialism and secularism, explicitly added to the Preamble by the 42nd Amendment (1976), reflect the Indian Constitution's commitment to social justice and religious neutrality. Judicial interpretations have further affirmed these principles as part of the Constitution's basic structure.

Body

Socialism in the Constitution

- **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP):** Articles 38, 39, and 43 direct the State to ensure equitable distribution of resources and social welfare policies.
- **Fundamental Rights:** Article 14 (equality), Article 21 (right to life with dignity), and Article 23 (prohibition of exploitation) underpin socialist ideals.
- **Economic Reforms:** Early policies like land reforms and nationalization of banks derived constitutional legitimacy from socialist goals.
- **Judicial Support:** In *D.S. Nakara v. Union of India* (1983), the Supreme Court emphasized that economic justice is integral to socialism under the Constitution.
- **Contemporary Measures:** Welfare schemes like MGNREGA and PM Jan Dhan Yojana align with the socialist objective of inclusive growth.

Secularism in the Constitution

- **Religious Freedom:** Articles 25–28 guarantee freedom of religion, while Article 15 prohibits discrimination on religious grounds.
- **State Neutrality:** The State has no official religion and maintains principled distance from all faiths while regulating to ensure public order and reform.
- **Judicial Support:** In *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India* (1994), secularism was declared part of the Constitution's basic structure; misuse of religion in state governance was ruled unconstitutional.
- **Minority Rights:** Articles 29 and 30 protect cultural and educational rights of religious minorities.
- **Contemporary Interpretation:** Court judgments on issues like triple talaq and temple entry underscore secular, reformist interventions to uphold equality.

Conclusion

As Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said, *"Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy."* Upholding socialism and secularism through inclusive policies and vigilant judiciary ensures lasting harmony and equitable growth in India's democracy.

Q.12) Despite legal safeguards, custodial torture persists in India. Analyse the factors sustaining it and discuss police reforms needed to ensure professional, evidence-based policing. (250 words, 15 marks)

Introduction

Custodial torture remains a systemic issue in India despite constitutional protections (Articles 20, 21, 22) and judicial safeguards. NCRB data (2023) reported over 700 custodial deaths annually, highlighting persistent violations of human rights in law enforcement.

Body

Factors Sustaining Custodial Torture

- **Colonial Legacy:** The Indian Police Act of 1861 emphasized maintaining order over citizens' rights, fostering coercive methods of investigation.
- **Weak Accountability:** Few convictions despite custodial deaths (only 26 policemen convicted out of 1,888 cases between 2010–2020), due to institutional protection and lack of independent oversight.
- **Judicial Delays and Burden:** Over 5 crore pending cases and slow trials push police to use torture for quick confessions.
- **Political Interference:** Frequent transfers and pressure to deliver immediate results politicize policing and incentivize harsh methods.
- **Lack of Training and Resources:** Only 7% of police personnel receive annual human rights or forensic training (BPR&D 2022), leading to reliance on third-degree methods.

Police Reforms Needed

- **Implement Supreme Court Guidelines:** *Prakash Singh v. Union of India* (2006) mandated fixed DGP tenures, independent Police Complaints Authorities, and separating investigation from law-and-order duties. As of 2024, only 18 states have partially complied.
- **Forensic and Technology Upgrade:** With only one forensic expert per 3 lakh people (BPR&D 2023), India needs modern labs, DNA units, and CCTV in all stations (*Paramvir Singh Saini, 2020*). AI-based crime analytics in Telangana and Karnataka cut reporting delays by 30%.
- **Human Rights Training:** Over 700 custodial deaths annually (NCRB) underline the need for mandatory training on custodial rights, gender sensitivity, and scientific investigation methods under BPR&D programs.
- **Independent Oversight:** Strengthening Police Complaints Authorities and NHRC with binding powers, as recommended by the Second ARC, can enhance accountability in custodial crime investigations.
- **Legal Reforms:** Ratifying UNCAT and enacting the long-pending anti-torture law, along with mandatory audio-video interrogations, will align India with global human rights standards and criminalize custodial brutality.

Conclusion

Ending custodial torture needs reforms recommended by the National Police Commission and Second Administrative Reforms Commission—fixed police tenures,

independent oversight, forensic upgrades, and human rights training—ensuring accountable, technology-driven, and citizen-centric policing that safeguards constitutional rights.

Q.13) Examine the constitutional mandate under Article 93 for electing the Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha. Why has the prolonged vacancy of this office been termed a constitutional anomaly? (250 words, 15 marks)

Introduction

Article 93 of the Indian Constitution mandates that the Lok Sabha must elect both a Speaker and a Deputy Speaker “as soon as may be.” While the Speaker is usually elected promptly, prolonged vacancies in the Deputy Speaker’s post have been criticized as a breach of parliamentary norms and constitutional intent.

Body

Constitutional Mandate under Article 93

- **Provision:** Article 93 requires the House of the People to elect a Speaker and Deputy Speaker from among its members, ensuring continuity in presiding over sessions.
- **Historical Practice:** Traditionally, the Deputy Speaker has been elected within weeks of a new Lok Sabha convening, maintaining a balance in the Chair.
- **Tenure and Role:** Serves the entire life of the House unless removed; presides in Speaker’s absence, ensuring impartiality and smooth functioning of debates.
- **Convention of Opposition Representation:** Often, the post is offered to the Opposition to enhance bipartisan trust in parliamentary proceedings.
- **Parliamentary Rule:** Rules of Procedure reaffirm early election to strengthen legislative leadership and uphold the spirit of collective functioning.

Why Prolonged Vacancy is a Constitutional Anomaly

- **Deviation from Mandate:** Article 93 requires election of a Deputy Speaker “as soon as may be,” yet the post has remained vacant for over four years, the longest in independent India.
- **Imbalance in Presiding Authority:** Without a Deputy Speaker, only the Speaker and temporary chairpersons manage proceedings, weakening checks during debates on key legislations.
- **Erosion of Opposition Voice:** Traditionally held by the opposition, the vacancy diminishes bipartisan oversight and legislative dialogue.
- **Judicial Observations:** The Supreme Court (2021–22) emphasized that leaving this post vacant undermines constitutional balance and cannot be justified as political discretion.
- **Global Norms:** Democracies like the UK and Australia elect Deputy Speakers within weeks of forming the House, making India’s delay an international outlier.

Conclusion

The prolonged vacancy of the Deputy Speaker in the 17th Lok Sabha undermines legislative checks and balances. With India's ranking slipping in the Global Democracy Index 2024, promptly filling this post is vital to strengthen democratic institutions and parliamentary integrity.

Q.14) Critically analyse with help of examples how civil society movements have influenced policy reforms and legislative changes in post-liberalization India.

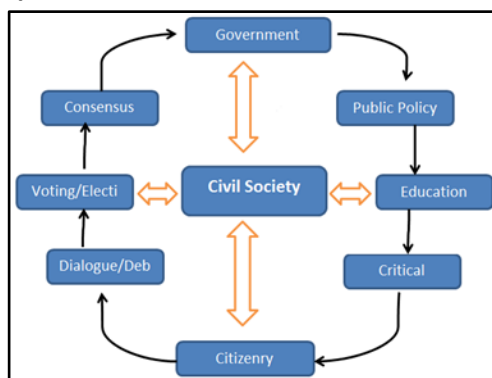
Introduction

Since 1991, civil society has acted as a link between people and government, raising public issues and pushing for reforms. Its movements have brought important laws that improved transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in India's democracy.

Body

Civil Society Movements Driving Legislative Change

- **Right to Information Movement (1996–2005):**
 - Spearheaded by **MKSS** and **NCPRI**, using social audits and public hearings to uncover corruption.
 - Led to the **RTI Act (2005)**, transforming access to government information and enabling citizen oversight.
- **Anti-Corruption Lokpal Movement (2011–2013):**
 - Led by Anna Hazare's "India Against Corruption," demanding strong anti-graft institutions.
 - Resulted in the **Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act (2013)**, creating independent anti-corruption watchdogs.
- **Right to Food and Education Campaigns:**
 - Civil society advocacy highlighted hunger and illiteracy; PILs like **PUCL vs. Union of India (2001)** strengthened the cause.
 - Influenced **National Food Security Act (2013)** and **Right to Education Act (2009)**, making them enforceable rights.
- **Environmental and Livelihood Movements:**
 - Movements like **Narmada Bachao Andolan** challenged displacement without rehabilitation; judicial rulings enforced stricter project evaluations.



- Forest rights activism led to the **Forest Rights Act (2006)**, recognizing tribal land entitlements.
- **Women's Rights Activism:**
 - The **Vishaka movement** against workplace harassment led to the **POSH Act (2013)**; campaigns strengthened domestic violence protections and shaped policies for women's political representation.

Impact on Policy Reforms

- **Transparency and Accountability:** RTI democratized information access, empowering citizens to question governance.
- **Institutional Anti-Corruption Measures:** Lokpal Act strengthened checks against high-level corruption.
- **Rights-Based Welfare State:** Food, education, and work entitlements (MGNREGA) arose from grassroots demands.
- **Environmental Safeguards:** Movements influenced laws ensuring sustainable development and community participation.

Limitations and Challenges

- **Implementation Gaps:** Many laws inspired by civil society (e.g., RTI, Lokpal) suffer from weak enforcement, understaffed commissions, and bureaucratic resistance.
- **State Pushback and Shrinking Civic Space:** Post-2010 regulatory measures like **FCRA amendments (2020)** have curtailed foreign funding, limiting NGO operations and advocacy capacity.
- **Urban Bias and Elite Capture:** Studies show most high-visibility movements are urban-led; rural and marginalized voices often remain underrepresented.
- **Fragmented Mobilization:** Movements are issue-specific with limited coalition-building, weakening sustained influence on broader structural reforms.
- **Judicial Dependence:** Civil society often relies on PILs and courts, leading to judicial overreach and bypassing deliberative legislative processes.

Conclusion

Civil society in post-liberalization India has been a powerful driver of democratic reforms, shaping transparency laws, rights-based entitlements, and environmental protections. Further, institutionalizing participatory policymaking is essential for these movements to evolve from episodic protests into enduring democratic partners.

Q.15) Explain the significance of the 106th Constitutional Amendment Act in advancing gender justice. Suggest Measures which can further women empowerment in political field. (250 words, 15 marks)

Introduction

The 106th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2023, mandates 33% reservation for women in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, a historic move to bridge gender gaps in political representation and strengthen India's constitutional promise of equality and social justice.

Body

Significance of the 106th Constitutional Amendment

- **Correcting Historical Exclusion:** Women held only **15% of Lok Sabha seats** and **9% in State Assemblies**, far below the **global average of 26%** (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2023).
- **Constitutional Backing:** Inserts Articles **330A, 332A, and 239AA(6)** to ensure reserved seats, including sub-quotas for SC/ST women, reflecting India's commitment to inclusive democracy.
- **Grassroots Success:** The **73rd and 74th Amendments (1993)** reserved one-third seats in local bodies, leading to over **14 lakh women in Panchayati Raj institutions**, demonstrating improved governance and participation.
- **International Alignment:** Reinforces commitments under **CEDAW** and **SDG 5**, aligning India with progressive democracies advancing gender-balanced legislatures.
- **Catalyst for Political Empowerment:** Similar reforms in countries like **Rwanda (61% women MPs)** and **Nepal (33% quota in Parliament)** have transformed policy priorities and women's leadership globally.



Measures to Further Women's Political Empowerment

- **Political Party Reforms:** Mandate parties to field **minimum 33% women candidates**, as practiced in **France's parity law**, ensuring representation starts from candidate selection.

- **Leadership Training:** Institutionalize nationwide political leadership programs for women, similar to **Nordic countries' women's caucuses**, enhancing policy and negotiation skills.
- **Financial and Campaign Support:** Provide dedicated electoral funding for women candidates, following **Canada's model of reimbursing expenses** to promote gender diversity in elections.
- **Safe Political Spaces:** Strengthen mechanisms to prevent harassment and violence against women in politics, learning from **Mexico's gender-based political violence laws**.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Create an independent **Gender Representation Commission** to review implementation, similar to **UK's Electoral Commission**, ensuring timely delimitation and reservation enforcement.
- **Grassroots to National Pipeline:** Develop mentorship networks connecting Panchayat women leaders to state and national politics, enabling experience-based leadership progression.

Conclusion

The 106th Amendment marks a historic step toward Ambedkar's vision of political equality. Inspired by global best practices, India must now ensure this reform translates into real empowerment, enabling women to lead and shape the nation's democratic future.

Q.16) Discuss the effectiveness of Question Hour and Zero Hour as instruments for ensuring executive accountability in India's parliamentary system. (250 words, 15 marks)

Introduction

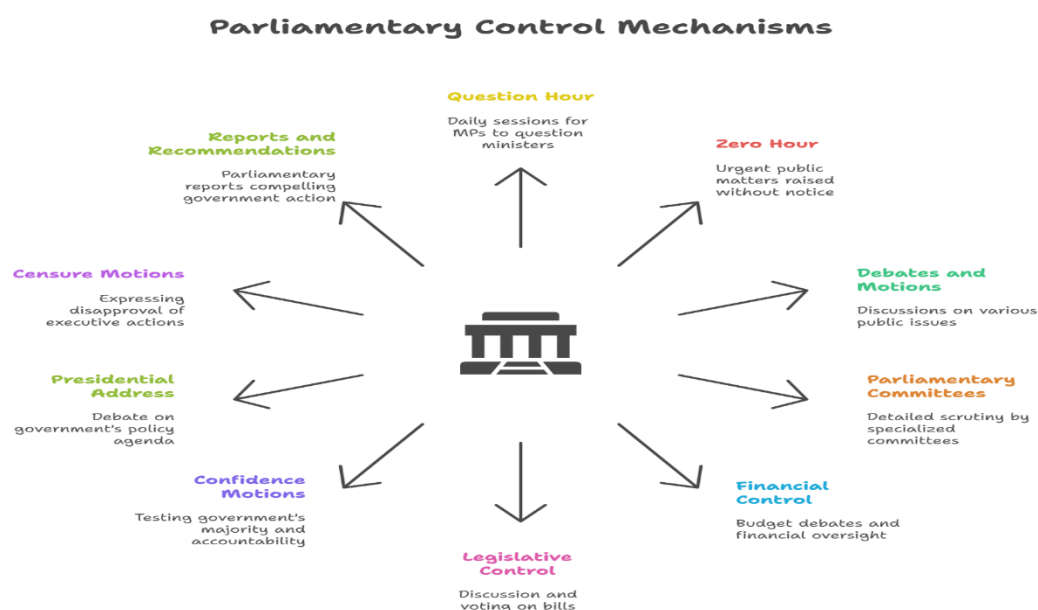
Question Hour and Zero Hour are key parliamentary tools for ensuring executive accountability. Guided by convention and Article 75's principle of collective ministerial responsibility, they enable MPs to scrutinize government actions and policies in real time.

Body

Effectiveness of Question Hour

- **Structured Oversight:** Held during the first hour of parliamentary sittings, MPs can ask starred (oral) and unstarred (written) questions, compelling ministers to justify decisions publicly. The **1957 Mundhra scandal**, exposed during Hour, led to the resignation of Finance Minister T.T. Krishnamachari.
- **Data and Policy Transparency:** Ministries must provide factual responses, many of which shape legislative debates and public opinion. During the 17th Lok Sabha, over **60,000 questions** were admitted, covering governance, welfare schemes, and security

matters.



- **Committee Follow-ups:** Responses often lead to deeper scrutiny by departmental committees, enhancing accountability.
- **Declining Productivity:** According to PRS Legislative Research, Question Hour functioned for only **60% of scheduled time** in Lok Sabha and **52% in Rajya Sabha**, with frequent disruptions resulting in only **~10% of starred questions** being orally answered.

Effectiveness of Zero Hour

- **Urgent Public Concerns:** Introduced in 1962, Zero Hour enables MPs to raise issues of immediate importance without prior notice, prompting swift government clarifications.
- **Flexible and Inclusive:** Allows participation of a larger number of MPs and has highlighted issues such as natural disasters and sudden policy changes.
- **Limited Formality:** As it is not part of the Rules of Procedure, responses are not binding, and follow-up action remains largely discretionary.

Challenges and Limitations

- **Frequent Disruptions:** Protests and adjournments significantly curtail these sessions, weakening their oversight potential.
- **Lack of Prime Minister's Question Time:** Unlike the UK, India lacks a dedicated session for direct PM questioning on cross-ministerial issues.
- **Research Gaps:** MPs often lack adequate research and expert support to frame high-quality, probing questions.
- **Implementation Weakness:** Commitments made during these sessions lack robust tracking and reporting mechanisms.

Way Forward

- Ensure uninterrupted parliamentary functioning through stricter disciplinary mechanisms.
- Introduce a **weekly Prime Minister's Question Hour** to enhance top-level executive scrutiny.
- Strengthen research support for MPs and empower committees to monitor ministerial assurances.
- Institutionalize written responses and follow-up actions for issues raised during Zero Hour.

Conclusion

Question Hour and Zero Hour are vital for parliamentary oversight. Strengthening them through fewer disruptions, better follow-up, and improved executive responsiveness will enhance legislative control and accountability in India's democracy.

Q.17) Special laws for the vulnerable sections such as women, scheduled tribes and scheduled caste, by its nature, are discriminatory in approach." Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer. (250 words, 15 marks)

Introduction

The Indian Constitution empowers the state to enact special laws for vulnerable groups under Articles 15(3), 15(4), 16(4) to address historical marginalization. While these laws distinguish based on social identity, they are designed to achieve substantive equality, not perpetuate discrimination.

Body**Why Special Laws Are Not Discriminatory**

- **Corrective Justice:** Historical injustices like caste oppression and gender exclusion demanded affirmative action. For example, **SC/ST literacy rates** improved from **8% (1951) to 71% (2011)** due to targeted educational policies.
- **Constitutional Sanction:** Framers, led by B.R. Ambedkar, justified **protective discrimination** to uplift disadvantaged groups (Directive Principles, Article 46), ensuring social and economic justice.
- **Judicial Endorsement:** In **Indra Sawhney (1992)** and **N.M. Thomas (1976)**, the Supreme Court upheld reservations as essential for achieving equality in practice.
- **Political Empowerment:** Laws like **Panchayati Raj 33% women's reservation (1993)** and the **Women's Reservation Bill (2023)** have increased female political representation, crucial for balanced governance.

- **Social Protection:** The **SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act (1989)** safeguards against caste violence, addressing ongoing structural discrimination (over **50,000 cases annually** reported under NCRB).

Concerns and Need for Refinement

- **Reverse Discrimination:** Critics argue affirmative action disadvantages forward classes, sparking debates on meritocracy, especially in competitive exams and public employment.
- **Creamy Layer:** Benefits often favor economically advanced sub-groups; courts (e.g., *Jarnail Singh*, 2018) have urged excluding such sections to target genuine deprivation.
- **Social Fragmentation:** Long-term identity-based quotas risk reinforcing caste divisions and fueling vote-bank politics, hindering social cohesion.
- **Implementation Gaps:** Despite protective laws, NCRB reports over **50,000 annual atrocities against SCs/STs**, reflecting weak enforcement and persistent inequality.
- **Time-Bound Review:** The Supreme Court recommends periodic evaluation to ensure affirmative action remains a **temporary, remedial measure** rather than a perpetual entitlement.

Conclusion

True to Ambedkar's vision, India must evolve from protective discrimination to empowerment-driven equality, ensuring education, economic upliftment, and social reform gradually render special laws unnecessary, achieving genuine social justice and dignity for all citizens.

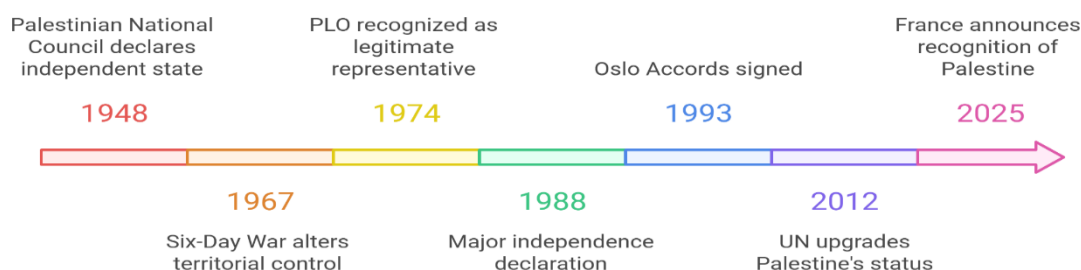
Q.18) France's recognition of Palestinian statehood marks a shift in Western policy towards the Israel-Palestine conflict. Critically analyze the implications of this move for global peace efforts and India's foreign policy. (250 words, 15 marks)

Introduction

France's decision to formally recognize Palestinian statehood marks a historic shift in Western policy, making it the first permanent UNSC member in the G7 to do so. This move reshapes global diplomacy around the Israel–Palestine conflict and has implications for both peace efforts and India's foreign policy.

Body

Key Milestones in Palestinian Statehood



Implications for Global Peace Efforts

- **Strengthening Two-State Momentum:** With over 140 countries already recognizing Palestine, France's step revives the **two-state solution** narrative, lending credibility to Palestinian aspirations under UN frameworks.
- **Increased Diplomatic Pressure:** Recognition isolates Israel in Western alliances, urging it to reconsider settlement policies and negotiate political solutions.
- **UN and ICJ Backing:** Aligns with the **ICJ advisory opinion (2024)** declaring Israel's occupation unlawful, strengthening the legal basis for Palestinian sovereignty.
- **Potential for Wider Recognition:** France's stance could spur other European nations (e.g., U.K., Canada) to follow, creating a broader Western consensus.
- **Challenges to Peace Talks:** Critics argue unilateral recognition may embolden hardline factions, complicating ceasefire negotiations and hostage release efforts.

Implications for India's Foreign Policy

- **Historical Position:** India recognized Palestine in 1988, upholds UNSC-backed two-state solution, yet maintains strategic ties with Israel (defence, technology, trade ~\$10B annually).
- **Balancing Major Powers:** France's move, potentially echoed by EU states, increases diplomatic convergence with India's traditional Palestine stance while preserving Israel cooperation.
- **West Asia Strategy:** Changing European policy could reshape India's Middle East partnerships (energy, diaspora), requiring nuanced engagement with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).
- **Multilateral Leverage:** Opens avenues for India to work with France, EU, and Global South to push for inclusive peace talks within **UN and G20** frameworks.

- **Strategic Autonomy:** Reinforces India's independent foreign policy—supporting Palestine's rights while expanding defence and technological ties with Israel and Western allies.

Conclusion

France's recognition of Palestine reflects a strategic recalibration in Western geopolitics, pressuring Israel and reviving multilateral diplomacy. For India, it strengthens its traditional pro-Palestine stance while demanding a delicate balance to preserve ties with Israel

Q.19) Discuss the evolving strategic and economic partnership between India and Europe. How can their cooperation contribute to building a stable, rules-based multipolar world order? (250 words, 15 marks)

Introduction

India–Europe ties have transformed into a comprehensive strategic partnership, driven by €120 billion trade, 70% FDI growth (2015–22), and shared democratic values, positioning them as key pillars for a rules-based multipolar order.

Body

Evolving Strategic and Economic Partnership

- **Trade and Investment:** EU is India's second-largest trading partner, accounting for 12% of total trade; France's FDI surged 373%, boosting manufacturing and services.
- **Connectivity and Climate Cooperation:** India–EU Connectivity Partnership (2021) and IMEC aim at sustainable infrastructure; collaboration on green hydrogen and fair carbon border adjustments enhances climate equity.
- **Technology and Innovation:** Partnerships in AI, semiconductors, biotechnology, and digital governance through Horizon Europe and 6G research strengthen future-ready cooperation.
- **Defence and Security:** Europe is a major arms supplier; co-development, maritime security, cyber resilience, and counter-terrorism cooperation are expanding under Atmanirbhar Bharat and Europe's ReArm 2025.
- **Human Capital Mobility:** Proposed agreements on skilled migration and education exchanges boost innovation and employment generation.

Contribution to a Rules-Based Multipolar Order

- **Middle-Power Leadership:** Both act as balancing forces against unilateralism, fostering coalitions for global stability.

- **Multilateral Reform:** Joint advocacy for UN Security Council and WTO reforms promotes inclusive governance.
- **Indo-Pacific Cooperation:** Maritime collaboration enhances regional security and supply chain resilience.
- **Sustainable Growth:** Leadership in clean energy and climate finance drives equitable development.
- **Technology Norms:** Cooperation on AI ethics and digital standards ensures fair technological governance.

Conclusion

As Shashi Tharoor observes, middle powers must act as “custodians of a rules-based order.” By deepening ties in trade, technology, and multilateral diplomacy, India and Europe can anchor a stable, inclusive multipolar world.

Q.20) Examine the evolution of India’s strategic autonomy doctrine from non-alignment to multi-alignment. How is it tested amid U.S.–Russia–China power dynamics? (250 words, 15 marks)

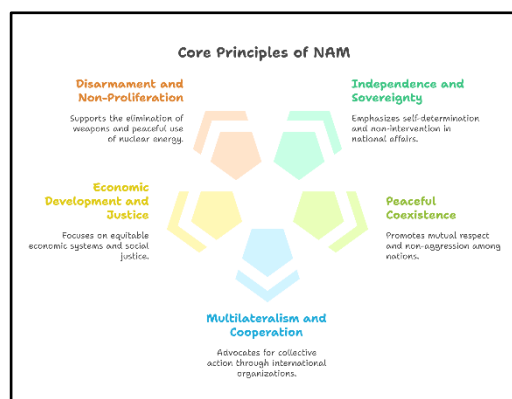
Introduction

India’s strategic autonomy began with Cold War-era non-alignment (NAM, 1961), avoiding U.S.–Soviet blocs. Post-1991 reforms and rising multipolarity shifted policy to multi-alignment, enabling parallel partnerships with powers like the U.S., Russia, and China.

Body

Evolution of Strategic Autonomy

- **Non-Alignment Foundations:** Post-independence, India championed NAM (1961) rooted in Panchsheel principles, maintaining neutrality between U.S. and Soviet blocs.
- **Pragmatic Shifts:** The 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty and 1991 liberalization signaled selective alignments for security and economic needs.
- **Nuclear Assertion:** Pokhran-II (1998) demonstrated independent strategic decision-making despite sanctions, paving the way for stronger global partnerships.



- **Rise of Multi-Alignment:** In the 21st century, India developed ties with multiple powers—U.S. (civil nuclear deal, foundational defence pacts), Russia (S-400, Kudankulam reactors), and China (trade relations, BRICS membership).
- **Institutional Diversification:** Active participation in Quad, SCO, BRICS, and G20 reflects a pragmatic, issue-based multi-aligned posture.

Testing Amid U.S.–Russia–China Dynamics

- **Russia-Ukraine War:** India abstained from UN votes, imported discounted Russian oil, and maintained Western ties, balancing competing expectations.
- **U.S.–China Rivalry:** India cooperates with U.S. through Quad and Indo-Pacific strategies while managing \$118 billion trade and unresolved border tensions with China (e.g., Galwan 2020).
- **Defence Dependencies:** With ~60% of defence imports from Russia (SIPRI 2023), India faces challenges from U.S. sanctions (CAATSA) while diversifying suppliers and promoting Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- **Technological and Energy Security:** Navigating Western tech alliances and Russian energy links while reducing reliance on Chinese supply chains tests policy flexibility.
- **Global Leadership Role:** India's G20 presidency and leadership in Global South initiatives showcase independent diplomacy despite competing power pressures.

Conclusion

As Nehru said, *"We want to be friends with all countries but allies of none."* In today's multipolar world, India must strengthen self-reliance and balanced diplomacy to uphold true strategic autonomy.