

General Studies Paper-II

Q1. Starting from inventing the 'basic structure' doctrine, the judiciary has played a highly proactive role in ensuring that India develops into a thriving democracy. In light of the statement, evaluate the role played by judicial activism in achieving the ideals of democracy. (200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

1. Judicial activism refers to the proactive role played by the judiciary in advancing social justice and protecting citizens' rights beyond the traditional scope of interpreting laws and settling disputes.
2. In India, the judiciary has been instrumental in protecting democracy by upholding the Constitution's "basic structure" doctrine, which prohibits any amendments that violate the essential features of the Constitution.
3. The Supreme Court has also been proactive in protecting citizens' rights, such as the right to education, clean environment and dignity, by interpreting constitutional provisions in a liberal and progressive manner.

Answer:

Judicial activism refers to the proactive role played by the judiciary in advancing social justice and protecting citizens' rights beyond the traditional scope of interpreting laws and settling disputes. The Indian judiciary's proactive role in judicial activism has been vital for India's thriving democracy:

1. **Protection of fundamental rights:** Judiciary ensures citizens' rights, expanding their scope to prevent violations.
2. **Upholding the rule of law:** Judiciary holds all institutions accountable, including the executive and legislative branches.
3. **Checking abuse of power:** Unconstitutional laws and policies are struck down to prevent misuse of power.
4. **Strengthening democratic institutions:** Independence of key institutions like Election Commission and CAG is upheld.
5. **Protecting minority rights:** Religious and linguistic minorities' rights are safeguarded.

6. **Promoting transparency and accountability:** Judiciary promotes transparency and accountability in government actions.
7. **Filling gaps in legislation:** Interpretation of the Constitution and statutes strengthens democratic principles.

In conclusion, judicial activism plays a proactive role in India's democracy by safeguarding fundamental rights, upholding the rule of law and strengthening democratic institutions while ensuring transparency and accountability in government actions.

Q2. Though the federal principle is dominant in our constitution and that principle is one of its basic features, but it is equally true that federalism under the Indian Constitution leans in favour of a strong Center, a feature that militates against the concept of strong federalism. Discuss. (200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

1. The Indian Constitution establishes a federal system of government with a division of powers between the central government and the states.
2. However, the Constitution also gives the central government significant powers to control the states, such as the power to dismiss state governments under certain circumstances.
3. Additionally, the central government has the power to make laws on subjects that are traditionally under the jurisdiction of the states.
4. The distribution of financial resources also favours the central government, with the states depending heavily on grants from the centre.

Answer:

The Indian Constitution establishes a federal system of government with a division of powers between the central government and the states. The federal principle in the Indian Constitution leans in favour of a strong Center:

1. **Division of powers:** Center has more powers over states, with Union and Concurrent Lists under its jurisdiction.
2. **Distribution of resources:** Center has greater financial resources through taxation powers.

3. **Centralized decision making:** Center makes significant decisions on foreign policy, defense and national security.
4. **Emergency powers:** Center can override state powers during emergencies.
5. **Inter-state disputes:** Center has ultimate decision-making power in resolving inter-state disputes.
6. **Constitutional amendments:** Center holds the power to amend the Constitution, affecting the balance of power between Center and states.

In conclusion, while federalism is a significant aspect of the Indian Constitution, it favours a strong Center. This has maintained national unity but also led to debates on the balance of power between Center and states.

Q3. The 'Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and its Members' as envisaged in Article 105 of the Constitution leave room for a large number of uncodified and unenumerated privileges to continue. Assess the reasons for the absence of legal codification of the 'parliamentary privileges'. How can this problem be addressed?

(200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

1. **Reasons for absence of legal codification of parliamentary privileges:**

Parliamentarians are the ones who make the laws and they are unlikely to limit their own powers.

Parliamentary privileges are based on the conventions and practices of the British Parliament, which were inherited by India.

2. **Ways to address the problem of absence of legal codification of parliamentary privileges:**

Introducing a comprehensive legislation that defines and codifies the privileges of the Parliament and its members, while ensuring that the autonomy of the Parliament is not undermined.

The judiciary can play a role in interpreting and limiting parliamentary privileges.

Answer:

The absence of legal codification of parliamentary privileges in Article 105 of the Indian Constitution is due to:

1. **Historical reasons:** Privileges were inherited from the British Parliament and not codified in law.
2. **Separation of powers:** Codification by the judiciary might interfere with the doctrine of separation of powers.
3. **Dynamic nature:** Privileges need to be adaptable to changing societal needs, which codification might restrict.

4. **Complexity:** Privileges cover a range of issues, making codification challenging.

5. **Need for flexibility:** Codification could limit Parliament's ability to address emerging issues.

To address this, a committee could be formed to study privileges, consult stakeholders, review past cases, draft a bill, seek parliamentary approval and periodically review and amend the codification. This would bring clarity and consistency to the exercise of parliamentary privileges.

Q4. What do you understand by the concept "freedom of speech and expression"? Does it cover hate speech also? Why do the films in India stand on a slightly different plane from other forms of expression? Discuss.

(200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

1. The concept of freedom of speech and expression is enshrined in Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution and is considered a fundamental right.
2. It includes the right to express one's thoughts, ideas, opinions, beliefs and convictions through any medium, including print, electronic and digital media.
3. The freedom of speech and expression is subject to reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2) of the Constitution, which includes the sovereignty and integrity of India, public order, morality and the interests of the state.

Answer:

The Constitution of India guarantees freedom of speech and expression as fundamental rights to all citizens under Article 19(1)(a), but it does not include the right to spread hate speech. Films in India are a unique form of expression with a significant impact on society, warranting the need for content regulation. Freedom of Speech and Expression:

1. **Scope:** The concept includes verbal, written, visual and symbolic forms of expression.
2. **Protection of Hate Speech:** While freedom of speech is protected, it is not absolute. Hate speech, which incites violence, hatred, or discrimination based on race, religion, etc., is not covered under the protection and can be subject to legal action.
3. **Films in India:** They are considered powerful tools of communication, reflecting diverse cultures, traditions and ideas.
4. **Censorship:** Films are subjected to pre-censorship by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) to maintain public order, decency and morality.

In conclusion, freedom of speech and expression in India is a constitutionally protected right with certain limitations. While it covers most forms of expression, hate speech is not protected. Films stand on a different plane due to their pervasive influence, leading to pre-censorship and a delicate balance between creative freedom and societal interests.

Q5. Instances of President's delay in commuting death sentences has come under public debate as denial of justice. Should there be a time limit specified for the President to accept/reject such petitions? Analyse.

(200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

1. The President of India has the power to grant pardon, reprieve, respite or remission of punishment in certain cases, including death penalty cases.
2. Such delays cause undue mental agony and uncertainty and violate the right to speedy justice.
3. Opponents argue that the President needs enough time to consider all aspects of the case before taking a decision and that imposing a time limit could compromise the quality of decision making.

Answer:

Instances of President's delay in commuting death sentences have sparked a public debate on the denial of justice. The need for a time limit to accept/reject such petitions is a crucial matter.

1. **Ensuring timely justice:** A specific time limit for presidential decision-making on death sentence commutations would prevent undue delays and ensure justice is delivered promptly.
2. **Constitutional prerogative:** While the President's power to grant pardons and commutations is a constitutional prerogative, its exercise should be subject to reasonable limitations to prevent misuse or undue procrastination.
3. **Upholding rule of law:** A defined time frame would uphold the principle of the rule of law, demonstrating that no one is above the law.
4. **Human rights concerns:** Lengthy delays in deciding on commutations can lead to prolonged mental anguish for convicts and their families, possibly violating their human rights.
5. **Judicial finality:** Introducing a time limit could strike a balance between the President's discretion and the need for judicial finality, as prolonged uncertainty can adversely affect all parties involved.

In conclusion, establishing a time limit for the President to accept/reject petitions for commuting death sentences is essential to ensure timely justice, uphold constitutional principles, protect human rights and maintain public confidence in the legal system.

Q6. The size of the cabinet should be as big as governmental work justifies and as big as the Prime Minister can manage as a team. How far is the efficacy of a government then inversely related to the size of the cabinet? Discuss.

(200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

1. A large cabinet can ensure better representation of different regions, communities and interests in the government, which can promote inclusiveness and diversity.
2. Moreover, a large cabinet can make it difficult for the Prime Minister to maintain control and discipline over his/her team, as it can create factions or power centres within the government.

Answer:

A large cabinet can ensure better representation of different regions, communities and interests in the government, which can promote inclusiveness and diversity.

1. The size of the cabinet in India has been a subject of debate. A smaller cabinet can lead to efficient decision-making and faster implementation. It can also help avoid unnecessary expenditure on salaries and allowances of ministers.
2. However, a larger cabinet ensures representation of diverse groups, regions and communities.
3. It can also manage the workload of the government by delegating responsibilities to more ministers. In coalition governments, a larger cabinet helps manage relationships with allies and ensures stability.
4. Moreover, it can manage the political ambitions of party members and prevent internal dissent. Ultimately, the efficacy of the government depends on the Prime Minister's ability to manage the team effectively.
5. The size of the cabinet should be determined based on the needs of the government and its ability to work towards good governance.

The relationship between cabinet size and government efficacy is not solely based on a linear correlation. Instead, it's important to strike a balance that considers both the benefits of representation, expertise and diverse input that a larger cabinet can provide, as well as the challenges of coordination, decision-making delays and potential inefficiencies that can arise with a larger team.

Q7. Though 100 percent FDI is already allowed in non-news media like a trade publication and general entertainment channel, the Government is mulling over the proposal for increased FDI in news media for quite some time. What difference would an increase in FDI make? Critically evaluate the pros and cons.

(200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

Pros of Increased FDI in News Media:

Boosts Investment: Increased FDI in news media could bring in more investment, which could lead to modernization and better infrastructure in the sector.

Cons of Increased FDI in News Media:

Loss of Editorial Independence: Increased FDI in news media could lead to a loss of editorial independence, with news organizations becoming more focused on profit-making rather than unbiased reporting.

Answer:

Increasing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in news media is a complex decision that involves weighing the potential benefits against the challenges and risks associated with such a move.

Pros of increasing FDI in news media:

1. More investment in the sector, leading to better infrastructure and technology.
2. Increased competition, providing consumers with access to diverse news sources and perspectives.
3. Access to global expertise, improving professionalism in journalism and media management.
4. Creation of employment opportunities, contributing to economic growth.

Cons of increasing FDI in news media:

1. Threat to media freedom, as foreign companies may control content and editorial policies.
2. Risk to national security, as foreign interests may not align with those of the Indian government.
3. Lack of diversity, with a few big players dominating the media industry.
4. Unequal competition, foreign companies having advantages over Indian counterparts.

The government should carefully assess these pros and cons before deciding on any increase in FDI in the news media sector.

Q8. The setting up of a Rail Tariff Authority to regulate fares will subject the cash strapped Indian Railways to demand subsidy for obligation to operate non-profitable routes and services. Taking into account the experience in the power sector, discuss if the proposed reform is expected to benefit the consumers, the Indian Railways or the private container operators.

(200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

1. The setting up of a Rail Tariff Authority would lead to an increase in the cost of rail travel as it would enable the Railways to charge market prices for their services.
2. However, it could also lead to more efficient use of resources as the Railways would be forced to operate profitable routes and services.

Answer:

The setting up of a Rail Tariff Authority (RTA) to regulate fares in the Indian Railways is a significant reform that

aims to bring transparency and efficiency to the fare-setting process.

Benefits for Consumers:

1. Transparent pricing, enabling informed choices.
2. Better services and facilities from private operators.
3. Increased competition leading to improved service delivery.

Benefits for Indian Railways:

1. Improved financial position through fair fares.
2. Efficient resource allocation with private operators handling non-profitable routes.
3. Better collaboration and resource utilization.

Benefits for Private Container Operators:

1. Revenue generation and business opportunities.
2. Infrastructure development in the railways sector.
3. Scope for innovation and improved service delivery.

Potential Drawbacks:

1. Demand for subsidy for non-profitable routes, creating a financial burden.
2. Conflict of interest in balancing stakeholders' interests.
3. Regulatory challenges due to the absence of a well-defined framework.

The proposed Rail Tariff Authority can bring numerous benefits, including transparency, better services, improved finances for the railways, revenue generation and infrastructure development. However, potential drawbacks like demands for subsidies and regulatory challenges need careful consideration. A well-defined regulatory framework is crucial to ensure the proposed reform benefits all stakeholders in the long run.

Q9. National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in India can be most effective when its tasks are adequately supported by other mechanisms that ensure the accountability of a government. In light of the above observation assess the role of NHRC as an effective complement to the judiciary and the judiciary and other institutions. In promoting and protecting human rights standards.

(200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

1. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was established in 1993 to investigate human rights violations and recommend measures to prevent them.
2. NHRC has the power to inquire and intervene in cases of human rights violations, provide relief to victims and make recommendations to the government.

3. The NHRC can also complement other institutions by coordinating with them to address human rights concerns, such as the police, the National Commission for Women and the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Answer:

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was established in 1993 to investigate human rights violations and recommend measures to prevent them. NHRC has the power to inquire and intervene in cases of human rights violations, provide relief to victims and make recommendations to the government.

1. The NHRC plays a crucial role in protecting human rights and ensuring that the government and its institutions are held accountable for any violations of these rights.
2. However, the effectiveness of the NHRC can be limited without adequate support from other mechanisms that ensure government accountability, such as the judiciary and other institutions.
3. The judiciary plays a complementary role to the NHRC in promoting and protecting human rights standards in India by interpreting and enforcing the law and upholding individual rights and freedoms.
4. The NHRC has the power to investigate and monitor human rights violations, but its recommendations are not legally binding. Therefore, the judiciary can play a crucial role in ensuring that the NHRC's recommendations are enforced and that the government is held accountable for any violations of human rights.
5. Additionally, there needs to be greater collaboration and coordination between the NHRC, the judiciary and other institutions to ensure that human rights are protected and promoted effectively.

In conclusion, the NHRC in India serves as an effective complement to the judiciary and other institutions in promoting and protecting human rights standards. Its independence, advocacy role, and ability to bridge the gap between individuals and the justice system make it a valuable institution. However, addressing its challenges and ensuring that its recommendations have more legal weight would further enhance its effectiveness in safeguarding human rights.

Q10. The penetration of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in rural areas in promoting participation in development programmes is facing sociocultural hurdles. Examine.

(200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

1. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have become a popular instrument of microfinance and rural development in India, especially in the context of poverty alleviation and women's empowerment.

2. For instance, in some communities, women may face resistance from male members or elders in joining SHGs or attending meetings outside their homes.
3. Moreover, SHGs may reinforce existing inequalities or exclusions, if they do not address the root causes of poverty or social injustice.

Answer:

Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have become a popular instrument of microfinance and rural development in India, especially in the context of poverty alleviation and women's empowerment. The following points help to examine the extend of SHG:

1. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have been established as an effective tool in promoting participation of rural women in development programmes.
2. These groups have helped women to access credit, start small businesses and improve their social status.
3. However, the penetration of SHGs in rural areas is facing sociocultural hurdles.
4. One of the main hurdles is the deep-rooted patriarchal culture prevalent in rural areas.
5. Women are often not allowed to attend meetings, make decisions or participate in income-generating activities without the permission of male family members.
6. Illiteracy and lack of information prevent women from understanding the benefits of participating in SHGs and other development programmes.
7. Additionally, social stigma attached to certain occupations and activities further restricts the participation of women in SHGs.
8. This includes creating awareness and providing education to rural women, especially regarding their rights and opportunities available to them.
9. Lastly, the SHGs should be linked with government schemes and programmes for the holistic development of rural areas.

While SHGs have immense potential to promote rural participation in development programs, overcoming sociocultural hurdles is essential for their successful implementation. Sensitivity to local norms, gender dynamics and community engagement are key to ensuring that SHGs become effective tools for empowerment and change in rural areas.

Q11. Do government's schemes for up-lifting vulnerable and backward communities by protecting required social resources for them, lead to their exclusion in establishing businesses in urban economies?

(200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

1. Government schemes for up-lifting vulnerable and backward communities often provide them with social resources like land, water and forests for their livelihoods.

2. These resources are essential for their survival and are protected by the government, which may limit their use for other purposes, including establishing businesses in urban economies.
3. In some cases, this protection can lead to exclusion as it restricts access to these resources for non-members of the community.

Answer:

The Indian government has initiated various schemes to uplift vulnerable and backward communities by providing them with necessary social resources. However, there is a concern that these schemes may lead to exclusion in establishing businesses in urban economies. Let's examine the issue in detail.

Points in favour of the argument:

1. Reservation policies for education and employment may lead to complacency among the beneficiaries, resulting in lower competitiveness in urban economies.
2. Lack of adequate training and exposure to market mechanisms makes it difficult for beneficiaries to navigate the complexities of business operations in urban areas.
3. The lack of adequate financial support and access to credit facilities may lead to difficulties in establishing businesses.

Points against the argument:

1. Government schemes aim to empower vulnerable and backward communities by providing them with social and financial support, which can aid in establishing successful businesses in urban economies.
2. The schemes also provide access to education and training, which can enhance the skills and competitiveness of the beneficiaries.
3. The reservation policies help to ensure that opportunities are not monopolized by a few and that the benefits of economic growth are distributed equitably among different sections of society.

In conclusion, while government schemes for uplifting vulnerable and backward communities are essential for ensuring inclusive growth, they need to be implemented with caution. The schemes should be designed to encourage entrepreneurship and competitiveness while also providing adequate support to enable beneficiaries to succeed in urban economies. At the same time, the government should work towards improving infrastructure and social support systems in urban areas to reduce exclusion and ensure that all sections of society have equal opportunities to participate in the mainstream economy.

Q12. An athlete participates in Olympics for personal triumph and nation's glory; victors are showered with cash incentives by various agencies, on their return. Discuss the merit of state sponsored talent hunt and

its cultivation as against the rationale of a reward mechanism as encouragement.

(200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:**Merits of state-sponsored talent hunt and its cultivation:**

1. Identifying and nurturing talent at an early age can lead to long-term success and sustained excellence.
2. It can provide opportunities to talented individuals from underprivileged backgrounds who may not have access to quality training and facilities.

Rationale of a reward mechanism as encouragement:

1. Cash incentives can serve as a motivation for athletes to perform their best and bring glory to the nation.
2. Rewards can also provide financial security to athletes who may not have regular sources of income and may need support to continue their sporting pursuits.

Answer:

An athlete's participation in the Olympics is driven by personal triumph and the desire to bring glory to their nation. Upon their victorious return, they are often showered with cash incentives from various agencies. This raises two key approaches to nurturing sports talent:

1. State-Sponsored Talent Hunt:

Merit: State-sponsored talent hunt programs identify and nurture promising athletes from a young age, ensuring a strong pool of talent for future competitions.

Long-term Investment: These initiatives focus on systematic training and infrastructure development, fostering sustainable growth in sports.

Equal Opportunities: Talent hunts aim to discover hidden gems from diverse backgrounds, promoting inclusivity and national unity.

Holistic Development: Athletes receive expert coaching and scientific support to reach their full potential.

2. Reward Mechanism as Encouragement:

Motivation: Offering cash incentives to victorious athletes serves as a powerful motivational tool to push boundaries and achieve success.

Immediate Recognition: Such rewards provide instant recognition for athletes' hard work, inspiring others to excel in their respective sports.

Private Sector Involvement: Cash incentives from various agencies attract private sponsors to invest in sports, augmenting financial support.

Strengthening National Pride: Victorious athletes become symbols of national pride, encouraging patriotism and boosting the country's image.

In conclusion, while state-sponsored talent hunts focus on long-term development and inclusivity, reward mechanisms act as short-term encouragements and boost

national pride. Both approaches are essential in shaping a thriving sports culture, combining systematic nurturing with immediate recognition for athletes' dedication and achievements.

Q13. Should the premier institutes like IITs/ IIMs be allowed to retain premier status, allowed more academic independence in designing course and also decide mode/ criteria of selection of students. Discuss in light of the growing challenges. (200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

1. The IITs and IIMs are considered premier institutes of higher education in India and there have been debates about granting them greater autonomy and academic independence.
2. Proponents argue that granting these institutions greater autonomy would allow them to design courses that are more relevant to current needs and developments.

Answer:

The premier institutes of India, such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), have played a pivotal role in shaping the nation's education landscape and producing highly skilled professionals. As these institutions face growing challenges, the question of whether they should be allowed to retain their premier status and enjoy more academic independence in course design and student selection arises.

Points in favor of allowing premier status, academic independence and mode/criteria of selection:

1. **Sustaining Excellence:** The IITs and IIMs have consistently been ranked among the top institutions globally. Allowing them to retain their premier status would ensure that their reputation and legacy continue to attract the best faculty and students, fostering an environment of excellence.
2. **Academic Independence:** Granting these institutions more academic independence would enable them to adapt their curriculum to changing industry demands and technological advancements swiftly. This flexibility is crucial for nurturing innovation and staying relevant in a dynamic world.
3. **Customized Curriculum:** With increased autonomy in course design, these institutes can tailor their offerings to suit specific disciplines and industries. This adaptability will enhance the employability of graduates and their ability to address emerging challenges effectively.

The debate surrounding the retention of premier status and academic autonomy for institutes like IITs and IIMs is complex. While granting them greater independence in designing courses and selecting students can foster excellence, it must be accompanied by adequate measures to address concerns of accessibility, fairness

and accountability. Striking the right balance will ensure that these premier institutes continue to thrive as beacons of knowledge, research and development, contributing significantly to India's growth and progress.

Q14. Has the Cadre based Civil Services organization been the cause of slow change in India? Critically examine. (200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

1. The Cadre-based Civil Services organization in India has been criticized for being a major factor in the slow pace of change in the country.
2. This has led to a system where officers are often more loyal to their respective state cadres than to the central government, resulting in bureaucratic inertia and slow decision-making.

Answer:

The cadre-based civil services system in India has both advantages and disadvantages and its impact on the pace of change in the country is a subject of debate.

Pros of the Cadre-based Civil Services organization:

1. **Stability and Continuity:** Provides a stable administrative system with experienced civil servants leading the government through challenges.
2. **Knowledge and Expertise:** Offers a pool of knowledge and expertise in various domains crucial for effective governance and policy-making.
3. **Impartiality:** Civil servants are known for their impartiality and objectivity, ensuring efficient performance of their duties.
4. **Accountability:** Civil servants are accountable to the citizens, ensuring transparency in government functioning.

Cons of the Cadre-based Civil Services organization:

1. **Bureaucratic Hurdles:** Hierarchical structure and rigid rules can lead to bureaucratic delays in decision-making.
2. **Lack of Innovation:** Stagnation of ideas and lack of flexibility hinder innovation in the system.
3. **Resistance to Change:** Reluctance to adopt new approaches and technologies impedes progress.
4. **Political Interference:** Vulnerability to political influence may compromise impartiality and transparency.

The Cadre-based Civil Services organization has strengths such as stability, expertise and accountability, but it also suffers from bureaucratic hurdles, lack of innovation, resistance to change and political interference. Striking a balance between these aspects through reforms is essential for a more efficient and responsive civil services system. Emphasizing innovation, flexibility and accountability while retaining stability and continuity can help ensure effective governance in India.

Q15. Two parallel-run schemes of the Government, viz the Aadhaar Card and NPR, one as voluntary and the other as compulsory, have led to debates at national levels and also litigations. On merits, discuss whether or not both schemes need to run concurrently. Analyse the potential of the schemes to achieve developmental benefits and equitable growth. (200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

1. The Aadhaar card scheme was introduced in 2009 to provide a unique identification number to all residents of India, while the National Population Register (NPR) scheme was introduced in 2010 to create a comprehensive identity database of all usual residents of India.
2. Aadhaar is a voluntary scheme, while NPR is compulsory and mandatory.

Answer:

The Aadhaar card and the National Population Register (NPR) are two government schemes that have sparked debates in India. While Aadhaar is voluntary, NPR is compulsory. This essay examines whether both schemes should run concurrently, considering their potential benefits and drawbacks.

Merits of running both schemes concurrently:

1. **Enhanced data accuracy:** Both schemes collect different biometric and demographic data, leading to improved accuracy when run together.
2. **Reduced duplication:** Concurrent implementation minimizes redundant efforts, leading to cost savings and efficient resource allocation.
3. **Comprehensive database:** Utilizing both databases creates a more comprehensive dataset for targeted development programs and policies.
4. **Improved security:** Multiple layers of authentication enhance data security, benefiting citizens.

Demerits of running both schemes concurrently:

1. **Financial burden:** Running both schemes together may strain government resources, impacting overall budget allocation.
2. **Conflicting objectives:** Aadhaar and NPR have distinct objectives, which can create confusion and conflicts in implementation.
3. **Privacy concerns:** Concurrent implementation raises privacy concerns, with data stored in multiple databases, increasing the risk of misuse.
4. **Duplication of data:** Running both schemes may lead to data duplication, causing confusion and errors in the database.

In conclusion, the decision to run both Aadhaar and NPR schemes concurrently requires careful consideration of the

advantages and disadvantages. While a comprehensive and accurate database is a potential benefit, financial burdens and privacy concerns should not be overlooked. The government must assess the overall impact on citizens and ensure the protection of data privacy rights while striving for efficient and targeted governance.

Q16. With respect to the South China sea, maritime territorial disputes and rising tension affirm the need for safeguarding maritime security to ensure freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region. In this context, discuss the bilateral issues between India and China. (200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

1. India and China have long-standing territorial disputes in the Himalayas, particularly in the Aksai Chin region.
2. The two countries have also had maritime disputes in the South China Sea, with China claiming sovereignty over most of the sea, including areas that are also claimed by other countries, including India.
3. China has been increasing its presence and influence in the Indian Ocean, with the construction of ports and infrastructure projects in countries like Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Answer:

The South China Sea region is witnessing rising tensions due to maritime territorial disputes, necessitating the protection of maritime security to uphold freedom of navigation and overflight. Within this context, the bilateral issues between India and China are noteworthy:

1. **Border Disputes:** India and China share a long-standing border dispute along the Himalayas, particularly in the eastern and western sectors. The 1962 War further complicated the matter and resolution remains a challenge.
2. **Line of Actual Control (LAC):** The disputed LAC serves as the de facto border between the two nations. However, differing perceptions of its alignment have led to frequent military standoffs, like the Doklam Crisis in 2017.
3. **Regional Influence:** Both countries seek to enhance their influence in the Indian Ocean region, which has resulted in strategic competition and geopolitical tensions.
4. **China's Maritime Expansion:** China's assertiveness in the South China Sea has raised concerns for India's maritime security, considering its proximity to crucial sea lanes of communication.
5. **Economic Rivalry:** Trade imbalances and market access issues contribute to economic frictions between the two major Asian economies.
6. **Geopolitical Alliances:** India's partnerships with other countries in the Indo-Pacific, like the Quad

alliance, have irked China, amplifying geopolitical tensions.

7. **Pakistan Factor:** China's deepening ties with Pakistan, particularly through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, add complexity to the India-China relationship.
8. **Cybersecurity Concerns:** Both countries have accused each other of cyber espionage, aggravating trust deficit and bilateral relations.

Addressing these bilateral issues requires diplomatic maturity and mutual understanding to establish durable mechanisms for conflict resolution and promote cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

Q17. The aim of Information Technology Agreements (ITAs) is to lower all taxes and tariffs on information technology products by signatories to zero. What impact would such agreements have on India's interests?
(200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

Pros:

1. Lower prices for imported IT products.
2. Improved access to the latest technologies.

Cons:

1. Loss of revenue for the government due to zero tariffs.
2. Negative impact on the domestic IT manufacturing industry due to increased competition.

Answer:

Information Technology Agreements (ITAs) aim to reduce or eliminate tariffs on IT products, significantly impacting India's IT sector. Evaluating the pros and cons of these agreements can shed light on their impact on India's interests.

Pros:

1. **Access to new technology:** Lower tariffs enable Indian businesses to access new technology at competitive prices, boosting their competitiveness in the global market.
2. **Increased exports:** Reduced tariffs facilitate easier export of Indian IT products to other countries, potentially boosting India's economy and trade balance.
3. **Job creation:** A thriving IT sector due to increased exports can lead to job creation, addressing employment challenges in the country.
4. **Bridging the digital divide:** Lower tariffs may contribute to better connectivity and accessibility to IT products, bridging the digital divide and promoting digital inclusion.

Cons:

1. **Revenue loss:** Eliminating tariffs can lead to revenue loss, affecting the government's ability to fund essential social welfare programs.

2. **Impact on domestic industry:** Increased competition from foreign companies may negatively impact Indian IT businesses, potentially leading to job losses and reduced competitiveness.
3. **Dependence on foreign technology:** Relying heavily on foreign technology may pose security and sovereignty concerns for the country.
4. **Non-tariff barriers:** Despite tariff elimination, non-tariff barriers like licensing requirements could hinder access to new technology.

In conclusion, Information Technology Agreements (ITAs) can bring both benefits and challenges to India's IT sector. While fostering access to new technology and enhancing export opportunities, potential revenue loss and impact on domestic industry need to be carefully considered. India should assess the long-term implications of such agreements on its interests and carefully negotiate the terms to ensure a balanced outcome.

Q18. Some of the International funding agencies have special terms for economic participation stipulating a substantial component of the aid to be used for sourcing equipment from the leading countries. Discuss on merits of such terms and if there exists a strong case not to accept such conditions in the India context.
(200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

1. Special terms for economic participation, which stipulate that a substantial component of the aid must be used for sourcing equipment from leading countries, can provide benefits such as access to advanced technology and infrastructure development.
2. Such terms can also lead to a dependence on foreign countries for equipment and technology, which may be expensive and unsustainable in the long term.

Answer:

The practice of international funding agencies stipulating conditions related to economic participation, including sourcing equipment from leading countries, has both merits and potential drawbacks.

Merits of Special Terms for Economic Participation:

1. **Technology Transfer:** Access to modern technology from developed countries can enhance India's economic growth and development.
2. **Quality of Equipment:** The use of high-quality equipment from developed countries can improve project efficiency and economic benefits.
3. **Collaboration:** Special terms encourage collaboration between developed and developing countries, leading to mutual benefits and knowledge transfer.

Demerits of Special Terms for Economic Participation:

1. **Dependence:** India may become dependent on developed countries for equipment, hindering long-term growth and autonomy.
2. **Discrimination:** Local manufacturers and suppliers may suffer due to discrimination, leading to job losses and reduced revenue for the domestic economy.
3. **Limited Scope:** Special terms may limit the project scope to a few leading countries, ignoring other potential suppliers with comparable equipment.
4. **High Cost:** Equipment from leading countries may be costlier, increasing project expenses and reducing aid benefits.

In the Indian Context:

1. **Technology Transfer:** India can benefit from technology transfer, leading to higher economic growth.
2. **Local Manufacturing:** Special terms may negatively impact domestic manufacturers and suppliers, hindering India's industrial growth.
3. **Strategic Autonomy:** Accepting such terms may hinder India's strategic autonomy and long-term development.
4. **Domestic Capabilities:** India's strong manufacturing sector may be affected by accepting the terms.

India should carefully evaluate the potential benefits and drawbacks of special terms for economic participation. While technology transfer and collaboration are advantageous, dependence, discrimination and higher costs may pose challenges. India must consider its long-term growth and strategic autonomy before accepting such terms to ensure balanced economic development.

Q19. India has recently signed to become founding member of New Development Bank (NDB) and also the Asian Infrastructure Bank (AIIB). How will the role of the two Banks be different? Discuss the strategic significance of these two Banks for India.

(200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:**New Development Bank:**

1. It was established in 2014 by the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) with the aim of financing infrastructure and sustainable development projects.
2. The bank has an initial authorized capital of \$100 billion, with an initial subscribed capital of \$50 billion to be equally shared by the founding members.

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank:

1. It was established in 2016 with the aim of financing infrastructure projects in Asia and promoting regional connectivity and economic integration.

2. The bank has an authorized capital of \$100 billion, with an initial subscribed capital of \$50 billion to be equally shared by its founding members.

Strategic significance for India:

1. Both banks provide India with an alternative source of funding for infrastructure development, reducing the country's dependence on traditional development banks such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank.

Answer:

The New Development Bank (NDB) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) are both multilateral financial institutions focused on infrastructure development and sustainable growth, but they have different origins, memberships and operational structures.

Role and Functions of NDB:

1. Established in 2014 by BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) with headquarters in Shanghai, China.
2. Aims to support sustainable development projects and infrastructure in emerging market economies.
3. Focuses on infrastructure projects in transportation, energy and water supply sectors.
4. Provides loans, guarantees, equity investments and technical assistance.
5. Has a committed capital of \$100 billion.

Role and Functions of AIIB:

1. Established in 2015 by China with headquarters in Beijing, China.
2. Aims to support infrastructure development and connectivity in the Asia-Pacific region.
3. Focuses on projects in transportation, energy and telecommunications sectors.
4. Provides loans, guarantees, equity investments and technical assistance.
5. Has a committed capital of \$100 billion.

Strategic Significance of NDB and AIIB for India:

1. India's founding membership and significant funds contribution give it a greater say in decision-making and influence over the banks' focus and priorities.
2. Both banks provide an alternative funding source for India's huge infrastructure deficit, reducing reliance on traditional sources like the World Bank and Asian Development Bank.
3. Participation helps India deepen engagement with regional countries, including China and build better diplomatic relations.
4. Access to the latest technology and best practices in infrastructure development and financing from these banks.

5. NDB and AIIB's focus on sustainable development align with India's goals of promoting sustainable and inclusive growth.

NDB and AIIB play a crucial role in India's infrastructure development and financing. Their sustainable focus and alternative funding sources make them vital for India's infrastructure plans. Moreover, India's strategic significance in these banks extends to diplomatic relations and regional cooperation. However, India must ensure active representation of its interests in the decision-making process of these multilateral development banks.

Q20. WTO is an important international institution where decisions taken affect countries in a profound manner. What is the mandate of WTO and how binding are their decisions? Critically analyse India's stand on the latest round of talks on Food security. (200 words) [12½]

Approach to question:

Mandate of WTO:

1. WTO was established in 1995 as a multilateral trading system with the mandate to promote free and fair trade among member nations.
2. WTO agreements cover a wide range of issues such as tariffs, subsidies, intellectual property rights and services trade.

India's stand on the latest round of talks on Food security:

1. India has been advocating for a permanent solution to the issue of public stockholding of food grains for distribution to the poor at the WTO.

Critical analysis:

1. India's stand on the issue of public stockholding of food grains is justified as it is a critical aspect of food security for millions of people in India.

Answer:

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is an international organization that aims to facilitate global trade by establishing rules and principles for trade relations among its member countries.

Mandate of WTO:

1. WTO is an international organization that supervises and regulates global trade.
2. It aims to promote free trade and reduce barriers in the form of tariffs and non-tariff measures.
3. WTO also provides a platform for member countries to negotiate and settle disputes related to trade issues.

Binding nature of WTO decisions:

1. WTO decisions are binding and enforceable on member countries.
2. Dispute settlement mechanisms ensure that countries adhere to the rules and regulations of WTO.

India's stand on the latest round of talks on food security:

1. India has been pushing for an agreement that allows it to provide subsidies for food security without being challenged under WTO rules.
2. India, along with other developing countries, has been arguing that the existing rules on subsidies are not flexible enough to accommodate the needs of developing countries.
3. India has proposed a permanent solution to the issue of public stockholding for food security purposes at the WTO.
4. India has also been advocating for special and differential treatment for developing countries to ensure that they are not unfairly disadvantaged in global trade.

Strategic significance of WTO for India:

1. WTO provides a forum for India to negotiate and settle trade disputes with other countries.
2. It also provides a platform for India to promote its interests in global trade and seek fair treatment.

In conclusion, WTO is a crucial international institution for regulating global trade. Its decisions are binding on member countries and it provides a platform for negotiating and settling trade disputes. India's stand on the latest round of talks on food security is aimed at securing flexibility for developing countries in the existing WTO rules on subsidies.