General Studies Paper-II

Q1. "**There is a need for simplification of procedure for disqualification of persons found guilty of corrupt practices under the Representation of Peoples Act**". Comment.

(150 words) [10]

Approach to question:

1. **Efficient and Timely Disqualification:** The current procedure for disqualification is often lengthy and complex, leading to delays in taking action against those involved in corrupt practices.

2. **Deterrence and Accountability:** Streamlining the procedure would enhance the deterrence factor by sending a strong message that corruption will not be tolerated.

3. **Public Confidence and Trust:** A simplified procedure would help restore public confidence and trust in the political system.

4. **Clear and Objective Criteria:** Simplification would involve establishing clear and objective criteria for disqualification, ensuring that the process is transparent and consistent.

Answer:

The complexity and time-consuming nature of the current procedure for disqualification of individuals involved in corrupt practices under the Representation of Peoples Act have raised concerns. Here are the key points highlighting the need for simplification:

1. **Expediency and Efficiency**: Simplification would expedite the disqualification process, allowing swift action against those guilty of corrupt practices.

2. **Ease of Implementation:** A simplified procedure would make it easier for authorities to implement disqualification measures at different levels of governance.

3. **Deterrence Effect:** A streamlined process would serve as a strong deterrent against corrupt practices, sending a clear message that corruption will not be tolerated.

4. **Judicial Efficiency:** Simplification would reduce the burden on the judiciary, leading to quicker resolution of cases related to corrupt practices.

5. **Public Confidence:** Simplification would restore public confidence in democratic institutions by showcasing a commitment to addressing corruption effectively.

The need for simplifying the procedure for disqualification of individuals found guilty of corrupt practices is evident. Simplification would lead to expedience, transparency and accountability in the political system, while also boosting public confidence and judicial efficiency.

Q2. "**Recent amendments to the Right to Information Act will have profound impact on the autonomy and independence of the Information Commission**". Discuss.

(150 words) [10]

Approach to question:

1. **Weakening of Information Commission:** The amendments introduce changes that potentially weaken the autonomy of the Information Commission, compromising its ability to function independently and effectively.

2. **Appointment Process:** The amendments modify the appointment process of Information Commissioners, granting more control to the government.

3. **Term and Conditions:** Changes in the tenure and conditions of service of Information Commissioners could impact their independence.

4. **Appeals and Penalties:** The amendments introduce provisions that impose penalties on Information Commissioners for decisions deemed to be incorrect or non-compliant.

Answer:

Recent amendments to India's Right to Information (RTI) Act have sparked concerns over their potential impact on the autonomy and independence of the Information Commission. These changes, affecting the appointment process, tenure, conditions of service and accountability mechanisms, are crucial to consider as they may undermine the Commission's ability to function impartially.

Points:

1. **Weakening of Information Commission:** The amendments introduce changes that may weaken the autonomy and independence of the Information Commission, undermining its effectiveness.

2. **Term and Conditions of Service:** Changes in the tenure and conditions of service may compromise the independence of Information Commissioners.

3. **Penalties and Appeals:** Provisions for penalties on Information Commissioners for perceived

incorrect decisions may lead to self-censorship and fear of retribution.

4. **Restricted Disclosure of Information:** The amendments restrict the disclosure of certain information, diminishing transparency and public access to crucial data.

The recent amendments to the Right to Information Act in India are a matter of concern due to their potential impact on the autonomy and independence of the Information Commission.

Q3. **How far do you think cooperation, competition and confrontation have shaped the nature of federation in India? Cite some recent examples to validate your answer.**

(150 words) [10]

Approach to question:
1. **Cooperation:** Cooperative federalism is evident in various areas where the central and state governments work together for mutual benefit.
2. **Competition:** Competitive federalism is seen in the states' pursuit of development and attracting investment. States compete to improve their business environment, infrastructure and governance to attract industries and boost economic growth.
3. **Confrontation:** Confrontations between the central and state governments occur when there are disagreements or clashes of interests.

Answer:

The nature of the federation in India has been shaped by three key dynamics: cooperation, competition and confrontation. These elements play significant roles in influencing the relationship between the central and state governments. Here are the key points to consider:

Points:
1. **Cooperation:** Cooperative federalism is evident in various policy areas where the central and state governments work together for mutual benefit and overall development. Examples include the implementation of GST and the National Rural Health Mission.
2. **Competition:** Competitive federalism is observed as states strive to attract investments and promote economic growth. They compete by offering incentives, improving business climates and implementing investor-friendly policies.

Recent Examples:
1. **Cooperation:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, the central and state governments collaborated to manage the crisis and implement measures to control the spread of the virus.
2. **Competition:** States like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka competed to attract investments and industries, establishing industrial corridors and creating investor-friendly policies.

The dynamics of cooperation, competition and confrontation play crucial roles in shaping India's federal structure. Balancing these elements is essential for maintaining a strong and functional federation.

Q4. **The judicial systems in India and UK seem to be converging as well as diverging in recent times. Highlight the key points of convergence and divergence between the two nations in terms of their judicial practices.** **(150 words) [10]**

Approach to question:
Convergence:
1. **Judicial Activism:** Both India and the UK have witnessed an increase in judicial activism, with courts playing an active role in shaping public policy and protecting citizens' rights.
2. **Judicial Independence:** Both India and the UK emphasize the importance of judicial independence in ensuring impartiality and upholding the rule of law.

Divergence:
1. **Legal System:** India follows a common law system, while the UK follows a combination of common law and statutory law. This fundamental difference impacts the structure and functioning of their respective judicial systems.
2. **Role of Precedents:** The UK places a strong emphasis on precedents, with decisions of higher courts binding on lower courts.

Answer:

While they share similarities in terms of judicial activism, public interest litigation and judicial independence, they differ in their legal systems, judicial appointment processes, role of precedents, case backlogs, use of technology and the role of public prosecutors.

Convergence:
1. **Judicial Activism:** Both countries have experienced an increase in judicial activism, with courts actively shaping public policy and safeguarding citizens' rights.
2. **Public Interest Litigation (PIL):** Both India and the UK have adopted PIL as a means to address social justice concerns, allowing direct access to courts for public interest matters.

Divergence:
1. **Judicial Appointment Process:** India involves the executive and the judiciary in appointing judges, whereas the UK has an independent Judicial Appointments Commission for transparent and unbiased appointments.
2. **Use of Technology:** The UK has embraced technology for case management and proceedings, whereas India faces challenges in widespread technology adoption due to infrastructure limitations.

In conclusion, While sharing common features like judicial activism, PIL and judicial independence, they differ in their legal systems, appointment processes, precedents, case backlogs, technology adoption and public prosecutors' roles. Understanding these nuances is crucial for appreciating the functioning of each system and fostering cross-system exchange and learning.

Q5. '**Once a Speaker, Always a Speaker' ! Do you think this practice should be adopted to impart objectivity to the office of the Speaker of Lok Sabha? What could be its implications for the robust functioning of parliamentary business in India?**

(150 words) [10]

Approach to question:

1. **Imparting Objectivity:** Adopting the practice of 'Once a Speaker, Always a Speaker' can enhance the objectivity of the Speaker's office.

2. **Ensuring Continuity and Experience:** Allowing former Speakers to retain their status ensures the availability of experienced individuals who can provide guidance to newly elected Speakers and contribute their wealth of knowledge and expertise in parliamentary procedures and practices.

Implications for the Robust Functioning of Parliamentary Business in India:

1. **Maintaining Independence:** The practice can help preserve the independence of the Speaker's office, preventing undue influence from the executive or other political interests.

2. **Ensuring Consistency:** Continuity in the Speaker's position promotes consistency in the interpretation and application of parliamentary rules and procedures.

Answer:

The practice of 'Once a Speaker, Always a Speaker' refers to allowing former Speakers to retain their status and benefits even after their tenure. This practice can have several advantages, such as enhancing objectivity, upholding parliamentary decorum, preserving institutional memory and ensuring continuity and experience.

1. **Imparting Objectivity:** Adopting this practice can enhance the objectivity of the Speaker's office, ensuring impartiality in presiding over parliamentary proceedings.

2. **Upholding Parliamentary Decorum:** It reinforces the Speaker's role as a custodian of the House, promoting fair and unbiased decision-making.

3. **Preserving Institutional Memory:** The practice helps preserve knowledge of parliamentary practices and precedents, ensuring consistency in the conduct of parliamentary business.

Implications for Parliamentary Business in India:

1. **Maintaining Independence:** The practice preserves the independence of the Speaker's office, making it an effective check on the government.

2. **Ensuring Consistency:** Continuity promotes consistent interpretation and application of parliamentary rules.

3. **Upholding Fairness:** Detachment from politics allows impartiality in decision-making during debates.

The practice of 'Once a Speaker, Always a Speaker' can be beneficial for the objectivity, decorum, continuity and impartiality of the Speaker's office. Its implications for robust parliamentary functioning in India include maintaining independence, consistency, fairness, public confidence and preserving neutrality.

Q6. **In order to enhance the prospects of social development, sound and adequate health care policies are needed particularly in the fields of geriatric and maternal health care. Discuss.** **(150 words) [10]**

Approach to question:

1. **Geriatric Health Care:** Developing sound health care policies for the elderly population is crucial to address their specific health needs.

2. **Maternal Health Care:** Adequate health care policies focusing on maternal health are essential to reduce maternal mortality rates and improve maternal well-being.

3. **Preventive Health Care:** Emphasizing preventive health care measures through policies can significantly enhance social development.

4. **Accessible and Affordable Health Care:** Ensuring universal access to affordable health care services is vital for social development.

Answer:

Enhancing social development through health care policies is essential for building healthier, more equitable societies. By focusing on geriatric and maternal health care, promoting preventive measures, ensuring accessibility, investing in infrastructure and research, fostering partnerships and engaging communities, comprehensive health care policies can significantly improve health outcomes and drive overall social progress.

Geriatric Health Care: Policies should cater to the specific health needs of the elderly, providing regular check-ups, specialized clinics and home-based care for improved well-being.

1. **Preventive Health Care:** Emphasizing preventive measures through awareness, screenings and lifestyle interventions can reduce preventable diseases.

2. **Accessible and Affordable Health Care:** Universal access to affordable health care is crucial, especially in underserved areas.

3. **Health Care Infrastructure:** Robust infrastructure, including medical professionals and equipment, is vital for effective health care policies.

4. **Research and Innovation:** Investment in research can lead to evidence-based policies for geriatric and maternal health care.

Comprehensive health care policies addressing geriatric and maternal health, promoting prevention, ensuring access and affordability, investing in infrastructure and research, fostering partnerships, engaging communities and monitoring outcomes are crucial for enhancing social development. By prioritizing these aspects, societies can improve health outcomes, promote equity and drive overall progress in social development.

Q7. **"Institutional quality is a crucial driver of economic performance". In this context**

suggest reforms in Civil Service for strengthening democracy. (150 words) [10]

Approach to question:

1. **Merit-based selection:** Implement a transparent and merit-based selection process for civil servants to ensure that qualified individuals are appointed based on their skills, knowledge and abilities, rather than political considerations.

2. **Performance-based evaluation:** Establish a robust performance evaluation system for civil servants, linking promotions, rewards and career progression to their performance, accountability and adherence to ethical standards.

3. **Citizen-centric approach:** Foster a citizen-centric approach among civil servants, emphasizing their role as public servants and promoting a culture of responsiveness, transparency and accountability in delivering public services.

Answer:

Reforming the civil service is vital for strengthening democracy and enhancing institutional quality. By adopting measures such as merit-based selection, training, performance evaluation, citizen-centricity, transparency, accountability, whistleblower protection, independence, diversity promotion, professional development, technology adoption, code of ethics and citizen participation, the civil service can become more efficient, accountable and responsive to citizens' needs, fostering a robust democratic system.

1. **Merit-based Selection:** Transparent and merit-based selection ensures qualified individuals are appointed based on skills and abilities, enhancing professionalism.

2. **Training and Capacity Building:** Enhance training for civil servants to adapt to changing challenges and improve service delivery.

3. **Performance-based Evaluation:** Establish a robust evaluation system to incentivize high performance and ensure accountability.

4. **Streamlining Bureaucracy:** Simplify processes and promote efficiency to reduce corruption and improve service delivery.

5. **Citizen-centric Approach:** Foster a culture of responsiveness, transparency and accountability to prioritize citizens' needs.

By implementing these reforms, the civil service can play a pivotal role in driving social development, fostering good governance and promoting democratic accountability. Strengthening the civil service through meritocracy, training, accountability, citizen-centricity, transparency and technology will enhance institutional quality and ensure a more efficient and responsive administration.

Q8. **"The emergence of Fourth Industrial Revolution (Digital Revolution) has**

initiated e-Governance as an integral part of government". Discuss. (150 words) [10]

Approach to question:

Points for the emergence of Fourth Industrial Revolution and e-Governance as integral parts of government:

1. **Digital connectivity:** The widespread availability of internet connectivity and mobile devices has expanded access to e-Governance services, bridging the digital divide and reaching remote areas.

2. **Data-driven decision making:** e-Governance enables collection and analysis of data, providing valuable insights for evidence-based policy formulation, resource allocation and monitoring of government programs.

3. **Strengthened accountability:** e-Governance platforms promote transparency and accountability by providing digital trails and records of government transactions, reducing opportunities for corruption and enhancing public trust.

Answer:

The Fourth Industrial Revolution, also known as the Digital Revolution, has profoundly impacted society, including governance. The integration of digital technologies and e-Governance has revolutionized how governments operate, interact with citizens and deliver public services. The following points elaborate on the significance and impact of this development.

1. **Technological Advancements:** The Fourth Industrial Revolution brings advancements like AI, big data analytics, IoT and blockchain, forming the foundation for e-Governance, enabling automation, data analysis and improved service delivery.

2. **Efficient Service Delivery:** e-Governance enhances service delivery by providing accessible government services and information online, streamlining processes and reducing bureaucracy.

3. **Transparent and Accountable Governance:** Digital platforms ensure transparency and accountability by providing a digital trail, reducing corruption, enhancing public trust and optimizing resource utilization.

4. **Citizen Participation and Engagement:** e-Governance fosters citizen engagement by offering portals for feedback, public consultations and policy contribution, strengthening democracy with diverse perspectives.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has ushered in e-Governance, revolutionizing government operations and public service delivery. e-Governance enables efficiency, transparency, citizen engagement and data-driven decision-making. While embracing this revolution, governments must address challenges to ensure inclusive and secure e-Governance for all citizens.

Q9. Critically examine the role of WHO in providing global health security during the Covid-19 pandemic. **(150 words) [10]**

Approach to question:

1. **Global surveillance and monitoring:** The WHO established mechanisms for global surveillance and monitoring of the pandemic, including tracking the spread of the virus, monitoring its impact on public health and sharing data to facilitate evidence-based decision-making.

2. **Guidance on public health measures:** The WHO provided guidance on public health measures such as testing, contact tracing, quarantine and isolation. It also emphasized the importance of preventive measures like hand hygiene, mask-wearing and social distancing.

3. **Research and development:** The WHO facilitated global collaboration in research and development for diagnostics, treatments and vaccines.

Answer:

The World Health Organization (WHO) played a crucial role in providing global health security during the Covid-19 pandemic. Its actions, however, have been subject to both commendations and criticisms.

1. **Early Warning and Global Coordination:** The WHO issued early warnings and provided guidance to member states during the initial stages of the Covid-19 outbreak, facilitating global coordination in response efforts.

2. **Technical Guidance and Expertise:** The WHO offered technical guidance on pandemic response, including risk assessment, testing strategies, infection prevention and clinical management.

3. **Epidemiological Surveillance and Data Sharing:** The WHO established mechanisms for global surveillance and data sharing, aiding in tracking the virus's spread and informing policy decisions.

4. **Promotion of Best Practices:** The WHO disseminated best practices and guidelines for managing the pandemic, covering testing, contact tracing, healthcare systems and community engagement.

The WHO's role in the Covid-19 pandemic was critical, involving early warnings, technical guidance and vaccine advocacy. However, challenges and criticisms underscored the need for continuous improvement and reforms in global health governance systems to address future health crises effectively. Strengthening global health institutions and fostering international cooperation remain essential in ensuring global health security.

Q10. 'Indian diaspora has a decisive role to play in the politics and economy of America and European Countries'. Comment with examples. **(150 words) [10]**

Approach to question:

1. **Political Influence:** The Indian diaspora has demonstrated its political influence in countries like the United States and the United Kingdom. Indian-Americans have been elected to prominent political positions, including the US Congress and state legislatures.

2. **Economic Contributions:** The Indian diaspora has made significant economic contributions to countries like the United States and European nations. Indian entrepreneurs and professionals have excelled in various sectors, including technology, finance, etc.

3. **Cultural Diplomacy:** The Indian diaspora has played a crucial role in promoting Indian culture and fostering cultural exchange. They have organized festivals, cultural events and community initiatives that celebrate Indian traditions and contribute to the multicultural fabric of their host countries.

Answer:

The Indian diaspora has emerged as a significant force in shaping the politics and economy of America and European countries. The following points highlight the decisive role played by the Indian diaspora in various aspects of their host countries.

1. **Political Influence:** Indian-Americans and the Indian diaspora in the UK have been elected to key political positions, impacting policy-making and bringing their perspectives to the forefront.

2. **Economic Contributions:** Indian entrepreneurs and professionals have excelled in various sectors, driving innovation and contributing to the economies of their host countries.

3. **Cultural Influence:** The Indian diaspora has promoted Indian culture through festivals and events, enriching the multicultural fabric of their host countries.

4. **Philanthropy and Social Impact:** The Indian diaspora has made significant contributions to philanthropy and social impact initiatives, addressing social challenges and improving communities.

The Indian diaspora's political influence, economic contributions, cultural promotion, philanthropy, advocacy and collaboration are instrumental in shaping policies and fostering growth in America and European countries. Their active participation strengthens ties between India and their host countries, contributing to mutual development and prosperity. The Indian diaspora's role will continue to be significant in the global context, bridging cultures, driving innovation and fostering cooperation.

Q11. Indian Constitution exhibits centralising tendencies to maintain unity and integrity of the nation. Elucidate in the perspective of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897; The Disaster Management Act, 2005, and recently passed Farm Acts. **(250 words) [15]**

Approach to question:

1. **Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897:** The Act empowers the central government to take necessary measures to prevent the spread of dangerous epidemic diseases. It grants extensive powers to the central government, enabling it to enforce quarantine, regulate public gatherings and take other measures for public health.

2. **Disaster Management Act, 2005:** The Act establishes a central authority, the National Disaster Management Authority, to coordinate disaster response and mitigation efforts.

3. **Recently passed Farm Acts:** The three farm acts introduced in 2020, aim to reform agricultural practices and promote market efficiency. They seek to create a unified national market for agricultural produce, allowing farmers to sell their produce to buyers outside their local area.

Answer:

The Indian Constitution is designed to maintain the unity and integrity of the nation. Several legislations, such as the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897; the Disaster Management Act, 2005; and the recently passed Farm Acts, exhibit centralizing tendencies. These laws provide a framework for the central government to exercise its authority in critical areas, ensuring a coordinated and unified approach for the greater good of the nation.

1. **Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897:** The Act grants the central government the power to take necessary measures to prevent the spread of dangerous epidemic diseases.

   It empowers the central government to enforce quarantine, regulate public gatherings and implement measures for public health.

2. **Disaster Management Act, 2005:** The Act establishes a comprehensive framework for disaster management in India, creating the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs).

   It empowers the central government to declare a national disaster and take necessary measures for its management.

3. **Recently passed Farm Acts:** The three farm acts passed in 2020 aim to reform agricultural practices and promote market efficiency.

   They provide a framework for the central government to regulate agricultural markets and trade across the country, creating a unified national market for agricultural produce.

The Indian Constitution exhibits centralizing tendencies through various legislations, empowering the central government to take decisive actions in critical areas such as public health, disaster management and agriculture. While centralization is necessary for maintaining unity and integrity, it is important to strike a balance with decentralized governance and ensure that the concerns and interests of the states and stakeholders are adequately addressed.

Q12. Judicial Legislation is antithetical to the doctrine of separation of powers as envisaged in the Indian Constitution. In this context justify the filing of large number of public interest petitions praying for issuing guidelines to executive authorities.

(250 words) [15]

Approach to question:

1. Judicial legislation refers to the practice of courts making laws through their judgments, which is seen as a deviation from the principle of separation of powers.

2. The doctrine of separation of powers, as envisaged in the Indian Constitution, mandates that the legislature makes laws, the executive implements them and the judiciary interprets them.

3. However, the filing of a large number of public interest petitions seeking guidelines from the judiciary to executive authorities can be justified in certain cases.

4. The judiciary, as the guardian of fundamental rights, has the power to issue guidelines to ensure that executive authorities adhere to constitutional principles and fulfill their obligations towards citizens.

Answer:

Judicial legislation refers to the phenomenon where the judiciary, through its judgments, effectively creates new laws or alters existing ones. This practice can be seen as a departure from the traditional separation of powers doctrine, which assigns lawmaking powers to the legislature, executive powers to the executive and adjudicatory powers to the judiciary.

1. **Doctrine of Separation of Powers:** The doctrine of separation of powers is an essential feature of the Indian Constitution, aimed at maintaining checks and balances among the three branches of government. Article 50 emphasizes the separation of the judiciary from the executive in the State, promoting the independence of the judiciary.

2. **Justification for Public Interest Petitions:** Filing public interest petitions seeking guidelines from the judiciary can be justified in certain circumstances, given the evolving role of the judiciary as a protector of constitutional rights and an agent of social change.

3. **Inherent Power of the Judiciary:** As the custodian of the Constitution, the judiciary has the inherent power to issue guidelines and directions to executive authorities in case of fundamental rights violation or legislative silence.

4. **Addressing Systemic Issues:** Public interest petitions can address systemic issues, correct administrative failures and provide remedies in situations where the executive has failed to act or adequately address social concerns.

5. **Promoting Accountability and Good Governance:** These petitions hold the executive accountable

and ensure transparency, fairness and good governance in the functioning of public authorities. The filing of public interest petitions seeking guidelines to executive authorities can be justified as a necessary means to uphold constitutional rights, fill legislative gaps and promote social justice in the Indian legal system. However, it is crucial for the judiciary to exercise restraint and base its decisions on constitutional principles and legal precedents, avoiding excessive judicial legislation and maintaining the integrity of the separation of powers doctrine.

Q13. **The strength and sustenance of local institutions in India has shifted from their formative phase of 'Functions, Functionaries and Funds' to the contemporary stage of 'Functionality'. Highlight the critical challenges faced by local institutions in terms of their functionality in recent times.**

(250 words) [15]

Approach to question:

1. **Lack of capacity:** Many local institutions lack the necessary skills, expertise and resources to effectively carry out their functions. This hampers their ability to provide quality services to the local population.

2. **Limited autonomy:** Local institutions often face constraints in decision-making due to excessive interference from higher levels of government. This limits their ability to address local needs and priorities.

3. **Insufficient financial resources:** Many local institutions struggle with inadequate financial resources, limiting their capacity to undertake development initiatives and deliver essential services.

4. **Political interference:** Local institutions often face political pressure and interference, compromising their independence and ability to work in the best interests of the local community.

Answer:

Local institutions in India have evolved from their initial focus on "Functions, Functionaries and Funds" to the contemporary stage of "Functionality". However, they face critical challenges that hinder their effective functioning and service delivery. This concise discussion highlights these challenges and suggests measures to address them.

Challenges:

1. **Lack of capacity:** Many local institutions lack the necessary skills, expertise and resources to effectively carry out their functions. This hampers their ability to provide quality services to the local population.

2. **Limited autonomy:** Excessive interference from higher levels of government restricts local institutions' decision-making abilities, hindering their ability to address local needs and priorities independently.

3. **Inadequate human resources:** A shortage of skilled personnel affects the ability of local institutions to deliver services efficiently, hindering their effective functioning.

4. **Limited public participation:** Inadequate citizen engagement undermines the democratic functioning of local institutions, hindering effective decision-making and representation.

5. **Fragmented approach:** Fragmentation of responsibilities across different tiers of local governance leads to coordination challenges and duplication of efforts, resulting in inefficiencies.

Addressing the Challenges:

To enhance the functionality of local institutions, the following measures are crucial:

1. **Capacity building:** Provide training and skill development programs to enhance the capacity of local institutions.

2. **Autonomy:** Empower local institutions with more decision-making authority to address local needs effectively.

3. **Financial resources:** Ensure adequate and timely allocation of funds to support local development initiatives.

4. **Accountability:** Strengthen transparency and accountability mechanisms to hold local institutions responsible for their actions.

By addressing capacity, autonomy, financial resources, accountability, human resources, infrastructure, public participation, coordination and resource distribution, India can create an enabling environment that strengthens local institutions' effectiveness and promotes inclusive and sustainable development at the grassroots level.

Q14. **Rajya Sabha has been transformed from a 'useless stepney tyre' to the most useful supporting organ in past few decades. Highlight the factors as well as the areas in which this transformation could be visible.**

(250 words) [15]

Approach to question:

1. **Representation:** Rajya Sabha ensures representation of states and union territories, providing a platform for their interests and perspectives in policy making.

2. **Legislative Review:** Rajya Sabha plays a crucial role in reviewing and amending legislation proposed by the Lok Sabha, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of laws.

3. **Checks and Balances:** The Rajya Sabha acts as a check on hasty or biased legislation, ensuring a comprehensive and balanced decision-making process.

4. **Consensus Building:** With a longer tenure for its members, Rajya Sabha facilitates deliberations, debates and negotiations, fostering consensus among different political parties

Answer:

The transformation of Rajya Sabha, the upper house of India's Parliament, from a 'useless stepney tyre' to a vital supporting organ in the country's democratic system has

been a significant development over the past few decades. Several factors have contributed to this transformation and the Rajya Sabha's effectiveness and relevance are visible in various areas of governance.

1. **Representation of States:** Rajya Sabha ensures the representation of states and union territories, providing a platform for their interests and perspectives in the national policy making process. This representation strengthens federalism and ensures the voices of different regions are heard.

2. **Expertise and Experience:** Over the years, Rajya Sabha has attracted eminent personalities from diverse fields such as academics, judiciary, arts and sciences. Their presence brings valuable expertise and experience to legislative discussions, enhancing the quality of debates and policy formulation.

3. **Legislative Review:** Rajya Sabha plays a crucial role in reviewing and amending legislation proposed by the Lok Sabha. Its members scrutinize bills in detail, identifying gaps and proposing necessary changes to ensure effective and robust laws.

4. **Checks and Balances:** Rajya Sabha acts as a check on hasty or biased legislation. Its members bring diverse perspectives to the table, ensuring a comprehensive and balanced decision-making process.

5. **Consensus Building:** With a longer tenure for its members, Rajya Sabha provides stability and continuity. It facilitates deliberations, debates and negotiations, fostering consensus among different political parties.

The visible transformation of Rajya Sabha from a 'useless stepney tyre' to a vital supporting organ in India's democratic system is evident in its representation of states, expertise and experience of its members, legislative review, checks and balances, consensus building, policy expertise, protection of minority interests, role in judicial and constitutional reforms and engagement in international forums.

Q15. Which steps are required for constitutionalization of a Commission? Do you think imparting constitutionality to the National Commission for Women would ensure greater gender justice and empowerment in India? Give reasons.

(250 words) [15]

Approach to question:

Imparting constitutionality to the National Commission for Women would ensure greater gender justice and empowerment in India. Reasons for this include:

1. **Legally Empowered:** Constitutionality would provide a stronger legal basis for the National Commission for Women, enabling it to act as a statutory body with defined powers and functions.

2. **Enhanced Credibility:** Being a constitutional body would enhance the credibility and authority of the Commission, making its recommendations and actions more influential and enforceable.

Answer:

The constitutionalization of a Commission involves establishing a legal framework for its existence and functioning through a constitutional amendment. Such a process ensures that the Commission's powers, functions and autonomy are protected under the Constitution.

1. **Constitutional Amendment:** The first step is to introduce a constitutional amendment to provide a legal framework for the establishment and functioning of the Commission. This would involve amending the Constitution to include provisions related to the Commission's powers, functions and composition.

2. **Defining Powers and Functions:** The constitutional amendment should clearly define the powers, functions and jurisdiction of the Commission. This would ensure that the Commission has a well-defined mandate and can effectively carry out its responsibilities.

Reasons Supporting the Constitutionalization of the National Commission for Women:

1. **Legal Empowerment:** Constitutionality would provide a stronger legal basis for the National Commission for Women, elevating it to the status of a constitutional body. This would enhance its authority and mandate, enabling it to act as a statutory body with defined powers and functions.

2. **Enhanced Credibility and Authority:** Being a constitutional body would enhance the credibility and authority of the Commission. Its recommendations, reports and actions would carry more weight and influence, leading to greater attention and seriousness in addressing gender-related issues.

By imparting constitutionality to the National Commission for Women, India would provide a stronger legal foundation for addressing gender-based inequalities and advancing gender justice. It would empower the Commission to effectively advocate for women's rights, influence policy changes and ensure the implementation of measures that promote gender equality and empowerment.

Q16. "The incidence and intensity of poverty are more important in determining poverty based on income alone". In this context analyse the latest United Nations Multidimensional Poverty Index Report.

(250 words) [15]

Approach to question:

1. The incidence and intensity of poverty are more significant in determining poverty than income alone. The latest United Nations Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Report supports this notion. It assesses both the percentage of people living in poverty (incidence) and the depth of poverty experienced (intensity). By considering multiple deprivations, the MPI captures the complexities of poverty and enables policy makers to target interventions that address the diverse needs of the poor, leading to more effective poverty reduction strategies.

Answer:

The United Nations Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Report provides valuable insights into poverty beyond the traditional income-based approach. By considering multiple dimensions of poverty, the MPI offers a comprehensive understanding of the incidence and intensity of poverty. This analysis sheds light on the complex nature of poverty and informs policy makers on targeted interventions and monitoring progress.

Analysis of the United Nations MPI Report:

1. **Multidimensional Perspective:** The MPI considers various dimensions beyond income, such as health, education and standard of living. This approach recognizes that poverty is not solely about lack of income but encompasses a range of deprivations affecting individuals' well-being.

2. **Incidence of Poverty:** The MPI assesses the incidence of poverty by identifying the percentage of people living in multidimensional poverty. It reveals the proportion of individuals experiencing deprivations in multiple dimensions, highlighting the extent of poverty and areas requiring interventions.

3. **Depth of Poverty:** The MPI measures the intensity of poverty by examining the depth of deprivation experienced by those living in poverty. It quantifies the number and severity of deprivations individuals face, providing a nuanced understanding of poverty's depth and the extent of suffering within impoverished populations.

4. **Intersecting Deprivations:** Poverty often involves intersecting deprivations, such as lack of education, health and basic services. The report analyzes these intersections, recognizing the complexity of poverty and the need for comprehensive solutions.

The United Nations Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Report offers a comprehensive perspective on poverty beyond income alone. By analyzing intersecting deprivations, regional disparities and providing valuable policy implications, the MPI enables effective poverty reduction strategies.

Q17. "Micro-Finance as an anti-poverty vaccine, is aimed at asset creati security of the rural poor in India". Evaluate the role of the Self Help Groups in achieving the twin objectives along with empowering women in rural India. **(250 words) [15]**

Approach to question:

1. **Asset Creation:** SHGs provide access to small loans and financial services, enabling members to start income-generating activities and invest in productive assets.

2. **Asset Security:** SHGs promote savings and build a financial buffer for the rural poor, enhancing their resilience to economic shocks and protecting their assets.

3. **Empowering Women:** SHGs empower women through collective action, capacity-building and financial inclusion, enabling them to participate in decision-making and challenge social norms.

4. **Social Capital:** SHGs foster support systems and social capital, creating a conducive environment for entrepreneurship and community development.

Answer:

Microfinance, often considered an anti-poverty vaccine, has emerged as a powerful tool in creating asset security for the rural poor in India. Self Help Groups (SHGs) play a significant role in achieving the twin objectives of asset creation and security while empowering women in these communities. This article evaluates the impact of SHGs in achieving these crucial development goals.

Evaluation of SHGs' Role in Achieving Objectives:

1. **Asset Creation:** SHGs facilitate access to small loans and financial services for the rural poor, enabling them to start income-generating activities like small businesses, agriculture, or livestock rearing. This access to credit helps them invest in productive assets, leading to increased income and improved livelihoods.

2. **Empowering Women:** SHGs have transformed the lives of women in rural India by providing a platform for collective action and discussion. Through regular meetings and capacity-building activities, women gain confidence, leadership skills and knowledge about financial management and entrepreneurship.

3. **Financial Inclusion:** SHGs promote financial inclusion by ensuring that the rural poor, particularly women, have access to formal financial services. This breaks the cycle of dependence on informal moneylenders, enabling sustainable saving, investing and asset building.

4. **Social Capital and Support Systems:** SHGs build social capital and support systems within communities. Members support each other, share knowledge and address challenges collectively. This fosters a supportive environment for entrepreneurship and empowers women in decision-making processes.

Self Help Groups (SHGs) play a vital role in promoting inclusive growth, poverty alleviation and sustainable development in rural India. By facilitating asset creation, financial inclusion and empowerment of women, SHGs have transformed the lives of the rural poor. These community-driven efforts not only enhance livelihoods but also contribute to social development and gender equality.

Q18. National Education Policy 2020 is in conformity with the Sustainable Development Goal-4 (2030). It intends to restructure and reorient education system in India. Critically examine the statement. **(250 words) [15]**

Answer:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India aims to transform the education system, aligning it with the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (2030), which emphasizes inclusive and quality education for all. While the NEP introduces positive changes, a critical examination reveals areas of alignment with SDG-4 and potential concerns that need attention.

Alignment with SDG-4:

1. **Inclusive Education:** The NEP 2020 focuses on inclusive education, aiming to address disparities based on gender, socio-economic backgrounds and geographical locations. It promotes access to education for all, including children with disabilities and marginalized communities, aligning with SDG-4's goal of inclusivity.

2. **Quality Education:** The NEP 2020 prioritizes quality education through curriculum reforms that emphasize critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills. This aligns with SDG-4's focus on providing equitable and quality education to foster lifelong learning opportunities.

Areas of Concern:

1. **Implementation Challenges:** Successful implementation of the NEP 2020 requires adequate resources, infrastructure and trained educators, posing challenges in a diverse country like India. Ensuring equitable implementation across regions and socio-economic backgrounds remains a concern.

2. **Equity and Inclusion:** While the NEP 2020 aims to address disparities, concerns exist about effectively ensuring equal access to quality education for marginalized communities, children in remote areas and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Bridging these gaps requires dedicated efforts and targeted interventions.

3. **Evaluation and Assessment:** The NEP 2020 proposes a shift from rote learning to competency-based assessment. Designing and implementing effective evaluation methods that genuinely assess students' skills, creativity and critical thinking abilities can be complex.

The National Education Policy 2020 in India aligns with the Sustainable Development Goal 4 by emphasizing inclusive and quality education, holistic development and early childhood care. However, challenges related to implementation, equity, teacher training, assessment methods and resource allocation needs to be addressed to effectively realize the NEP's goals.

Q19. **'Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)' is transforming itself into a trade bloc from a military alliance, in present times. Discuss.**
(250 words) [15]

Answer:

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), comprising the United States, Japan, Australia and India, has witnessed a notable transformation in recent times. While initially established as a military alliance, the Quad is now shifting its focus towards becoming a trade bloc. This shift reflects the changing dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region and the member countries' recognition of the importance of economic cooperation in fostering regional stability and growth.

Shift towards Economic Cooperation:

1. **Robust Trade Relations:** The Quad countries are increasingly prioritizing economic cooperation, recognizing the significance of strong trade relations and investment partnerships to counterbalance the influence of other global powers and promote regional stability.

2. **Supply Chain Resilience:** Collaborative efforts are underway to enhance supply chain resilience. The Quad aims to promote secure and diversified supply chains to reduce vulnerabilities and disruptions, especially in critical sectors, as highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. **Trade Partnerships**: The Quad is exploring avenues for closer trade partnerships. Initiatives to promote free and open trade, remove barriers and

strengthen economic linkages in the Indo-Pacific region are being pursued, including potential trade agreements and preferential tariffs.

4. **Technology Cooperation:** The Quad seeks to deepen cooperation in emerging technologies such as 5G, AI, cybersecurity and quantum computing. Collaboration in research, development and standards-setting aims to leverage the potential of these technologies for shared economic growth.

The transformation of the Quad from a military alliance to a trade bloc signifies its adaptation to changing regional dynamics. The shift towards economic cooperation, supply chain resilience, infrastructure development and technology collaboration reflects the member countries' commitment to fostering shared prosperity, regional stability and a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific.

Q20. **What is the significance of Indo-US defence deals over Indo-Russian defence deals? Discuss with reference to stability in the Indo-Pacific region.** **(250 words) [15]**

Approach to question:

1. **Strategic Alignment:** Indo-US defense deals reflect a growing strategic alignment between the two countries in addressing regional security challenges, promoting a rules-based order and maintaining stability in the Indo-Pacific.

2. **Technology Transfer:** Defense deals with the US offer access to advanced military technologies and equipment, enhancing India's defense capabilities and interoperability with US forces.

3. **Enhanced Interoperability:** Defense deals with the US enable greater interoperability between the Indian and US armed forces through joint exercises, training and defense cooperation.

Answer:

The significance of Indo-US defense deals over Indo-Russian defense deals in the context of stability in the Indo-Pacific region reflects India's evolving strategic priorities, geopolitical dynamics and the quest for advanced technology and interoperability.

Significance of Indo-US Defense Deals:

1. **Strategic Alignment:** Indo-US defense deals signify a growing strategic alignment between India and the United States in addressing regional security challenges. Both countries share democratic values and a common interest in maintaining stability and a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific.

2. **Access to Advanced Technology:** Indo-US defense deals grant India access to advanced military technologies and equipment, enhancing its defense capabilities. This technology transfer strengthens India's deterrence posture and defense preparedness in the region, contributing to regional stability.

3. **Maritime Security:** Indo-US defense deals emphasize enhancing maritime security, essential for ensuring freedom of navigation, safeguarding sea lines of communication and countering common security threats in the Indo-Pacific, including China's assertive behavior in the South China Sea.

Importance of Indo-Russian Defense Deals: It is essential to note that Indo-Russian defense deals have been historically significant and continue to play a role in India's defense preparedness.

In conclusion, Indo-US defense deals hold greater significance for stability in the Indo-Pacific region due to their alignment with India's evolving strategic priorities and the quest for advanced technology, interoperability and a balanced regional security architecture. These deals signify a growing partnership between India and the United States, contributing to regional stability and a rules-based order. While defense cooperation with Russia remains relevant, the shift towards Indo-US defense deals reflects India's adaptability to changing geopolitical dynamics and security needs in the Indo-Pacific region.