



## Be Mains Ready

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### Revision Test-1

**Q.1** Mauryan art was not exclusive to any particular religion. Elucidate. (150 words)

**Q.2** British land revenue policy profoundly transformed agrarian relations in India. Discuss. (150 words)

**Q.3** Explain the phenomenon behind the occurrence of earthquakes and how do earthquake waves develop shadow zones? (150 words)

**Q.4** India is on the right side of demographic transition that provides a golden opportunity for its rapid socio-economic development, if policymakers align the developmental policies with this demographic shift. Discuss. (250 Words)

**Q.5** Highlight the vulnerability of Indian cities to Urban Flooding. What measures should be adopted to deal with this phenomenon? (150 words)

**Q.6** The efficiency of the collegium system has been challenged time to time in terms of its independence and transparency of judicial appointments. Critically examine. (250 Words)

**Q.7** The recently announced National Mission on Edible Oil-Oil Palm will help India become self-reliant in edible oil and reduce dependence on imports. Critically discuss. (250 Words)

**Q.8** SCO has emerged as a key regional organisation in the Eurasian space. In the light of the statement discuss the opportunity for India to fulfil its national interest. (250 Words)

**Q.9** The Indian experience of the Citizens' Charter highlights several deficiencies. Thus it is high time for India to make the system of Citizens' Charter more effective. Discuss.

**Q.10** Contrary to popular perception, India's sex ratio at birth declined even as per capita income increased. Discuss. (250 words)F

21 Nov 2021 | Revision Tests | Essay

## Approach / Explanation / Answer

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**Ans: 1**

### Approach

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- Briefly introduce the Mauryan art
- Justify with examples the multi-religious influence on the sculpture and art of this period
- Conclude suitably

### Answer

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The Mauryan Empire thrived from 322 B.C.E. to 185 B.C.E. and its first king was Chandragupta Maurya who ruled from Patliputra (present-day Patna). Mauryan art is represented both in court art as well as popular art. While the tall stone pillars and their decorative capitals represent court art, examples of popular art may be seen in sculptures like the Deedarganj Yakshi which is now in the Patna Museum in Bihar.

Art activities in the Mauryan period were mostly related to religions practiced in this period and symbols and units associated with them. The art forms and all of their symbolic representations, however, were not exclusive to any particular religion.

- For example, the Bharhut and Sanchi Stupas not only depict scenes from the life of the Buddha but also the reliefs of Yakshas, Yakshinis, Nagas, and other popular deities. The artists, in order to decorate the Stupas, carved many scenes which they observed in nature along with religious ideas. In fact, these are examples of secular art forms.
- Because of regular interactions with other cultures in this period, we also find elements of non-Indian art in the artistic creations of this period. This is particularly true of the Gandhara region which produced art typical to the region, in which many different elements came to be assimilated.
- The Buddha image which began to be sculpted in this period was a departure from earlier representations of him in the form of Bodhi tree, Stupa, footprints, etc.
- Making images for worship became common among other religions as well. The construction of Stupas, Chaityas and Viharas became popular.
- The pillars and their symbolism are often compared to Persian sculptures and 'Greco – Buddhist' symbolism.

Mauryan architecture is considered significant for its large scale, robust and fully formed figures and the unique glaze-like polish that provides a sophisticated finish to the sculptures.

**Ans: 2**

### Approach

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- Begin with the real intent behind the introduction of land revenue policy
- Explain how land revenue policies (Permanent Settlement, Ryotwari, Mahalwari) transformed agrarian relations
- Conclusion-These policies caused famines, discontent with the British rule and deteriorated condition of the poor farmers.

## Answer

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After securing the Diwani rights of Bengal in 1765, the British East India Company worked to enlarge the company's revenue which was reflected in their land policies and settlements. The land revenue policies introduced by the British were designed to extract maximum revenue with complete negligence of the agrarian society. Consequently, these policies transformed agrarian relations in India.

### Revenue policy and changes in agrarian relations

Lord Cornwallis introduced the **Zamindari system** in 1793 and Zamindars were recognized as the owners of the land. They were declared full owners with absolute proprietary rights on land, without realizing that they were only tax collecting intermediaries during the preceding regime. But it was a great injustice to the peasants as it totally ignored their occupancy rights and reduced them to the position of mere tenants in their own fields.

Under the **Ryotwari system**, introduced by Sir Thomas Munro, direct contact between the ryot (the cultivator) and the state was established. Ryots were turned in to rent tenants and share-croppers came into existence. In the ryotwari areas, various categories of tenants-such as 'protected', 'occupancy', 'ordinary' and 'sharecropper' tenants, besides different types of attached labour emerged.

Similarly, the **Mahalwari system** under which the revenue assessment was fixed for the entire village, also brought misery to the agrarian classes.

The British also tried to commercialize Indian agriculture, pushing farmers to grow cash crops. These cash crops required credit facilities which were not properly organized in nineteenth-century India. So the poor peasant naturally turned to the moneylender, who exploited him by charging exorbitant interest rates on loans. Peasants unable to repay loans with interest had to surrender their land to their creditors. This strengthened the position of the money lenders and rich landlords in rural India.

The colonial revenue policies worked against the interest of small landowners, raiyats, and sharecroppers who constituted the poor peasantry. Growing indebtedness among the poor cultivating classes and consequent transfer of lands to money-lenders had considerably worsened agrarian relations, created ripe conditions for famines and the resultant unrest that threatened the political stability of British rule.

**Ans: 3**

## Approach

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- Briefly talk about earthquakes and their impact
- Discuss how they are generated
- Explain what is shadow zone and how it is determined

## Answer

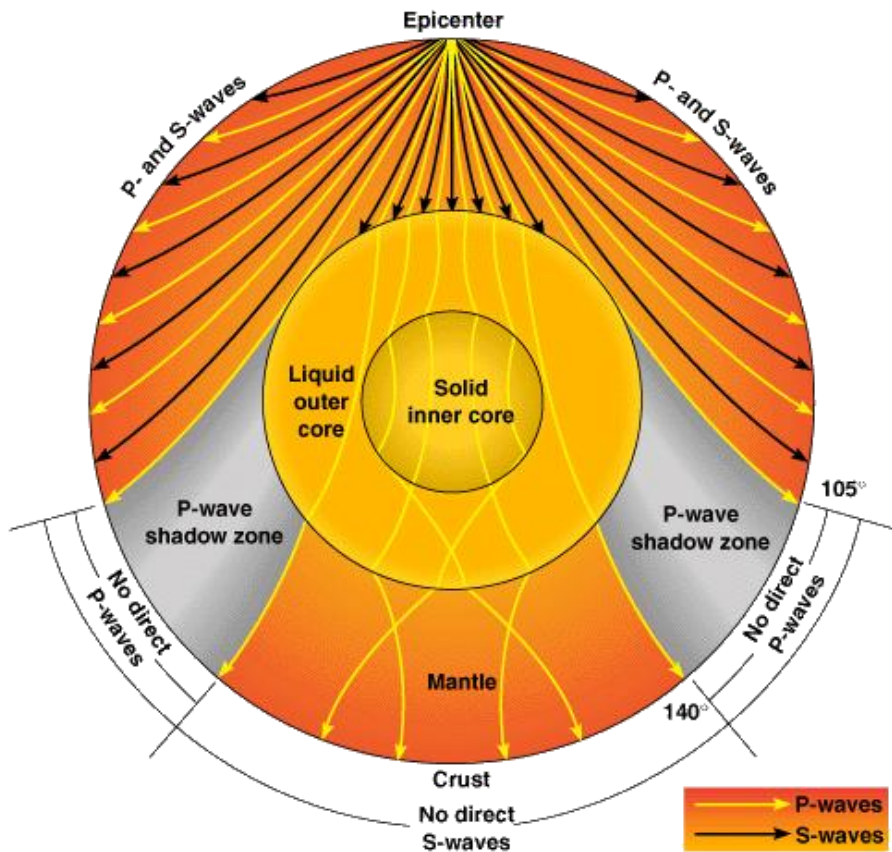
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An earthquake is a natural event which simply means shaking the earth. All natural earthquakes occur in the lithosphere (i.e, the region which constitutes the earth's crust and rigid upper part of the mantle). Earthquakes are by far the most unpredictable and highly destructive of all the natural disasters. It not only damages and destroys the settlements, infrastructure, etc. but also results in the loss of lives of men and animals.

It is caused due to the release of energy, which generates waves that travel in all directions. The release of energy occurs along a fault. A fault is a sharp break in the crustal rocks. Rocks along a fault tend to move in opposite directions. As the overlying rock strata press them, the friction locks them together. However, their tendency to move apart at some point of time overcomes the friction. As a result, the blocks get deformed, and eventually, they slide past one another abruptly. This causes a release of energy, and the energy waves travel in all directions. The point where the energy is released is called the focus of an earthquake, alternatively, it is called the hypocentre. The energy waves traveling in different directions reach the surface. The point on the surface, nearest to the focus, is called the epicenter. It is the first one to experience the waves. It is a point directly above the focus.

The earthquake which originates in the lithosphere propagates different seismic waves or earthquake waves. The velocity of waves changes as they travel through materials with different densities. Their direction also changes as they reflect or refract when coming across materials with different densities. Earthquake waves are basically of two types – body waves and surface waves.

- Body waves are generated due to the release of energy at the focus and move in all directions traveling through the body of the earth. The body waves interact with the surface rocks and generate a new set of waves called surface waves. These waves move along the surface.
- There are two types of body waves. They are called P and S-waves. P-waves move faster and are the first to arrive at the surface. These are also called 'primary waves'. They travel through gaseous, liquid, and solid materials. S-waves arrive at the surface with some time lag and can travel only through solid materials.



As Earthquake waves radiate out spherically from the earthquake's focus, they get recorded in seismographs located at far off locations. A shadow zone is an area of the Earth's surface where seismographs do not detect any earthquake waves. These zones develop due to the peculiar property of P-waves and S-waves. As P waves are refracted by the liquid outer core, the shadow zone of P-waves appears as a band around the earth between 103 degrees and 142 degrees away from the epicenter. S waves cannot pass through the liquid outer core and are not detected beyond 103 degrees. Thus, the entire zone beyond 103 is referred to as the Shadow zone of S-waves. The shadow zone of the S-wave is much larger than that of the P-waves.

**Ans: 4**

### Approach

- Start with explaining about the demographic dividend and how it is a golden opportunity for India's socio-economic development.
- Discuss the issues faced in the realisation of the demographic dividend stage in India.
- Suggest what should be the policy for the realisation of the demographic dividend.

### Answer

According to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), demographic dividend means, "the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working-age share of the population (14 and younger, and 65 and older)".

India has 62.5% of its population in the age group of 15-59 years which is ever increasing and will be at the peak around 2036 when it will reach approximately 65%. According to the Economic Survey 2018-19, India's Demographic Dividend will peak around 2041, when the share of working-age, i.e. 20-59 years, population is expected to hit 59%.

### **Demographic Dividend provides golden opportunity**

Better economic growth brought about by increased economic activities due to higher working age population and lower dependent population. It will be channelised in following ways:

- Increased Labour Force that enhances the productivity of the economy.
- Increased fiscal space created by the demographic dividend to divert resources from spending on children to investing in physical and human infrastructure.
- Rise in women's workforce that naturally accompanies a decline in fertility, and which can be a new source of growth.
- Increase in savings rate, as the working age also happens to be the prime period for saving.

### **Challenges Associated with Demographic Dividend**

- Lack of skills: Most of the new jobs that will be created in the future will be highly skilled and lack of skill in the Indian workforce is a major challenge. India may not be able to take advantage of the opportunities, due to a low human capital base and lack of skills.
- Low human development parameters: India ranks 130 out of 189 countries in UNDP's Human Development Index, which is alarming. Therefore, health and education parameters need to be improved substantially to make the Indian workforce efficient and skilled.
- Informal nature of the economy in India is another hurdle in reaping the benefits of demographic transition in India.
- Jobless growth: There is mounting concern that future growth could turn out to be jobless due to de-industrialization, de-globalization, the fourth industrial revolution and technological progress. As per the NSSO Periodic Labour Force Survey 2017-18, India's labour force participation rate for the age-group 15-59 years is around 53%, that is, around half of the working age population is jobless.

### **Way Forward-Policy making need**

**Building human capital:** Investing in people through healthcare, quality education, jobs and skills helps build human capital, which is key to supporting economic growth, ending extreme poverty, and creating a more inclusive society.

- **Skill development** to increase employability of the young population. India's labour force needs to be empowered with the right skills for the modern economy.
- **Education:** Enhancing educational levels by properly investing in primary, secondary and higher education. India, which has almost 41% of population below the age of 20 years, can reap the demographic dividend only if with a better education system. Also, academic-industry collaboration is necessary to synchronise modern industry demands and learning levels in academics.
- **Health:** Improvement in healthcare infrastructure would ensure a higher number of productive days for the young labourforce, thus increasing the productivity of the economy.
- **Job Creation:** The nation needs to create ten million jobs per year to absorb the addition of young people into the workforce.
  - Promoting businesses' interests and entrepreneurship would help in job creation to provide employment to the large labourforce.
  - India's improved ranking in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index is a good sign.
- **Urbanisation:** The large young and working population in the years to come will migrate to urban areas within their own and other States, leading to rapid and large-scale increase in urban population.

How these migrating people can have access to basic amenities, health and social services in urban areas need to be the focus of urban policy planning.

By learning from global approaches from countries such as Japan and Korea and designing solutions considering the domestic complexities, we would be able to reap the benefits of demographic dividend.

**Ans: 5**

## Approach

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- Begin with a brief introduction
- Discuss the factors that are responsible for this disaster
- Analyse the vulnerability of Indian cities to Urban Flooding
- Suggest measures to combat the crisis

## Answer

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Flood is defined as an overflow of a large body of water over areas. Thus, flooding in urban areas is caused by intense and prolonged rainfall, which overwhelms the capacity of the drainage system. Our cities are densely populated, and an urban flood affects a large number of people in a very small area.

**Urban flooding is caused by four main factors – meteorological, hydrological, human factors and erratic weather patterns.**

- Meteorological factors: It includes heavy rainfall, cyclonic storms and thunderstorms.
- Hydrological factors: It includes the presence or absence of overbank flow channel networks and occurrence of high tides impeding the drainage in coastal cities.
- Human factors: It includes land-use changes, surface sealing due to urbanization (which increases run-off), sudden release of water from dams and indiscriminate disposal of solid waste into urban water drains and channels are major causes of Urban flooding.
- Erratic weather pattern: High magnitude-short duration rains are also the culprit behind urban flooding disasters. With climate change, recurrence of such rains is expected frequently.

Recent Hyderabad flood is the result of it. The city, as well as Telangana, received unusually excessive rainfall due to a deep depression that developed in the Bay of Bengal.

**The vulnerability of Indian cities to Urban Flooding:**

- In any city, the low-lying regions like, railway lines, roads and highways — where squatter settlements pop-up — are the areas, which are most prone to flooding. Built uniformly with makeshift materials, many people lose their residence with recurring floods, which never gets accounted for.
- Floodwaters circulate untreated solid waste and faecal matter around squatter settlements, which leads to outbreaks of malaria, dengue, diarrhoea, etc for a much longer time than the season of rainfall.
- Besides, an urban flood results in inundation and damage to vital infrastructure, and disruption to roads and services, thereby affecting all walks of life.

**What needs to be done?**

- The existing drainage path should be well demarcated. There should be no encroachments on the natural drainage channels of the city, especially the flood plains of the rivers.
- A large number of bridges, flyovers and metro projects are being constructed with their supporting columns located in the existing drainage channels. This can be avoided using proper engineering designs, such as cantilever construction.
- Storage or holding ponds should also be provided at judiciously selected locations to store water during heavy rainfall so that it does not cause downstream flooding. Once the rain subsides, the water can be released gradually.
- The idea of “sponge cities” can be a solution. The idea is to make cities more permeable so as to hold and use the water which falls upon it. Sponge cities absorb the rainwater, which is then naturally filtered by the soil and allowed to reach urban aquifers.



- Restoration of wetlands in the cities because they absorb excess water during heavy rainfall.
- Vulnerability analyses and risk assessments should form part and parcel of city master plans.
- Use of technology for dissemination of information and for assessing the preparedness and prevention. For example, the launch of 'Coastal Flood Warning System App (CFLOWS-Chennai)' for flood mitigation in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

No city is safe from flooding. Heavy rainfall can occur in any city at any time. City authorities and residents should identify flood-prone areas and be prepared to tackle flooding. They should take measures to ensure that when heavy rainfall occurs, adequate drainage systems are in place and these are unclogged so that flooding does not occur in the vulnerable areas. Through proper planning and retrofitting of best management practices, we can make our cities more flood resilient.

**Ans: 6**

## Approach

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- Start with writing about the collegium system and its need in the judicial system.
- Discuss the issues with the functioning of the collegium system.
- Suggest a way forward to deal with the prevalent issues.

## Answer

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The Collegium system is the system of appointment and transfer of judges that has evolved through judgments of the Supreme Court, and not by an Act of Parliament or by a provision of the Constitution.

It was established in order to ensure independence in appointment of the judges in the judiciary.

### Issues Associated with Collegium System

- **Lack of Transparency:** The lack of a written manual for functioning, the absence of selection criteria, the arbitrary reversal of decisions already taken, the selective publication of records of meetings prove the opaqueness of the collegium system.  
No one knows how judges are selected, and the appointments made raise the concerns of propriety, self-selection and nepotism.
- **NJAC, A Missed Opportunity:** The National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) could guarantee the independence of the system from inappropriate politicization, strengthen the quality of appointments and rebuild public confidence in the system.

The decision was struck down by the SC in 2015 on the ground that it posed a threat to the independence of the judiciary.

- **Lack of Consensus among Members:** The collegium members often face the issue of mutual consent regarding appointment of judges.  
The shadow of mistrust between the members of the collegium exposes the fault lines within the judiciary.
- **Unequal Representation:** The other area of concern is the composition of the higher judiciary. While data regarding caste is not available, women are fairly underrepresented in the higher judiciary.
- **Delay in Judicial Appointments:** The process of judicial appointment is delayed due to delay in recommendations by the collegium for the higher judiciary.
- **Other Criticism:** Scope for nepotism, embroilment in public controversies, overlooks several talented junior judges and advocates.

## Way Forward

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- **Independent Body For Appointment:** Filling up of vacancies is a continuous and collaborative process involving the executive and the judiciary.  
However, it is time to think of a permanent, independent body to institutionalize the process with adequate safeguards to preserve the judiciary's independence guaranteeing judicial primacy but not judicial exclusivity.
- **Changing the Procedure of Recommendation:** Instead of selecting the number of judges required against a certain number of vacancies, the collegium must provide a panel of possible names to the President to appoint in order of preference and other valid criteria.
- **Reconsidering the Establishment of Act on Lines of NJAC:** The Supreme Court may amend the NJAC Act to have safeguards that would make it constitutionally valid and reorganize the NJAC to ensure that the judiciary retains majority control in its decisions.
- **Ensuring Transparency:** The collegium members have to make a fresh start and engage with each other.  
A transparent process adds accountability that is much needed to resolve the deadlock.

It is of the utmost importance that the Judiciary, which is the main bulwark of civil liberties, should be completely independent and separated from direct and indirect influence of the Executive.

Identifying and selecting the judges of the highest integrity for appointment to the highest courts of the land is the least that can be done to ensure independence of the judicial system of India.

**Ans: 7**

## Approach

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- Introduce the answer by writing about the National Mission on Edible oil-Oil Palm.
- Discuss the significance of the mission.
- Discuss the issues associated with the mission.
- Conclude suitably by giving a way forward.

## Answer

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Recently, the Prime Minister announced a National Mission on Edible Oil-Oil Palm (NMEO-OP), with an investment of over Rs 11,000 crore over a five-year period. It is a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme and proposed to have an additional 6.5 lakh hectares for palm oil by 2025-26.

Its objective is to harness domestic edible oil prices that are dictated by expensive palm oil imports and become self-reliant in edible oil and to raise the domestic production of palm oil by three times to 11 lakh MT by 2025-26.

### Significance of the Scheme

- **Raise Farmers Income:** It is expected to incentivise production of palm oil to reduce dependence on imports and help farmers cash in on the huge market.
- **Rise in Yields & Reduction in Imports:** India is the largest consumer of vegetable oil in the world. Of this, palm oil imports are almost 55% of its total vegetable oil imports.
  - It imports the rest, buying palm oil from Indonesia and Malaysia, soyoil from Brazil and Argentina, and sunflower oil, mainly from Russia and Ukraine.
  - In India, 94.1% of its palm oil is used in food products, especially for cooking purposes. This makes palm oil extremely critical to India's edible oils economy.

### Issues associated with the mission

- **Impact on Tribal Lands:** The oil palm is a water-guzzling, monoculture crop with a long gestation period unsuitable for small farmers and the land productivity for palm oil is higher than for oilseeds, which create apprehension for more land to be given for oil palm cultivation.
  - In southeast Asia, the plantation of palm oil trees has replaced massive tracts of rainforests.
  - It could also detach tribespeople from their identity linked with the community ownership of land and "wreak havoc on the social fabric".
- **Threat to Wildlife:** Focus areas are "biodiversity hotspots and ecologically fragile" and oil palm plantations would denude forest cover and destroy the habitat of endangered wildlife.
- **Palm is Invasive:** The palm is an invasive species that is not a natural forest product of northeastern India and its impact on the biodiversity as well as on soil conditions has to be analysed even if it is grown in non-forest areas.

- **Health Concern:** Oil palm requires 300 litres of water per tree per day, as well as high Pesticide use in areas where it is not a native crop, leading to consumer health concerns as well.
- **Farmers not Getting Fair Price:** The most critical issue in the cultivation of oil palm has been the inability of farmers to realise a remunerative price of fresh fruit bunches (highly perishable and need to be processed within twenty-four hours of harvest).

If subsidies and support are extended to oilseeds which are indigenous to India and suited for dryland agriculture, they can help achieve self-reliance without dependence on oil palm. Moreover, the success of mission oil palm will also depend on import duty on crude palm oil.

**Ans: 8**

## Approach

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- Introduce with explaining in brief about the SCO as an important organization in the Eurasian landscape.
- Discuss how SCO provides opportunity for India to fulfil its national interests.
- Highlight some issues with the group and suggest a way forward..

## Answer

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In less than two decades, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has emerged as a key regional organisation in the Eurasian space. It accounts for over 60% of Eurasia's territory, more than 40% of the world's population, and almost a quarter of the world's GDP.

### India's Opportunities and SCO

- **Regional Security:** SCO will enable India, as an integral part of the Eurasian security grouping, to neutralise threats like religious extremism and terrorism in the region. It is due to this, India has shown keen interest in deepening its security-related cooperation with the SCO and its Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS), which specifically deals with issues relating to security and defence.
- **Connect With Central Asia:** SCO is also a potential platform to advance India's Connect Central Asia policy. India's ongoing engagement with SCO can be seen through the prism of reconnecting and re-energising ties with a region with which India has shared civilizational linkages, and is considered the country's extended neighbourhood.
- **Dealing With Pakistan & China:** SCO provides India with a forum where it can constructively engage both China and Pakistan in a regional context and project India's security interests.

- **Bringing Stability in Afghanistan:** SCO, also an alternative regional platform to delve into the rapidly changing situation in Afghanistan.  
So far India completed 500 projects in Afghanistan and is continuing with some more, with a total development aid of \$3 billion.
- **Strategic Importance:** Acknowledging the strategic importance emanating from the region and SCO, the Indian Prime Minister had articulated the foundational dimension of Eurasia being 'SECURE'. The letters in the word SECURE are:
  - S for Security of our citizens,
  - E for Economic development for all,
  - C for Connecting the region,
  - U for Unite our people,
  - R for Respect for Sovereignty and Integrity, and
  - E for Environment protection.

### Challenges that India needs to navigate

- **Denial Of Direct Land Connectivity:** A major impediment in India's expanded engagement with Eurasia remains the strategic denial of direct land connectivity between India and Afghanistan and beyond by Pakistan.  
The lack of connectivity has also hampered the development of energy ties between the hydrocarbon-rich region and India
- **Difference Over BRI:** While India has made its opposition to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) clear, all other SCO members have embraced the Chinese project.
- **India-Pakistan Rivalry:** SCO members have, in the past, expressed fears of the organisation being held hostage to India's and Pakistan's adversarial relationship, and their fears would likely have worsened in recent times.

### Way Forward

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- **Improving Relations With China:** It is imperative that India and China set up a modus vivendi (agreement allowing conflicting parties to coexist peacefully) for the 21st century to be viewed through the lens of an Asia century.
- **Improving Relations With Pakistan:** SCO's emphasis on promoting economic cooperation, trade, energy and regional connectivity should be leveraged to improve relations with Pakistan and persuade it to unblock India's access to Eurasia and provide a fillip to projects like TAPI.
- **Strengthening Military Cooperation:** In the context of increasing terrorism in the region, it is imperative for SCO countries to develop a 'cooperative and sustainable security' framework and make the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure more effective.
- **Joint Institutional Capacities:** The SCO member countries should develop joint institutional capacities that respect individual national sensitivities and yet generate a spirit of cooperation to create contact and connectivity between people, societies and nations.

- **Realising Collective Stakes:** Member countries should realise that they have collective stakes to create a safe, secure and stable region that can contribute towards progress and improvement of human development indices.

**Ans: 9**

## **Approach**

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- Begin by providing an overview and background of the Citizen's Charter (CC)
- Highlight the limitations of CC in India
- Suggest measures for improving its effectiveness
- Conclude by stating the importance of fulfilling the values enshrined in the citizen charter

## **Answer**

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The Citizens' Charter is an instrument that seeks to make an organization transparent, accountable and citizen friendly. A Citizens' Charter is basically a set of commitments made by an organization regarding the standards of service which it delivers. Since May 1997, when the programme was launched in India, different Ministries, Departments, and other organizations have come with their own Citizens' Charters. In spite of its progress in easing public service delivery, there are still several deficiencies.

### **The general deficiencies of Citizen Charter in India are**

- Poor design and content: Most organizations do not have adequate capability to draft meaningful and succinct Citizens' Charter.
- Lack of Public Awareness and slow updation of Charters.
- End-users and NGOs are not consulted when Charters are drafted.
- Sometimes the needs of senior citizens and the disabled are not considered when drafting the Charter.
- There's also a lack of review mechanisms in organisation and resistance to change.

### **Measures to make Citizen's charter more effective**

- **Internal restructuring should precede Charter formulation-**Citizens' Charters that are put in place after internal reforms are more credible and useful than one released without any internal reforms.
- **Wide consultation process-** It should be formulated after extensive consultations within the organization followed by meaningful dialogue with civil society.
- **Firm commitments to be made-** Citizens' Charters must be precise and make firm commitments of service delivery standards to the citizens/consumers in quantifiable terms wherever possible.

- **Redressal mechanism in case of default**-Citizens' Charter should clearly lay down the relief which the organization is bound to provide if it has defaulted on the promised standards of delivery.
- **Periodic evaluation of Citizens' Charters**-Every organization must conduct a periodic evaluation of its Citizens' Charter preferably through an external agency.
- **Include Civil Society in the process**-Organizations need to recognize and support the efforts of civil society groups in preparation of the Charters, their dissemination and also facilitating information disclosures.

Even though the promises of citizen charter are not enforceable in a court of law, each organization should ensure that the promises made are kept and, in case of default, a suitable compensatory/remedial mechanism should be provided. Additionally, the Citizens' Charter should also stipulate the responsibilities of the citizens in the context of the charter.

**Ans: 10**

## Approach

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- Introduce by explaining the context of the given statement.
- Highlight the issues issues related to lower sex ratio at birth.
- Discuss the measures needed to improve the lower sex ratio at birth.
- Conclude suitably.

## Answer

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India's sex ratio at birth declined even as per capita income increased nearly 10 times over the last 65 years, according to an IndiaSpend analysis of government data. The recently published Sample Registration System (SRS) Report 2018 shows the same that that sex ratio at birth in India, declined from 906 in 2011 to 899 in 2018.

This could be because rising income, which results in increased literacy, makes it easier for families to access sex-selective procedures. This can be corroborated by the fact that many Indian cities has high economic growth but lower figures on sex ratio than rural areas.

Despite improved per capita income in India, askewed sex ratio in India continue to exist due to perpetuation of patriarchal attitudes and discriminatory cultural practices:

- **Continuation of Gender Bias:** According to information from the UNPFA, reasons for female infanticide include anti-female bias, as women are still seen as subservient to men, who often employ positions of power. As a result, girls continue to suffer educational, health and nutritional discrimination.
- **Son-Preference:** In addition, despite numerous efforts to inculcate the idea of gender equality in India, parents still believe they will be better taken care of in their old age by men, as men are perceived as the principal wage earners of the family.

- **Social Practices:** Despite banning dowry and making it a criminal offense, the dowry system is still prevalent in India. Parents of girls are still required to pay a dowry, which could be a massive expense, avoided by raising males. In many cases dowry is taken even if the bride itself is economically self independent.
- **Accessibility to postnatal sex selection techniques:** India recorded more than thirteen excess deaths for every 1000 girls under five years of age. This is the highest rate of female deaths in under the age of five years in the world. Better income and awareness of postnatal sex selection techniques may be attributed for this dismal picture.

### Other Issues Related to Lower Sex Ratio at Birth

- **Gender-imbalance:** Prof. Amartya Kumar Sen, in his world famous article “Missing Women?” has statistically proved that during the last century, 100 million women have been missing in south Asia.  
This is due to discrimination leading to death, experienced by them from womb to tomb in their life cycles. An adverse child sex ratio is also reflected in the distorted gender makeup of the entire population.
- **Distortion in the Marriage System:** Adverse ratio results in a gross imbalance in the number of men and women and its inevitable impact on marriage systems as well as other harms to women.  
In India, some villages in Haryana and Punjab have such poor sex ratios that men “import” brides from other States. This is often accompanied by the exploitation of these brides. There are concerns that skewed sex ratios lead to more violence against both men and women, as well as human-trafficking.

### Measures Needed To Improve The Lower Sex Ratio At Birth

- **Bringing Behavioural Change:** Increasing female education and economic prosperity help to improve the ratio.  
In this pursuit, the government’s Beti-Bachao Beti Padhao Campaign has achieved remarkable success in bringing behavioural change in the society.
- **Sensitizing Youth:** There is an urgent need to reach young people for reproductive health education and services as well as to cultivate gender equity norms.  
For this, the services of Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) can be leveraged, especially in rural areas.
- **Stringent Enforcement of Law:** India must implement the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994 more stringently and dedicate more resources to fighting the preference for boys.  
In this context, the Drugs Technical Advisory Board decision to include ultrasound machines in the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 is a step in the right direction.



Although India has created several impressive goals to reduce its population growth rates, India and the rest of the world has a long way to go to achieve meaningful population policy which are not only based on quantitative control but qualitative control as well.