



Drishti IAS

Mains

MARATHON

Important Q & A for Mains

2024

Indian Polity and Governance



Delhi

Drishti IAS,
641, Mukherjee Nagar,
Opp. Signature View
Apartment, New Delhi

New Delhi

Drishti IAS,
21, Pusa Road,
Karol Bagh
New Delhi

Uttar Pradesh

Drishti IAS,
Tashkent Marg,
Civil Lines, Prayagraj,
Uttar Pradesh

Rajasthan

Drishti IAS,
Tonk Road,
Vasundhra Colony,
Jaipur, Rajasthan

Madhya Pradesh

Drishti IAS,
Building No. 12, Vishnu Puri,
Main AB Road,
Bhawar Kuan, Indore,
Madhya Pradesh

1. The idea of “One Nation, One Election” has been recently debated in India. Discuss the potential advantages and disadvantages of implementing such a system. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by defining One Nation One Election
- Highlight the advantages of One Nation One Election
- Delve into its disadvantages
- Conclude in balanced manner

Introduction:

The concept of “One Nation, One Election” involves holding simultaneous elections for the **Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and local bodies** across the country.

- This concept has been widely discussed recently, leading to the establishment of a high-level **Committee on Simultaneous Elections** in September 2023.

Body:

Potential Advantages and Disadvantages of Simultaneous Elections:

➤ Advantages:

- **Cost-effectiveness:** According to estimates, the cost of holding general elections to the Lok Sabha alone is around ₹4,000 crore.
 - Conducting multiple elections at different intervals substantially increases the overall expenditure.
 - Holding simultaneous elections could lead to **significant cost savings** for the government and political parties.
- **Efficient Utilization of resources:** Simultaneous elections would optimize the deployment of **administrative machinery, paramilitary forces, and other resources** required for conducting elections.
 - This would prevent disruptions in governance and administrative efficiency caused by frequent elections.
- **Reduction in the Campaign Mode:** Under the current system, political parties and leaders **remain in a perpetual campaign mode** due to frequent elections, hindering policy-making and governance.

- Simultaneous elections could **provide a relatively longer period of stable governance** without electoral distractions.

- **Social Cohesion:** High-stake elections each year in various states often lead to **polarizing campaigns by political parties**, exacerbating social divisions along religious, linguistic, and regional lines.

- Simultaneous elections could **potentially reduce the frequency of such divisive campaigns**, promoting greater social cohesion.

- **Voter Fatigue Mitigation:** Frequent elections can lead to voter fatigue, potentially resulting in **lower turnouts** and diminished participation in the democratic process.

- Simultaneous elections could help mitigate this issue, fostering **greater engagement from the electorate**.

➤ Disadvantages:

- **Compromise on Federal Principles:** India is a diverse federal country with states having unique regional and local issues.

- Simultaneous elections could **overshadow these specific concerns, giving an advantage to national political parties** over regional parties, potentially undermining the federal structure.

- **May Not be so Cost Effective:** Various estimates by the **Election Commission** show that the costs of conducting all State and parliamentary elections in a five-year cycle work out to the equivalent of **Rs. 10 per voter per year**.

- In the short term, simultaneous elections will increase the costs for deploying far larger numbers of **EVMs and VVPATs**.

- **Constitutional Challenges:** The **Law Commission, under Justice B. S. Chauhan**, reported that simultaneous elections are not feasible within the existing constitutional framework.

- Implementing simultaneous elections would require significant constitutional amendments, particularly to **Articles 83, 85, 172, 174, and 356**, which deal with the duration and dissolution of the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.

- Such amendments could have far-reaching implications for the parliamentary democratic system.

Note:

- **Vulnerability to Systemic Failures:** In the current system, even if one state or region faces logistical or security issues during elections, the **remaining states can proceed with the process.**
 - However, in the case of simultaneous elections, any significant systemic failure or disruption could **potentially jeopardize the entire electoral exercise**, raising concerns about the resilience of the system.

Conclusion:

Any decision on implementing “**One Nation, One Election**” should be based on extensive consultations with all stakeholders to ensure that the **principles of federalism, democracy, and constitutional propriety** are upheld while reaping the potential benefits of simultaneous elections.

2. **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar famously referred to the Comptroller and Auditor General of India as “probably the most important officer in the Constitution of India”. Do you agree? (150 words)**

Approach:

- Introduce the answer by mentioning Article related to the CAG
- Validate Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s statement using key arguments
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

The **Constitution of India (Article 148)** provides for an independent office of the **Comptroller and Auditor General of India**. It is a crucial constitutional authority responsible for overseeing the financial integrity and accountability of the Indian government.

- **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, emphasized the pivotal role of CAG by stating that it is probably the most important officer under the Constitution of India.

Body:

CAG as Probably the Most Important Office of Constitution of India:

- **Guardian of Public Purse:** The CAG audits the accounts of the **Union government, state governments, union territory having a legislative assembly** and public sector undertakings ensuring that public funds are utilized efficiently, effectively, and for the intended purposes.

- For example, the CAG’s recent audit of the **Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana** stated that 7.5 lakh people in the database were linked to the same mobile number.

- **Independence and Impartiality:** The CAG is appointed by the **President of India** and can be removed only through a process similar to that of a **Supreme Court judge**, ensuring it can operate without interference from the executive or other branches of government.
- **Head of Indian Audit and Accounts Department:** The CAG heads the Indian Audit and Accounts Department that plays a crucial role in upholding **financial accountability** and promoting transparency across various levels of governance.
- **Advisor to Parliament:** The CAG’s audit reports and recommendations serve as valuable inputs for Parliamentary committees like the **Committee on Public Undertakings (COPU)**.
 - He acts as a guide, friend and philosopher of the **Public Accounts Committee of the Parliament**, this way CAG serves as a facilitator for the legislature to exercise control over the executive.
- **Certification of Net Proceeds:** The CAG ascertains and certifies the net proceeds of any tax or duty (**Article 279**). His certificate is final in this case.

Conclusion:

Therefore, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s statement emphasizing the CAG’s importance in the Indian Constitution is **well-founded**. Upholding the CAG’s position, authority, and independence remains essential for maintaining the **integrity of public finance** and fostering trust in the government’s **financial management system**.

3. **Evaluate the effectiveness of India’s Act East Policy in strengthening its strategic and economic ties with Southeast Asian nations. Also delve into potential areas of cooperation between India and ASEAN countries. (250 words)**

Approach:

- Introduce by mentioning the goal of India’s Act East Policy
- Highlight the effectiveness of Act East Policy in economic as well as strategic terms
- Delve into potential areas of cooperation between India and ASEAN
- Conclude suitably.

Note:

Introduction:

India's Act East Policy, initiated in November 2014 as a diplomatic initiative to promote economic, strategic and cultural relations with the vast **Asia-Pacific region** at different levels especially with **Southeast Asian nations**.

Body:**Effectiveness of Act East Policy:**➤ **In Strengthening Strategic Ties:**

- India has actively participated in various ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as the **East Asia Summit, ASEAN Regional Forum, and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus**.
 - These platforms have **facilitated dialogue and cooperation** on regional security issues, thereby strengthening India's strategic engagement with Southeast Asia.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** India has upgraded its relations with several ASEAN countries to the level of Strategic Partnerships, including **Singapore, Vietnam, and Indonesia**.
 - These partnerships have facilitated deeper cooperation.

➤ **In Strengthening Economic Ties:**

- **Trade and Investment:** Bilateral trade between India and ASEAN has witnessed significant growth, reaching **USD 131.58 billion** in the fiscal year **2022-23**.
 - India has implemented the **ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement (AIFTA)** to facilitate trade and investment flows.
 - However, the trade balance remains **skewed in favor of ASEAN**, indicating potential areas for improvement.
- **Connectivity Initiatives:** India has undertaken various connectivity projects, such as the **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway** and the **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project**, to enhance physical and economic connectivity with Southeast Asia.
 - These initiatives aim to facilitate the movement of goods, services, and people, thereby boosting economic integration.

Potential Areas of Cooperation between India and ASEAN:

- **Maritime Cooperation:** Enhancing maritime security cooperation, including **joint patrols, information**

sharing, and capacity building, to address challenges like piracy, illegal fishing, and territorial disputes in the **South China Sea**.

- **Digital Economy and Emerging Technologies:** Collaborating on developing a robust **digital infrastructure, promoting e-commerce**, and fostering innovation in areas like artificial intelligence, blockchain, and the **Internet of Things (IoT)**.
- **Renewable Energy and Green Transition:** Collaborating on the development and deployment of renewable energy technologies, such as **solar, wind, and hydrogen**, to meet climate change goals and promote sustainable development.
- **Space Exploration and Satellite Technology:** Collaborating on space exploration initiatives, including **satellite development, remote sensing, and space-based applications** for areas like disaster management, navigation, and environmental monitoring
- **Blue Economy and Marine Resource Management:** Enhancing cooperation in the sustainable use of marine resources, maritime security, and the development of the blue economy, including areas like **fisheries, aquaculture, and coastal tourism**.
- **Connectivity and Infrastructure:** Collaborating on accelerating the infrastructure development projects under India's Act East Policy and **ASEAN's Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025**.

Conclusion:

India's Act East Policy has bolstered its strategic and economic ties with Southeast Asian nations. By leveraging complementary strengths and addressing shared challenges, India can forge a **robust, future-oriented partnership** that contributes to **regional stability, sustainable development, and collective prosperity**.

4. **Discuss the role of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) in promoting transparency and accountability in the Indian administrative system. (150 words)**

Approach:

- Introduce the answer with CVC and Santhanam Committee
- Delve into the role of CVC in promoting transparency and accountability
- Conclude suitably.

Note:

Introduction:

The **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)** was established in 1964 as a result of the recommendations of the **Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption**.

- It is the apex governmental body in India that is responsible for promoting **integrity, transparency, and accountability** in the country's public administration.

Body:**Role of the Central Vigilance Commission:**

- **Investigation and Inquiry:** Inquires or causes inquiries/ investigations into allegations of corruption offenses under the **Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988**, against public servants of the Central government and its authorities as upheld by the Supreme Court in the ***Vineet Narain & Others v. Union of India (1998)*** case.
 - Examines complaints against officials belonging to **All-India Services, Group 'A' officers**, and specified levels of officers of the Central government authorities.
- **Oversight and Superintendence:** Exercises superintendence over the functioning of the **Delhi Special Police Establishment (CBI)** concerning investigations into offenses under the **Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988**.
 - Monitors the progress of applications pending for sanction of prosecution under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.
- **Advisory and Regulatory Role:** Tenders advice to the Central government and its authorities on matters referred to it.
 - Consults with the Central government in making rules and regulations governing vigilance and disciplinary matters related to **Central Services and All-India Services**.
- **Whistle-blower Protection and Complaints Handling:** Undertakes complaints received under the **Public Interest Disclosure and Protection of Informers' Resolution**, and recommends appropriate action.
- **Appointments and Selection Committees:** The Central Vigilance Commissioner serves as the **Chairperson of the Selection Committees** responsible for appointing the **Director of Enforcement** and recommending officers for appointments above the level of Deputy Director of Enforcement.

Conclusion:

By exercising its mandated functions, the CVC plays a crucial role in promoting **transparency, integrity, and accountability** within the Indian administrative system. In effect, it serves as a **vital watchdog**, ensuring good governance and fostering public trust

5. **Analyze the impact of electoral reforms after 1990 on the functioning of the Election Commission of India and their implications for democratic governance. (250 words)**

Approach:

- Start with the significance of electoral reforms in a democracy like India
- Mention impacts of electoral reforms on functioning of ECI
- State impacts of electoral reforms on Democratic Governance.
- Conclude Suitably.

Introduction:

Electoral reforms are pivotal in shaping the contours of a **nation's democratic framework**, influencing the **integrity, transparency, and credibility** of the electoral process.

- In India, the post-1990 era witnessed a watershed moment with a series of far-reaching reforms aimed at strengthening the functioning of the ECI and overall democratic governance.

Body:**Impact of Electoral Reforms After 1990:**

- **On Functioning of Election Commission of India:**
 - **Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs):** In **1992**, Parliament inserted **Section 61A in the Representation of People Act, 1951** and rules validating the use of the EVM and paving way for their use in elections. The ECI started using EVMs widely in 1998.
 - The Supreme Court in the ***Jayalithaa and Ors vs. Election Commission of India (2002)*** stated that the use of EVMs in elections is constitutionally valid.
 - **Voter-Verifiable Paper Audit Trail System (VVPAT):** In **2013**, the Central government notified the amended Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961, enabling the ECI to use VVPAT with EVMs.

Note:

- The Supreme Court in **ADR Vs Election Commission of India (2024)** upheld the legality of using VVPAT with random 5% verification in Assembly constituencies.
- **Appointment of Election Commissioners:** The **CEC and Other ECs (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act 2023**, introduced a Selection Committee for appointment of Election Commissioners including the **Prime Minister, a Union Cabinet Minister, and Leader of the Opposition**.
 - However, the Supreme Court, in the **Anoop Baranwal vs Union of India Case 2023**, emphasized recommendations from the **Dinesh Goswami Committee (1990)** and the **Law Commission's 255th report (2015)** on Electoral Reforms.
 - These reports proposed a committee with the Prime Minister, Chief Justice of India, and Leader of the Opposition for appointing the CEC and ECs.
- **On Democratic Governance:**
 - **Allocation of Time on Electronic Media:** The **2003** ECI notification on allocation of equitable time on electronic media during elections has democratized political discourse, allowing diverse voices and viewpoints to reach the electorate.
 - This provision has mitigated the influence of **biased media coverage, fostering informed decision-making among voters**.
 - **NOTA (None of the Above):** NOTA was introduced in elections in **2013**, granting voters the ability to abstain from voting for any candidate while maintaining ballot secrecy.
 - The Supreme Court instructed the Election Commission to incorporate the **None of the Above (NOTA) option** in both ballot papers and Electronic Voting Machines.
 - **Ban on Exit Polls:** A **2009 provision** bans conducting and publishing exit polls during Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly elections till the last phase of polling is over.
 - Exit polls can impact voter behavior, causing a shift from choice-based voting to mass-based voting when one party dominates in the early phase of elections. .

- **Increased Voter Participation and Confidence:** Voter facilitation measures, such as the **National Voters' Service Portal and the Voter Helpline**, have improved voter awareness and engagement, leading to higher turnouts.

Conclusion:

The electoral reforms after 1990 have significantly enhanced the functioning of the ECI, empowering it to uphold the principles of **free, fair, and credible elections**. While these reforms have had positive implications for democratic governance, ongoing challenges and concerns such as **executive interference, money power in elections, and technological vulnerabilities persist** that need to be addressed to further strengthen India's democratic fabric.

6. **"Judicial overreach can be antithetical to the idea of democracy". Critically analyse the given statement. (250 words)**

Approach:

- Start with explaining the concept of Judicial Overreach.
- Mention supporting arguments for the given statement.
- Mention opposing arguments for the given statement.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

Judicial overreach is a term commonly used when the judiciary seems to have overstepped its mandate. It is when the judiciary starts interfering with the proper functioning of the legislative or executive organs of the government, i.e., the judiciary crosses its own function and enter the executive and legislative functions. In simpler terms, it is when the judiciary starts interfering with the proper functioning of the legislative or executive organs of the government.

Body:

Arguments Supporting Judicial Overreach Undermines Democracy:

- **Erosion of Legislative Supremacy:**
 - The Indian Parliament is the primary law-making body. When courts strike down democratically passed laws, it weakens the legislature's authority and the will of the people they represent.

Note:

➤ Concentration of Power:

- An overreaching judiciary concentrates power in the hands of judges, raising concerns about accountability. Unlike elected members of parliaments (MPs), judges are not directly answerable to the public.
 - **Example:** The judiciary's intervention in issues like banning liquor sales on highways or regulating religious practices can be seen as overreach, as these are matters that could be addressed through legislation and public discourse.

➤ Lack of Expertise:

- Judges may not possess the expertise required to make complex policy decisions on economic or social issues. This can lead to poorly crafted regulations with unintended consequences.
 - **Example:** In the case of *Mohit Minerals vs Union of India (2022)*, the SC ruled that the decisions of the GST council are not binding on the state governments.
 - The ruling, based on legal interpretations, could unintentionally disrupt businesses, complicate tax administration, and even undermine the intended benefits of the GST.

Arguments Against Judicial Overreach Undermines Democracy:

➤ Protecting Fundamental Rights:

- The judiciary acts as a guardian of fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. Its power to strike down laws that violate these rights is crucial for protecting individuals from arbitrary government action.
 - **Example:** Landmark judgments such as *Unnikrishnan JP vs State of Andhra Pradesh (1993)* expanded the scope of Art 21 and declared Right to Education as Fundamental Right.
 - Later, this judgment became the basis of passage of Right to Education Act in 2009.

➤ Promoting Social Justice:

- The judiciary can play a vital role in advancing social justice by interpreting laws in a way that promotes equality and protects disadvantaged groups.
 - **Example:** Judgments promoting reservation policies for historically marginalized communities highlight the judiciary's role in ensuring social justice.

➤ Legislature's Inaction:

- Sometimes, judicial overreach stems from the legislature's failure to act on critical issues. This can create a situation where the judiciary steps in to fill the void, blurring the lines of appropriate intervention.
 - **Example:** Before the SC ruling in the *Anoop Baranwal vs Union of India (2023)* case, the chief election commissioner and election commissioners were appointed by the President on the recommendation of the central government.
 - However, the constitution mandates the parliament to make a law on this regard as per Art 324(2).
 - After this judgment, the parliament passed a law related to the appointment of election commissioners.

Conclusion:

Judicial overreach can indeed threaten Indian democracy. However, a completely restrained judiciary weakens its role as a protector of rights and a check on power. Striking a balance between judicial activism and overreach, while respecting the separation of powers, is essential for a vibrant Indian democracy.

7. Analyze the key aspects of the recent Supreme Court judgment on the Enforcement Directorate's powers under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act and its implications. (250 words)

Approach:

- Introduce with ED and its mandate of enforcing PMLA
- Delve into key aspects of the recent SC Ruling
- Mention its implications citing various case laws
- Conclude using syllabus related keywords.

Introduction:

The **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** is a multi-disciplinary agency responsible for investigating money laundering and foreign exchange violations.

- It enforces the provisions of the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA)** by tracing assets from crime proceeds, provisionally attaching properties and prosecuting offenders.

Note:

Body:

The recent Supreme Court judgment on the Enforcement Directorate's powers under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act has significant implications:

Key aspects of the judgment:

- **Limitation on Arrest Powers:** SC ruled that the ED cannot arrest an accused under Section 19 of PMLA after the special court takes cognizance of the complaint.
 - This **curtails the ED's power to arrest** a person and protects the accused from potential misuse of the PMLA provisions.
 - It promotes **due process of law** and ensures that **arrests are subject to judicial scrutiny.**
- **Custodial Interrogation:** If the ED wants custody of the accused for further investigation, it **must apply to the special court** and justify the need for custodial interrogation.
 - The court will grant custody only if satisfied that it is required, even if the accused was not initially arrested.
 - This safeguard **prevents undue custodial interrogation** and respects the rights of the accused.
- **Bail Provisions:** The judgment clarifies that an accused who appears before the court pursuant to a summons need not apply for regular bail under **CrPC Section 437**.
 - This relieves the accused from the stringent **twin conditions for bail under PMLA**, providing a more balanced approach.

Implications:

- **Upholding Personal Liberty and Fair Procedure:** The judgment upholds the principles laid down in the **Nikesh Tarachand Shah case (2017)**, where the Supreme Court held that personal liberty cannot be curtailed beyond what is permissible to **fair, just and reasonable procedure** established by valid law.
- **Ensuring Judicial Oversight and Safeguards:** It aligns with the **Vijay Madanlal Choudhary case (2022)**, which emphasized the need for judicial oversight and safeguards against arbitrary arrests under PMLA.
- **Limiting Arrest Powers Post-Cognizance:** By limiting the ED's arrest powers post-cognizance, the judgment addresses the issue highlighted in the **Pankaj Bansal case (2023)**, where the Supreme Court had to intervene and grant interim protection from arrest.

- **Addressing Failings in the Bail System:** The ruling echoes the concerns raised in the **Satender Kumar Antil case (2022)**, where SC acknowledged the **failings of the country's bail system** in recognizing the issue of undertrial and granting bail.
 - The Supreme court in **State of Rajasthan vs Balchand (1977)** established the principle that **bail is the rule and jail is the exception.**
- **Balancing Investigative Powers and Individual Rights:** The judgment strikes a balance between investigative powers and individual rights as highlighted by the current CJI by mentioning that "heart of this balance" lies the need to uphold due process.
- **Potential Impact on Expeditious Investigations:** It may impact the ED's ability to conduct expeditious investigations in complex money laundering cases.

Conclusion:

The Supreme Court's judgment is a significant step towards upholding the **principles of due process, fairness, and individual liberty** while ensuring effective implementation of the PMLA. It reinforces the **judiciary's role as a constitutional watchdog** and sets important precedents for striking the right balance between investigative powers and fundamental rights.

8. **Discuss the role of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) in promoting transparency and accountability in the Indian administrative system. (150 words)**

Approach:

- Introduce the answer with CVC and Santhanam Committee
- Delve into the role of CVC in promoting transparency and accountability
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

The **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)** was established in 1964 as a result of the recommendations of the **Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption.**

- It is the apex governmental body in India that is responsible for promoting **integrity, transparency, and accountability** in the country's public administration.

Note:

Body:**Role of the Central Vigilance Commission:**

- **Investigation and Inquiry:** Inquires or causes inquiries/ investigations into allegations of corruption offenses under the **Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988**, against public servants of the Central government and its authorities as upheld by the Supreme Court in the **Vineet Narain & Others v. Union of India (1998) case**.
 - Examines complaints against officials belonging to **All-India Services, Group 'A' officers**, and specified levels of officers of the Central government authorities.
- **Oversight and Superintendence:** Exercises superintendence over the functioning of the **Delhi Special Police Establishment (CBI)** concerning investigations into offenses under the **Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988**.
 - Monitors the progress of applications pending for sanction of prosecution under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.
- **Advisory and Regulatory Role:** Tenders advice to the Central government and its authorities on matters referred to it.
 - Consults with the Central government in making rules and regulations governing vigilance and disciplinary matters related to **Central Services and All-India Services**.
- **Whistle-blower Protection and Complaints Handling:** Undertakes complaints received under the **Public Interest Disclosure and Protection of Informers' Resolution**, and recommends appropriate action.
- **Appointments and Selection Committees:** The Central Vigilance Commissioner serves as the **Chairperson of the Selection Committees** responsible for appointing the **Director of Enforcement** and recommending officers for appointments above the level of Deputy Director of Enforcement.

Conclusion:

By exercising its mandated functions, the CVC plays a crucial role in promoting **transparency, integrity, and accountability** within the Indian administrative system. In effect, it serves as a **vital watchdog**, ensuring good governance and fostering public trust

9. **Discuss the evolution of Centre-State relations in India since independence. How have constitutional provisions and judicial interpretations influenced these relations? (250 Words)**

Approach:

- Begin the answer by introducing Centre-State relations in India.
- Discuss the evolution of Centre-State relations in India since independence.
- Highlight constitutional provisions and judicial interpretations that influenced these relations.
- Conclude as per the requirement of keywords.

Introduction:

Centre-State relations in India have evolved significantly since independence, reflecting the complex interplay of historical, political, and constitutional factors. The Constitution of India, through its provisions such as the 7th schedule and subsequent judicial interpretations, has played a crucial role in shaping these relations.

Body:**Evolution of Centre-State Relations:**

- **Pre-Independence Era:**
 - During British rule, India was a unitary state with significant centralization of power.
 - The Government of India Act, 1935, introduced federal features with separate powers for the Centre and provinces, laying the foundation for future Centre-State relations.
- **Post-Independence Period (1947-1966):**
 - The Government of India Act, 1935 formed the basis of the Indian Constitution, which adopted a federal structure with a strong Centre.
 - The Constitution outlined the distribution of powers between the Centre and states in the Seventh Schedule, with three lists—Union List, State List, and Concurrent List—detailing the subjects under each jurisdiction.
- **Nehruvian Era (1947-1964):**
 - Jawaharlal Nehru advocated for a strong Centre to maintain national unity and integrity.
 - The Planning Commission was established to promote economic planning, leading to a centralization of economic decision-making.

Note:

➤ Era of Linguistic Reorganization (1956-1966):

- in 1953, the government established the **Fazal Ali Commission** to investigate and address the demands of various states for separation on linguistic basis.
- Based on the recommendation of this commission, the States Reorganization Act, 1956, was introduced, which was a significant step in reorganizing states along linguistic lines.
- This period saw tensions between linguistic states and the Centre over issues of language, culture, and identity.

➤ Period of Political Turmoil (1967-1984):

- The 1967 general elections resulted in the rise of non-Congress governments in several states, leading to a shift in Centre-State dynamics.
- The Sarkaria Commission (1983) was set up to examine and recommend changes to Centre-State relations, highlighting the need for cooperative federalism.

➤ Era of Economic Reforms (1991-present):

- Economic liberalization in 1991 led to changes in the fiscal relationship between the Centre and states.
- The formation of the NITI Aayog in 2015 replaced the Planning Commission, signaling a shift towards cooperative federalism.

Influence of Constitutional Provisions and Judicial Interpretations:

➤ Constitutional Provisions:

- Articles 245-255 define the legislative relations between the Centre and states, ensuring a division of powers.
- Articles 256-263 detail the executive relations, emphasizing cooperation and coordination between the Centre and states.
- Article 356 provides for President's Rule in states in case of constitutional breakdown.

➤ Judicial Interpretations:

- The Supreme Court has played a crucial role in interpreting and clarifying the constitutional provisions related to Centre-State relations.
- Landmark cases such as *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India* (1994) have established principles regarding the misuse of Article 356 and the autonomy of states.

Contemporary Issues and Suggestions:

- **Goods and Services Tax (GST):** The implementation of GST represents a significant shift in fiscal federalism, aiming to streamline taxation but also leading to debates over revenue sharing and States' autonomy.
- **Inter-State Water Disputes:** Water being a State subject, disputes over river water-sharing highlight the complexities in Centre-State relations, often necessitating central intervention for resolution.
- **National Security and Law Enforcement:** Issues like terrorism and internal security require coordination between the Centre and States, sometimes leading to tensions over jurisdiction and control.

Conclusion:

The evolution of Centre-State relations in India reflects a dynamic process influenced by historical, political, and constitutional factors. While the Constitution provides a framework for these relations, judicial interpretations have helped clarify and define the boundaries of power between the Centre and states. As India continues to evolve as a federal democracy, it is essential.

10. Discuss the significance of Article 3 of the Indian Constitution in the context of territorial reorganization and its implications for federalism. (250 Words)

Approach:

- Begin the answer by introducing Article 3 of the Indian Constitution.
- Discuss the significance of Article 3 of the Indian Constitution in the context of territorial reorganization.
- Analyze the implications of Article 3 for Indian Federalism.
- Conclude as per the requirement of keywords.

Introduction:

Article 3 of the Indian Constitution grants the Parliament the power to form new states, alter the boundaries of existing states, or merge two or more states. This article is crucial as it impacts the territorial integrity and federal structure of India.

Note:

Body:**Significance of Article 3:**

- **Territorial Reorganization:**
 - Article 3 provides a legal framework for the reorganization of states based on administrative, linguistic, cultural, and historical considerations.
 - For example, the creation of Telangana from Andhra Pradesh in 2014 was based on demands for a separate state due to distinct cultural and historical factors.
- **Promotion of Regional Aspirations:**
 - It allows for the recognition and accommodation of regional aspirations.
 - The formation of states like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Uttarakhand fulfilled the long-standing demands of tribal and marginalized communities for separate states.
- **Enhanced Administrative Efficiency:**
 - Territorial reorganization under Article 3 can lead to improved administrative efficiency and governance.
 - Smaller states are often more manageable and responsive to local needs, leading to better delivery of services and development outcomes.
- **Preservation of Unity in Diversity:**
 - While reorganizing states, Article 3 ensures the preservation of India's unity in diversity by recognizing and respecting the unique identities and cultures of different regions.
 - The periodic reorganization of states in the Northeast, such as the creation of separate states like Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Mizoram, illustrates the application of Article 3 to accommodate ethnic and cultural diversity.
- **Flexibility in Federal Structure:**
 - Article 3 provides flexibility in the federal structure by allowing for changes in state boundaries as per the evolving needs and aspirations of the people. This flexibility helps in adapting to new socio-political realities and challenges.

Implications for Federalism:

- **Unilateral Powers to Centre:**
 - Article 3 provides unilateral powers to the centre over the states by requiring parliamentary approval for any changes in state boundaries.

- **Checks and Balances:**
 - The provision for state legislatures' views to be considered ensures that the reorganization is not arbitrary and respects the federal principles enshrined in the Constitution. This provides a check on the central government's power.
- **Preservation of Unity:**
 - While allowing for reorganization, Article 3 also emphasizes the importance of maintaining the country's unity and integrity.
 - Any alterations in state boundaries must be in the national interest and promote the well-being of the people.
- **Constitutional Safeguards:**
 - Article 3 includes safeguards such as requiring the President's assent and consultation with the concerned states.
 - These safeguards protect against hasty or politically motivated reorganizations that could disrupt federal harmony.
- **Judicial Review:**
 - The Supreme Court has the authority to review the constitutionality of actions taken under Article 3, ensuring that any reorganization adheres to the principles of federalism and does not violate the basic structure of the Constitution.

Conclusion:

Article 3 of the Indian Constitution plays a crucial role in the territorial reorganization of states, balancing the need for administrative efficiency with the preservation of federal principles. Its significance lies in its ability to accommodate regional aspirations while maintaining the unity and integrity of India.

11. Discuss the significance of judicial review in upholding the principles of the Constitution. Provide examples highlighting its role in India's democratic framework. (250 Words)

Approach:

- Begin the answer by introducing the Judicial Review.
- Discuss the significance of judicial review in upholding the principles of the Constitution.
- Illustrate examples highlighting its role in India's democratic framework.
- Conclude as per the requirement of keywords.

Note:

Introduction:

Judicial review stands as a cornerstone in upholding the principles enshrined in the Constitution of India. It serves as a mechanism to ensure the supremacy of the Constitution, maintain the delicate balance of power among the organs of the state, and safeguard fundamental rights of citizens.

Body:**Judicial Review Upholding Constitutional Principles Along With Their Examples:**

- **Ensuring Constitutional Supremacy:**
 - Judicial review empowers the judiciary to review the constitutionality of legislative and executive actions. This ensures that laws and policies conform to the principles laid down in the Constitution.
 - For instance, in *Kesavananda Bharati vs. State of Kerala (1973)*, the Supreme Court asserted that the Parliament cannot alter the basic structure of the Constitution, thus affirming its supremacy.
- **Protecting Fundamental Rights:**
 - One of the primary functions of judicial review is to protect fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution.
 - Through landmark judgments like *Maneka Gandhi vs. Union of India (1978)* and *K.S. Puttaswamy vs. Union of India (2017)*, the judiciary has expanded the scope of fundamental rights, ensuring their enforcement against both state and non-state actors.

Role in India's Democratic Framework:

- **Checking Executive and Legislative Actions:**
 - Judicial review acts as a check on the powers of the executive and legislative branches, preventing them from overstepping their constitutional limits.
 - For example, in *Indira Gandhi vs. Raj Narain (1975)*, the Supreme Court declared the election of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi as void on grounds of electoral malpractice, asserting the judiciary's role in upholding electoral integrity.
- **Safeguarding Federalism:**
 - India's federal structure is preserved through judicial review, as the judiciary adjudicates disputes between the Union and State governments.

- Cases like *State of Karnataka vs. Union of India (1977)* have delineated the respective powers of the Centre and States, fostering cooperative federalism.

Ensuring Accountability and Good Governance:**➤ Curbing Arbitrary Actions:**

- Judicial review acts as a deterrent against arbitrary actions by the government, promoting accountability and good governance.
 - In *Vishaka vs. State of Rajasthan (1997)*, the Supreme Court laid down guidelines to prevent sexual harassment at workplaces, compelling the government to enact laws for ensuring workplace safety.

➤ Promoting Rule of Law:

- By interpreting laws and ensuring their conformity with the Constitution, judicial review strengthens the rule of law.
 - Notable instances include *S. R. Bommai vs. Union of India (1994)*, where the Supreme Court upheld the principle of secularism and dismissed the imposition of President's rule in states for political reasons.

Conclusion:

Judicial review plays a pivotal role in upholding the principles of the Constitution, ensuring governmental accountability, protecting fundamental rights, and promoting good governance. As India's democratic framework evolves, the significance of judicial review remains indispensable in preserving the ideals of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity enshrined in the Constitution.

12. Compare and contrast the separation of powers, federal structure, and judicial review mechanisms in the Indian, US, and UK constitutional frameworks. Analyze their implications. (250 Words)

Approach:

- Begin the answer by introducing the constitutional frameworks in India, US and UK.
- Compare and contrast the separation of powers, federal structure, and judicial review mechanisms in India, US and UK.
- Analyze the implications of the separation of powers, federal structure, and judicial review mechanisms.
- Conclude as per the requirement of keywords.

Note:

Introduction:

Separation of powers, federal structure, and judicial review are fundamental principles in constitutional governance across various countries. India, the United States (US), and the United Kingdom (UK) each have distinct frameworks for these principles, with implications that shape their political systems and governance.

Body:**Separation of Powers:**➤ **India:**

- India's Constitution embodies a system of parliamentary democracy with a fusion of powers.
- While the Constitution envisages separation of powers among the legislature, executive, and judiciary, there's a significant overlap between the executive and legislature due to the parliamentary system.
- The President, who is the head of state, exercises executive powers, but real executive authority lies with the Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers.

➤ **US:**

- The US Constitution establishes a strict separation of powers among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Each branch has its own distinct powers and responsibilities outlined in the Constitution.
- This separation is reinforced by the system of checks and balances, where each branch has the authority to check the powers of the other branches to prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful.

➤ **UK:**

- Unlike the US, the UK does not have a codified constitution but operates under a system of parliamentary sovereignty.
- While there is a nominal separation of powers among the legislature, executive, and judiciary, the fusion of powers is more evident.
- The Prime Minister, who is the head of government, is also a member of the legislature (House of Commons). This blurs the lines between the executive and legislature.

Federal Structure:➤ **India:**

- India is a federal country with a strong central government. The Constitution delineates powers between the Union (central) government and the state governments.
- However, the Indian federal structure is characterized by a tilt towards centralization, with the Union government having more powers than the states, especially in crucial areas like defense, foreign affairs, and finance.

➤ **US:**

- The United States is a federal republic with a clear division of powers between the federal government and the state governments.
- The Constitution enumerates powers granted to the federal government, while all other powers are reserved for the states.
- This division of powers is designed to protect state autonomy while ensuring a strong central government.

➤ **UK:**

- The UK has a unitary system of government, meaning that power is concentrated at the national level, with little autonomy granted to subnational entities.
- While there are devolved governments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland with varying degrees of legislative power, ultimate authority still rests with the UK Parliament at Westminster.

Judicial Review Mechanisms:➤ **India:**

- Judicial review, integral part of India's constitutional framework, provides Supreme Court the power to review the constitutionality of laws passed by the legislature and actions taken by the executive.
- The Supreme Court has delivered several landmark judgments that have shaped the course of Indian democracy and governance.

➤ **US:**

- The US Supreme Court is widely regarded as one of the most powerful judicial bodies in the world, primarily due to its authority of judicial review.
- The Court has the power to declare laws enacted by Congress or actions taken by the President unconstitutional.

Note:

- This power serves as a check on the other branches of government and ensures that they operate within the bounds of the Constitution.

➤ **UK:**

- Unlike India and the US, the UK does not have a codified constitution with explicit provisions for judicial review.
- However, the principle of parliamentary sovereignty allows the UK courts to review the compatibility of laws with EU law and the European Convention on Human Rights.
- Despite this, parliamentary supremacy remains a defining feature of the UK's constitutional framework.

Implications:

➤ **India:**

- India's parliamentary democracy allows for flexibility but can lead to issues of accountability and concentration of power in the hands of the executive.
- The federal structure strives to balance central authority with regional autonomy, but challenges such as inter-state disputes and center-state relations persist.

➤ **US:**

- In the US, the strict separation of powers and robust system of checks and balances have contributed to political stability and the protection of individual liberties.
- However, gridlock and polarization between branches of government can hinder effective governance.

➤ **UK:**

- The UK's fusion of powers and lack of codified constitution provide for strong executive leadership but raise concerns about democratic accountability and protection of rights, particularly in the absence of explicit judicial review provisions.

Conclusion:

While the principles of separation of powers, federalism, and judicial review are foundational to constitutional governance, their implementation varies significantly across India, the US, and the UK. Understanding these differences and their implications is crucial for analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of each country's political system.

13. Discuss the roles and significance of statutory, regulatory, and quasi-judicial bodies in governance, with examples, highlighting their impact on public administration. (250 Words)

Approach:

- Briefly introduce the need for statutory, regulatory, and quasi-judicial bodies in a democracy.
- Discuss the roles and significance of statutory, regulatory, and quasi-judicial bodies in governance
- Highlight their impact on public administration.
- Conclude Suitably.

Introduction:

Effective democracy hinges on **well-structured governance machinery**. In India, beyond the legislature, executive, and judiciary, a network of **statutory, regulatory, and quasi-judicial bodies** plays a crucial role in shaping public administration, safeguarding citizens' rights, and maintaining checks and balances within the system.

Body:

Statutory Bodies:

- **Role:** They are established by an act of Parliament or state legislatures and derive their authority from the respective acts.
 - These bodies are entrusted with specific functions and responsibilities, and their powers are clearly defined within the legal framework.
- **Significance:** They bring specialised expertise to public administration, improve efficiency, and ensure adherence to legislative intent.
- **Example:**
 - **Reserve Bank of India (Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934)**
 - **Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) (Cinematograph Act, 1952)**
 - **National Human Rights Commission (Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993)**

Regulatory Bodies:

- **Role:** These bodies are often subsets of statutory bodies tasked with **formulating regulations** and overseeing their implementation within a particular sector. They can impose penalties for non-compliance.

Note:

- **Significance:** Regulatory bodies ensure a level playing field, protect consumer interests, and promote sectoral growth.
- **Example:**
 - The **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** regulates the telecommunications sector, prescribing tariffs and ensuring fair competition.
 - The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** regulates food safety and quality standards.

Quasi-Judicial Bodies:

- **Role:** These bodies combine features of both **executive and judicial branches**. They adjudicate disputes arising from the application of laws and regulations, often following simplified procedures compared to regular courts.
- **Significance:** They provide faster and more accessible avenues for dispute resolution, decongesting regular courts and ensuring quicker justice.
- **Examples:**
 - The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** adjudicates environmental disputes, while the **National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission** addresses consumer grievances.

Impact on Public Administration:

- **Enhanced Expertise and Informed Decision-Making:** These bodies leverage specialised knowledge to tackle complex issues, enabling data-driven decisions within public administration.
 - For instance, the **World Bank** has kept India's growth forecast at **6.3% for FY24**. The RBI uses these data-driven strategies to regulate interest rates, aiming to control inflation and promote economic growth.
- **Streamlined Processes and Improved Service Delivery:** Statutory and regulatory bodies establish **clear guidelines and procedures**, leading to measurable improvements in service delivery by government agencies.
 - **Example:** FSSAI has recently clarified that the term '**Health Drink**' is not defined or standardised anywhere under the **FSS Act 2006**
- **Fostering Accountability and Compliance:** Regulatory bodies set standards, enforce compliance, and hold stakeholders accountable for their actions, demonstrably improving **ethical practices**.

- **Promoting Transparency and Citizen Centricity:** Quasi-judicial bodies provide accessible platforms for citizens to address grievances, leading to a more transparent and responsive public administration system.
 - Following a massive fire at Delhi's Ghazipur landfill, the National Green Tribunal took suo motu cognizance and referred to dump sites in cities as **"time bombs."**
- **Adaptability and Addressing Emerging Challenges:** These bodies can adapt and evolve regulations to address new challenges and technological advancements, demonstrably tackling emerging issues.
 - **SEBI's** recent regulations for **algorithmic trading** are a data-driven response to a new challenge.

Conclusion:

In rapidly evolving circumstances, the roles of statutory, regulatory, and quasi-judicial bodies transcend mere governance; they represent the cornerstone of a progressive society. These bodies not only enforce laws but also shape the future by fostering innovation, ensuring accountability, and protecting fundamental rights.

14. Analyze the factors behind the Supreme Court's decision to strike down the Electoral Bonds Scheme. Propose recommendations for improving transparency in political funding in India. (250 words)

Approach:

- Start the answer with a discussion that sets a context for the question.
- Analyze the factors behind the Supreme Court's decision to strike down the Electoral Bonds Scheme.
- Propose recommendations for improving transparency in political funding in India.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

Electoral bonds are money instruments like promissory notes, which can be bought by companies and individuals in India from the State Bank of India (SBI) and donated to a political party, which can then encash these bonds. In a unanimous verdict, the Supreme Court declared the electoral bond schemes unconstitutional and ordered the State Bank of India (SBI) to cease issuing electoral bonds with immediate effect.

Note:

Body:**Some of the key factors behind the Supreme Court's decision to strike down the Electoral Bonds Scheme:**

- **Violation of the Right to Information:** The court held that the scheme, by permitting anonymous political donations, infringed upon the fundamental right to information under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.
 - It pointed out that such a right is not only restricted to fulfilling the freedom of speech and expression but plays a key role in furthering participatory democracy by holding the government accountable. Thus, it is not just a means to an end but an end in itself.
- **Possibility of Quid Pro Quo Arrangements:** The verdict highlighted that economic inequality leads to differing levels of political engagement because of the deep association between money and politics. As a result, there is a legitimate possibility that financial contribution to a political party would lead to quid pro quo arrangements.
- **Not Proportionally Justified to Curb Black Money:** Relying on the proportionality test laid down in its 2017 verdict in the **KS Puttaswamy case**, which upheld the right to privacy, it underscored that the government did not adopt the least restrictive method to achieve its objective.
 - As examples of such least restrictive methods, the Chief Justice cited the ₹20,000 cap on anonymous donations and the concept of Electoral Trusts which facilitate the collection of political contributions from donors.
- **Unlimited Corporate Donations Violate Free and Fair Elections:** The court found that amendment made to Section 182 of the Companies Act, 2013, permitting unlimited political contributions by companies, to be manifestly arbitrary.
 - The provision allows Indian companies to make financial contributions to political parties under specific conditions. However, through the Finance Act, of 2017, crucial changes were introduced, including the removal of the prior cap on the amount that companies can donate to political parties - 7.5% of the average profits of the preceding three fiscal years.
- **Amendment to Section 29C of RPA, 1951 Quashed:** Initially, Section 29C of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, required parties to declare all contributions

higher than ₹20,000, and specify whether they were received from individual persons or companies.

- However, the Finance Act, of 2017, amended this provision to create an exception wherein such a requirement would not apply to donations received through electoral bonds.
- Striking down the amendment, the court observed that the original requirement to disclose contributions of more than ₹ 20,000 effectively balanced the voters' right to information with the right to privacy of donors.

Some measures required to improve transparency in political funding in India:

- **Comprehensive Legal Reforms:** Enact and implement comprehensive legal reforms to regulate political party finances, election expenditures, and the sources of funding.
 - This may include revisiting and strengthening existing laws or introducing new legislation to address loopholes.
 - Encourage cross-party consensus on the need for electoral funding reforms
- **Independent Electoral Oversight:**
 - Strengthen the role of independent electoral oversight bodies, such as the Election Commission of India, to monitor and enforce compliance with campaign finance laws. Provide these bodies with adequate resources and autonomy.
- **Limits on Expenditure:** Expenditure limits safeguard politics from a financial arms race. They relieve parties from the pressure of competing for money even before they start to compete for votes. Though the RoPA, 1951 sets a limit on expenditure incurred by a candidate but it doesn't set any such cap on the political parties.
 - Some countries impose an expenditure limit on political parties. For example, in the UK, political parties are not allowed to spend more than Euro 30,000 (about Rs 30 lakh) per seat.
- **Transparency in Political Party Funding:** Mandate political parties to disclose all sources of funding, including details of donors and the amounts received.
 - Ensure that this information is easily accessible to the public and regularly updated.
 - Introduce an upper limit on the amount that can be donated to political parties to curb the influence of large corporate contributions.

Note:

- In the UK, a party needs to report donations received from a single source amounting to a total of more than Pounds 7,500 in a calendar year. The analogous limit in Germany is Euros 10,000.
- **Providing Public Funding to Parties: The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2008)** advocated partial state funding to curb “illegitimate and unnecessary funding” of election expenses.
 - For instance, in Germany, parties receive public funds on the basis of their importance within the political system.
- **The Chilean Experiment:** Under the Chilean system of “reserved contributions”, donors could transfer to the Chilean Electoral Service the money they wished to donate to parties, and the Electoral Service would then forward the sum to the party without revealing the donor’s identity.
 - If the complete anonymity system worked perfectly, the political party would not be able to ascertain the sum donated by any specific donor — and would find it extremely difficult to strike quid pro quo arrangements.
- **Establishing National Election Fund:** Another option would be to establish a National Election Fund to which all donors could contribute. The funds could be allocated to parties based on their electoral performance. This would eliminate the so-called concern about donors’ reprisals.
 - Under the Chilean system of “reserved contributions”, donors could transfer to the Chilean Electoral Service the money they wished to donate to parties, and the Electoral Service would then forward the sum to the party without revealing the donor’s identity.

Conclusion:

By embracing transparency in electoral funding in India, the nation can fortify the foundations of its democratic institutions and empower citizens with the knowledge and confidence that their electoral choices are influenced by ideas and values rather than the undue influence of financial interests.

15. The efficacy of the reservation policy depends on its capacity to authentically elevate the most disadvantaged segments of society. Evaluate this statement in light of the Maharashtra State Reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes Bill, 2024. (250 words)

Approach:

- Start the answer with a discussion that sets a context for the question.
- Discuss the efficacy of the reservation policy in light of the Maharashtra State Reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes Bill, 2024.
- Propose strategies for developing a reservation policy that genuinely uplifts the most marginalized segments of society.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

Recently, the Maharashtra State Assembly unanimously passed a bill that allocates 10% reservation in education and government jobs to the Maratha community. The Bill specifies the Maratha community as a Socially and Educationally Backward Class under **Article 342A (3)** of the Indian Constitution.

Body:

Some Key Arguments in Favour of Maratha Reservation:

- **Recommended by Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission:** The Maharashtra State Reservation for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes Bill 2024, was drafted based on a Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission (**Shukre Commission**) report.
 - This report identified the Marathas as socially and educationally backward, justifying the need for a reservation.
 - The commission’s report highlighted “exceptional circumstances and extraordinary situations” justifying reservations to the Maratha community above the 50% ceiling set by the Supreme Court
- **Historical Marginalization:** Despite being a historically dominant and influential community in Maharashtra, Marathas argue that they have faced marginalization in education, employment, and other spheres. They believe that reservation status will help address historical injustices and uplift the community.
 - The **Gaikwad Commission** found that 76.86 % of Maratha families were engaged in agriculture and farm labor, around 50% lived in mud houses,

Note:

only 35.39% had personal tap water connections, 13.42% of Marathas were not literate with only 35.31% having primary education, 43.79% having cleared HSC and SSC.

- **Economic Disparities:** Many Marathas, particularly those in rural areas, face economic challenges and lack access to opportunities for socio-economic advancement. Reservation is seen as a means to provide them with better access to education and employment opportunities.
 - The Shukre Commission describes extreme poverty, the decline in agricultural income, and partitions in land holdings as reasons for the poor status of the Marathas. It also notes that 94% of farmers who have died by suicide in the state belonged to the Maratha community.
- **Inadequate Representation in Public Services:** The demand for the Maratha reservation has been fueled by concerns over access to education and employment, particularly in competitive exams where limited seats are available.
 - The Shukre Commission finds inadequate representation of the community in all sectors of public services and says the Marathas have remained “completely out of the mainstream” due to their backwardness.
- **Social Mobility:** Reservation for Marathas is seen as a means to facilitate upward social mobility within the community, enabling individuals from marginalized backgrounds to access overall social advancement.
 - The Shukre commission notes that the population of Marathas in the state is 28%, while 84% of them are not advanced, adding that such a large backward community cannot be added to the OBC bracket.

Some Key Arguments Against the Maratha Reservation:

- **Lack of Social and Economic Backwardness:** Marathas historically held significant land ownership and political power. Critics argue they may not meet the criteria for reservation as socially and economically backward.
 - Marathas own over 75% of the land in the State as well as 86 of the 105 sugar factories besides controlling about 55% of educational institutions and over 70% of cooperative bodies.

- **Domination in Political Landscape:** Marathas have dominated the political landscape with 11 of the 20 Chief Ministers coming from the community, and over 60% of all the members of the Legislative Assemblies of Maharashtra have been Marathas since 1962.
- **Need for a Detailed Inquiry:** The Commission concluded its survey within a span of 9 days (from January 23 to January 31, 2024). However, as the report has not been made public, there is little information available regarding the sample design, the questionnaire used, or the methodology employed for data analysis.
 - The bill declares Marathas to be socially and educationally backward, but the details available from the Shukre Commission’s report, seem to primarily emphasize the community’s economic backwardness. Almost nothing concrete is available about their social and educational backwardness.
- **Legal Concerns:** Maharashtra currently has a reservation of 52%, including various categories such as SC, ST, OBC, Vimukt Jati, Nomadic Tribes, and others. With the addition of 10% reservation for the Marathas, the total reservation in the state will now reach 62%.
 - Extending reservations beyond the 50% cap set by the Supreme Court may also raise legal concerns.
- **Political Motivations:** Some critics question the timing and political motivations behind the push for the Maratha reservation.
 - They argue the decision may be driven by electoral considerations rather than genuine concerns for social justice.

Some Strategies to Formulate Effective Reservation Policy :

- **Need for a Comprehensive Socio-economic Census:** Addressing demands of politically dominant groups such as the Marathas, which have stratifications due to significant intra-community variations in terms of income and educational outcomes, suggests a case for a comprehensive socio-economic census.
 - Such a census will establish the true nature of backwardness and discrimination across States and could even clarify a new means of providing affirmative action based on the data while staying true to principles of social justice.

Note:

- **Evidence-Based Legislation:** Ensure that the Maratha Reservation Bill is legally sound and withstands judicial scrutiny by providing robust empirical data to justify the reservation beyond the 50% quota ceiling set by the Supreme Court.
- **Need for Comprehensive Approach:** Increasing more employment opportunities is often considered more essential than expanding reservation policies.
 - The government should adopt integrated policies that combine reservation with targeted welfare programs, skill development initiatives, and infrastructure projects to ensure holistic development for Marathas.
- **Ensure Fair Competition without Discrimination:** Ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly and without discrimination is a fundamental aspect of promoting equality. This means that people should not face disadvantages or privileges based on their background, such as their parents' status.
 - Encouraging competition on a level playing field, where individuals have equal opportunities to succeed based on their skills, abilities, and efforts, is crucial. This promotes excellence by motivating individuals to strive for their best.
- **Balancing the Reservation and Merit:** While giving reservations to the communities, the efficiency of the administration has to be looked upon too. Reservation beyond the limit will lead to ignorance of the merit, which will disturb the entire administration.
 - The main purpose of reservation is to address the issue of historical wrongs done to the less advantaged communities but the merit beyond a certain point must not be neglected too.

Conclusion:

The reservation policy serves as a crucial tool for fostering a strong and inclusive society in India, but its effectiveness hinges on its ability to genuinely uplift the most marginalized sections of society. However, when reservation benefits are misused or manipulated for personal gain, it can undermine the integrity of the policy and perpetuate inequalities.

16. What is the present financial condition of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in India? Analyze the hurdles PRIs face in generating internal revenue and suggest measures to strengthen their financial autonomy. (250 words)

Approach:

- Start the answer by mentioning the provisions in the Indian Constitution that empower local bodies in the country.
- Discuss the present financial condition of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in India.
- Analyze the hurdles PRIs face in generating internal revenue.
- Suggest measures to strengthen their financial autonomy.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts empower local bodies in India for self-government, including fiscal devolution and revenue generation. Emanating from these central acts, various States Panchayati Raj Acts have made provisions for taxation and collection. Based on the provisions of these Acts, panchayats have made efforts to generate their own resources to the maximum extent.

Body:

The Current Status of Finances of PRIs :

➤ Revenue Statistics:

- As per RBI, in FY 2022-23, panchayats recorded a total revenue of Rs 35,354 crore.
- However, only Rs 737 crore was generated through their own tax revenue which can be earned through taxes on profession and trades, land revenue, stamps and registration fees, taxes on property, and service tax.
- Non-tax revenue amounted to Rs 1,494 crore, primarily from interest payments and Panchayati Raj programs.
- Panchayats received Rs 24,699 crore in grants from the Central government and Rs 8,148 crore from State governments.

➤ Revenue Per Panchayat:

- On an average, each panchayat earned just Rs 21,000 from its own tax revenue and Rs 73,000 from non-tax revenue.
- Conversely, grants from the Central government amounted to approximately Rs 17 lakh per panchayat, with State government grants totaling over Rs 3.25 lakh per panchayat.

Note:

➤ State Revenue Share and Inter-State Disparities:

- Panchayats' share in their respective State's own revenue remains minimal.
 - For example, in Andhra Pradesh, revenue receipts of panchayats form just 0.1% of the State's own revenue, while in Uttar Pradesh, it forms 2.5%, the highest among states.
- There are wide variations among states regarding the average revenue earned per panchayat.
 - Kerala and West Bengal lead with average revenues of over Rs 60 lakh and Rs 57 lakh per panchayat, respectively.
 - The revenue was over Rs 30 lakh per panchayat in Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Odisha, Sikkim, and Tamil Nadu.
 - States like Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Mizoram, Punjab, and Uttarakhand have significantly lower average revenues, less than Rs 6 lakh per panchayat.

The hurdles that PRIs face in generating internal revenue :

➤ Excessive Reliance on Grants:

- "Panchayats earn only 1% of the revenue through taxes," with the rest being raised as grants from the State and Centre. It specifically points out that 80% of the revenue is from the Centre and 15% from the States.

➤ Disparities Across States:

- In several states, gram panchayats lack the authority to collect taxes, while in numerous others, intermediate and district panchayats are not delegated the responsibility of tax collection.
- There is a need to demarcate Own Source of Revenue (OSR) for the entire three-tier panchayats to ensure equitable sharing.

➤ General Aversion Towards Generating Own Income:

- With the increase in the allocation of Central Finance Commission (CFC) grants, panchayats are evincing less interest in the collection of OSR.
- The allocation for rural local bodies from the 10th and 11th CFC was Rs 4,380 crore and Rs 8,000 crore, respectively.
 - But in the 14th and 15th CFCs, there was a huge increase by way of allocating Rs 2,00,202 and Rs 2,80,733 crore, respectively.

- The tax collected in 2018-19 was Rs 3,12,075 lakh which diminished in 2021-2022 to Rs 2,71,386 lakh. The non-tax revenue collected for the same period was Rs 2,33,863 lakh and Rs 2,09,864 lakh.

➤ Incentivisation by State Governments:

- At one time, panchayats were in competition to raise OSR for their commitment to fulfill basic needs. This has now given place to dependency on allocations and reimbursements through different finance commissions.
- Some States have a policy of incentivization by providing matching grants but these were sparingly implemented.

➤ Impediments Due to Freebie Culture:

- Despite every enabling factor to raise revenue, panchayats confront several impediments in resource mobilization: the 'freebie culture' rampant in society is the cause for the antipathy in paying taxes. Elected representatives feel that imposing taxes would alter their popularity adversely.

Suggestions Required for Boosting the Financial Resources of PRIs :

➤ Recommendations of Expert Committee Report:

- The report of the expert committee constituted by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj on OSR of rural local bodies elaborates on the details of State Acts that have incorporated tax and non-tax revenue that can be collected and utilised by panchayats.
- Property tax, cess on land revenue, surcharge on additional stamp duty, tolls, tax on profession, advertisement, user charges for water and sanitation and lighting are the **major OSRs where panchayats can earn maximum income.**

➤ Establishing Conducive Environment:

- Panchayats are expected to establish a conducive environment for taxation by implementing appropriate financial regulations.
- This includes making decisions regarding the tax and non-tax bases, **determining their rates, establishing provisions for periodic revisions, defining exemption areas, and enacting effective tax management and enforcement laws for collection.**

Note:

- **Diversifying Sources for Non-Tax Revenues:**
 - The huge potential for non-tax revenue includes fees, rent, and income from investment sales and hires charges and receipts. There are also innovative projects that can generate OSR.
 - This covers income from rural business hubs, innovative commercial ventures, renewable energy projects, carbon credits. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds and donations.
- **Leveraging Local Resources:**
 - Gram sabhas have a significant role in fostering self-sufficiency and sustainable development at the grass-roots level by leveraging local resources for revenue generation.
 - They can be engaged in **planning, decision-making, and implementation of revenue-generating initiatives** that range from agriculture and tourism to small-scale industries.
 - They have the authority to impose taxes, fees, and levies, directing the funds towards local development projects, public services, and social welfare programmes.
- **Fostering Partnerships:**
 - Through transparent financial management and inclusive participation, gram sabhas ensure accountability and foster community trust, ultimately empowering villages to become economically independent and resilient.
 - Thus, gram sabhas need to promote entrepreneurship, and foster **partnerships with external stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of revenue generation efforts.**
- **Recommendations of RBI:**
 - The RBI suggests promoting greater decentralisation and empowering local leaders and officials. It advocates for measures to enhance financial autonomy and sustainability of Panchayati Raj.
 - The report emphasised that PRIs can enhance **resource utilisation by adopting transparent budgeting, fiscal discipline**, community involvement in development prioritisation, staff training, and rigorous monitoring and evaluation.
- **Educating Elected Representatives and Public:**
 - There is a need to educate elected representatives and the public on the significance of raising revenue to develop panchayats as self-governing institutions.

Conclusion:

Ultimately, the dependency syndrome for grants has to be minimized in due course so that panchayats will be able to survive on their own resources. Panchayats can only achieve such a state of affairs when there are dedicated efforts at all tiers of governance, which includes even the State and central level.

17. Explain the concept of the “Basic Structure of the Constitution” as propounded by the Supreme Court. How does it impact the amending power of the Parliament? (250 Words)

Approach:

- Begin the answer by introducing the Basic Structure of the Constitution.
- Discuss the concept of the “Basic Structure of the Constitution” as propounded by the Supreme Court.
- Highlight its impact on the amending power of the Parliament
- Conclude as per the requirement of keywords.

Introduction:

The Basic Structure Doctrine, established by the Indian Supreme Court in the landmark case of **Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973)**, holds that certain features of the Constitution are immutable and cannot be altered even through constitutional amendments. This doctrine emerged to safeguard the core principles and values enshrined in the Constitution, ensuring its stability and integrity.

Body:

Components of the Basic Structure:

➤ Democratic Framework:

- The doctrine upholds the democratic principles embedded in the Constitution, including free and fair elections, separation of powers, and the rule of law.
- These principles form the foundation of India’s governance structure and are essential for upholding the rights and freedoms of its citizens.

➤ Federalism:

- The Basic Structure Doctrine recognizes the federal structure of the Constitution, which ensures a balance of power between the central and state governments. Any attempt to undermine federal principles would violate the basic structure.

Note:

- **Secularism:**
 - Secularism, a fundamental feature of the Indian Constitution, prohibits the state from favoring any particular religion.
 - This principle promotes religious harmony and ensures equality among citizens irrespective of their faith.
- **Judicial Review:**
 - The doctrine reinforces the principle of judicial review, empowering the judiciary to strike down laws that violate fundamental rights or deviate from the constitutional framework.
 - This ensures the supremacy of the Constitution and protects individual liberties.
- **Fundamental Rights:**
 - Fundamental rights are considered an integral part of the basic structure, as they safeguard the dignity and freedoms of citizens.
 - Any amendment that dilutes or abrogates these rights would be unconstitutional.

Impact on Parliamentary Amending Power:

While Parliament possesses the **authority to amend the Constitution under Article 368**, the Basic Structure Doctrine imposes limitations on this amending power:

- **Constitutional Limitation:** Parliament cannot amend the Constitution in a manner that violates its basic structure. Any amendment deemed to be in conflict with the basic structure would be null and void.
 - **Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain (1975):** In this case, the court upheld the Basic Structure doctrine and struck down the 39th Amendment, which removed the authority of the Supreme Court to adjudicate petitions regarding elections of the President, Vice President, Prime Minister and Speaker of the Lok Sabha.
 - **Minerva Mills v. Union of India (1980):** The court reiterated the Basic Structure doctrine and held that the power to amend the Constitution is not a power to destroy its basic structure or framework.
- **Judicial Oversight:** The judiciary acts as the guardian of the Constitution and has the authority to review constitutional amendments. If a constitutional amendment is challenged in court for violating the basic structure, the judiciary will evaluate its compatibility with the core principles of the Constitution.

- The Supreme Court, time and again has reiterated in the judgments like IR Coelho case that Judicial Review is part of the basic structure.
- **Evolutionary Interpretation:** Over time, the Supreme Court has expanded the scope of the basic structure to adapt to changing socio-political realities. This ensures that the Constitution remains relevant and resilient in the face of new challenges.
 - **Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973):** This landmark case is the foundation of the Basic Structure doctrine. The court held that while Parliament has the power to amend the Constitution under Article 368, it cannot alter its basic structure.

Conclusion:

The Basic Structure Doctrine stands as a bulwark against arbitrary constitutional amendments and ensures the preservation of the foundational principles of the Indian Constitution. While it imposes constraints on parliamentary power, it also reinforces the supremacy of the Constitution and protects the rights and liberties of the people.

18. Discuss the interplay between the Parliamentary System and the Federal System in India. How does it contribute to the country's governance and federal structure? (250 Words)

Approach:

- Start the answer by introducing the Parliamentary System and the Federal System in India.
- Illustrate the interplay between the Parliamentary and the Federal Systems.
- Analyze its contribution to the country's governance and federal structure.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

The Indian Constitution establishes a unique governance framework that blends the Parliamentary System with a Federal System. India follows the Parliamentary System of government, where the executive is responsible to the legislature. It also features a Federal System, where powers are divided between the central government and the states.

Note:

Body:**Interplay between the Parliamentary and Federal Systems:**➤ **Cabinet System:**

- The Parliamentary System in India influences the federal structure by ensuring that the Council of Ministers includes members from different states.
- This promotes regional representation and ensures that state interests are considered at the central level.

➤ **Distribution of Powers:**

- The federal structure defines the powers of the central and state governments (7th Schedule), ensuring a balance of power. However, the Parliamentary System allows the central government to intervene in state matters through mechanisms like President's Rule, which can be imposed in case of a breakdown of constitutional machinery in a state.
 - **President's Rule:** The imposition of President's Rule in states under Article 356 reflects the interplay between the Parliamentary and Federal Systems. While it is a tool for maintaining constitutional order, its misuse can lead to conflicts between the Centre and states.

➤ **Legislative Relations:**

- The Parliament can legislate on subjects in the State List under specific circumstances, such as national interest or at the request of two or more states (Art 252).
- This reflects the cooperative nature of federalism in India, where the central and state governments collaborate for effective governance.

➤ **Financial Relations:**

- The federal structure includes mechanisms like Finance Commission (Art 280), which recommends the distribution of financial resources between the Centre and states.
- The Parliamentary System ensures that these recommendations are implemented through budgetary allocations and other financial mechanisms.
 - **Finance Commission:** The recommendations of the Finance Commission, which is a product of the federal structure, are implemented through the Parliamentary System. This ensures that financial resources are distributed equitably among states.

Contribution to Governance:➤ **Accountability:**

- The Parliamentary System ensures that the executive remains accountable to the legislature.
- This accountability extends to both central and state governments, ensuring transparency and responsiveness in governance.

➤ **Efficiency:**

- The fusion of Parliamentary and Federal Systems allows for quick decision-making, as the executive can swiftly respond to legislative needs and challenges. This agility is essential in a diverse country like India.

➤ **Representation:**

- The Parliamentary System ensures that all regions and communities are represented in the government, promoting inclusivity and diversity in governance.
- This representation is crucial for addressing regional disparities and ensuring equitable development.

Contribution to Federal Structure:➤ **Unity and Diversity:**

- The interplay between the Parliamentary and Federal Systems reflects India's commitment to unity in diversity.
- It accommodates the country's diverse linguistic, cultural, and regional identities while maintaining national unity.

➤ **Flexible Federalism:**

- The Indian federal structure is flexible, allowing for the adaptation of governance models to suit regional needs.
- This flexibility is essential in a country as diverse as India, where one size does not fit all.
 - **GST Council:** The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council is an example of cooperative federalism in action. It comprises representatives from the Centre and states and decides on GST rates and other related issues, reflecting a collaborative approach to governance.

➤ **Conflict Resolution:**

- The interplay between the systems provides mechanisms for resolving conflicts between the Centre and states.

Note:

- This includes the Constitutional provisions for dispute resolution and the role of institutions like the Inter-State Council.

Conclusion:

The interplay between the Parliamentary System and the Federal System in India is a testament to the country's commitment to democracy, federalism, and unity in diversity. This interplay ensures that governance is effective, accountable, and inclusive, contributing to India's status as the world's largest democracy.

19. Discuss the significance of the Directive Principles of State Policy in promoting social justice in the Indian Constitution. (250 Words)

Approach:

- Begin the answer by introducing the Directive Principles of State Policy.
- Discuss the significance of the Directive Principles of State Policy in promoting social justice.
- Conclude as per the requirement of keywords.

Introduction:

The Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) are a set of guidelines laid down in Part IV of the Indian Constitution. Though non-justiciable, they serve as a crucial instrument for promoting social justice in India.

Body:

- **Framework for Social Welfare Policies:**
 - DPSP provide a framework for formulating laws and policies aimed at promoting social justice.
 - For instance, **Article 39 directs the state to ensure equal pay for equal work**, which has led to the implementation of minimum wage laws and labor welfare schemes, thereby reducing economic disparities.
- **Eradicating Social Inequalities:**
 - Articles like 38 and 39 aim to minimize inequalities in income, status, and opportunities.
 - Policies such as reservation in education and employment for socially disadvantaged groups like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes are examples of efforts to address historical injustices and promote social equality.

➤ Promotion of Educational Opportunities:

- **Article 45 mandates the state to provide free and compulsory education** for children up to the age of 14.
- This provision has led to the establishment of schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and the Right to Education Act, ensuring access to education for marginalized sections of society, thereby promoting social inclusion.

➤ Empowerment of Weaker Sections:

- DPSP emphasize the protection and empowerment of weaker sections of society.
- Articles 46 and 47 stress the need for special care and attention towards the socio-economic development of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other marginalized communities.
- Initiatives like affirmative action policies and poverty alleviation programs aim to uplift these sections and bridge social gaps.

➤ Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice:

- Articles such as **48A highlight the importance of environmental protection** and sustainable development.
- Environmental degradation often disproportionately affects vulnerable communities.
- Policies promoting sustainable development not only ensure environmental justice but also safeguard the interests of marginalized populations dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods.

➤ Welfare Measures for Labor:

- DPSP advocate for the welfare of laborers and protection of their rights.
- Articles 42 and 43 stress the provision of just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.
- Implementation of labor laws, establishment of minimum wage standards, and initiatives like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) aim to improve the socio-economic conditions of laborers, thereby contributing to social justice.

➤ Strengthening Social Cohesion:

- DPSP play a crucial role in fostering social cohesion and harmony.
- Articles like 44 emphasize the promotion of a uniform civil code to eliminate discriminatory practices based on religion, gender, or caste.

Note:

- Such measures promote the idea of a pluralistic society where every individual enjoys equal rights and opportunities, irrespective of their background.

➤ **Judicial Activism and DPSP:**

- Although non-justiciable, DPSPs have influenced judicial decisions, leading to the evolution of socio-economic rights jurisprudence.
- The judiciary has often invoked DPSP while interpreting fundamental rights, thereby expanding the scope of social justice.
- Landmark judgments like Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala and Minerva Mills v. Union of India illustrate the symbiotic relationship between DPSP and fundamental rights.

Conclusion:

The Directive Principles of State Policy serve as a cornerstone for promoting social justice in the Indian Constitution. Through their multidimensional approach encompassing economic, social, environmental, and political dimensions, DPSP lay the groundwork for a more equitable and inclusive society.

20. Evaluate the effectiveness of affirmative action policies in India's quest for social justice, considering challenges and potential reforms. (250 Words)

Approach:

- Start the answer by introducing affirmative action.
- Illustrate the effectiveness of affirmative action policies in India's quest for social justice.
- Evaluate the persistent challenges and potential reforms required in affirmative action.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction:

Affirmative action policies in India have been implemented to address historical discrimination and promote social justice. These policies, including reservations in education and employment, aim to uplift marginalized communities such as Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

- Affirmative action in India has its roots in the Constitution, with provisions like Article 15(4) and Article 16(4), allowing for reservations in educational institutions and government jobs. The Mandal

Commission report in 1980 further expanded reservation to include OBCs, reflecting a commitment to addressing caste-based disparities.

Body:

Effectiveness of Affirmative Action Policies:

➤ **Socio-Economic Empowerment:**

- Affirmative action has led to increased representation of marginalized communities in education and employment.
- The representation of SCs, STs and OBCs in the posts and services under the Central Government, as on 01.01.2016, increased to 17.49%, 8.47% and 21.57% respectively.

➤ **Political Representation:**

- Affirmative action has facilitated political empowerment, with reserved seats in legislatures ensuring the representation of marginalized groups.
- For instance, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, aims to protect marginalized communities from discrimination and violence.

➤ **Educational Opportunities:**

- Reservation policies have increased access to education for marginalized communities, contributing to their social mobility.
- The implementation of the Right to Education Act, 2009, has furthered this objective by ensuring free and compulsory education for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Challenges:

➤ **Creamy Layer and Elite Capture:**

- The concept of the creamy layer has been criticized for allowing affluent individuals within reserved categories to benefit, leaving the truly marginalized at a disadvantage.
- **Elite capture** refers to the dominance of politically and economically powerful individuals within reserved categories, limiting the benefits to the most marginalized.

➤ **Quality vs. Quantity Debate:**

- Critics argue that reservations compromise meritocracy and quality, leading to inefficiencies in educational and professional institutions.

Note:

- The mismatch between educational qualifications and job requirements has been a concern, impacting the effectiveness of affirmative action.

➤ **Social Stigma and Discrimination:**

- Despite reservations, marginalized communities continue to face social stigma and discrimination, hindering their holistic development.
- The perpetuation of stereotypes and biases poses challenges to the integration of marginalized communities into mainstream society.

➤ **Resistance and Backlash:**

- There is often resistance from dominant groups who perceive these policies as unfair, leading to social tensions and conflicts.

Potential Reforms:

➤ **Strengthening Implementation Mechanisms:**

- Enhancing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of affirmative action policies.
- Implementing stricter penalties for non-compliance with reservation norms to deter violations.

➤ **Addressing Creamy Layer and Elite Capture:**

- Introducing income criteria to identify beneficiaries, ensuring that reservations benefit the economically disadvantaged within reserved categories.
- Promoting transparency in selection processes to prevent elite capture and ensure equitable distribution of benefits.

➤ **Promoting Social Inclusion and Awareness:**

- Launching campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of social inclusion and the detrimental effects of discrimination.
- Implementing programs to promote interaction and understanding between different communities, fostering a culture of inclusivity.

➤ **Socio-Educational Index:**

- A more nuanced approach that considers the socio-educational status of individuals, in addition to their caste, can ensure that the most marginalized within each group receive the benefits.

➤ **Diversification of Beneficiaries:**

- Including other marginalized groups like religious minorities, transgender individuals, and the disabled in affirmative action policies can make them more inclusive.

Conclusion:

Affirmative action policies in India have played a crucial role in promoting social justice and empowering marginalized communities. However, challenges such as creamy layer issues, quality concerns, and social stigma persist. Addressing these challenges through reforms that strengthen implementation, address elite capture, and promote social inclusion is essential to enhancing the effectiveness of affirmative action policies and realizing their goal of ensuring social justice for all.

21. Evaluate the need to create regional branches for the Supreme Court in India. (250 words)

Approach:

- Start the answer with a discussion that sets a context for the question.
- Discuss the arguments in favor of regional benches of the Supreme Court
- Discuss the arguments against the regional benches of the Supreme Court.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction :

Recently, the Law Ministry has endorsed the proposal to establish regional benches of the Supreme Court throughout India. Article 130 of the Indian Constitution says that the Supreme Court shall sit in Delhi or in such other place or places, as the Chief Justice of India (CJI) may, with the approval of the President, from time to time, appoint.

Body :

The arguments in favor of regional benches of the Supreme Court:

- **Increased Accessibility:** Regional benches would make justice more accessible to people living in remote areas or far from the capital. This would reduce the need for individuals to travel to Delhi for legal matters, particularly for those facing financial or logistical challenges.
- **Enhanced Focus on Constitutional Matters:** With the primary bench in New Delhi exclusively addressing constitutional issues, regional benches could specialize in handling appellate cases.

Note:

- **Improved Judicial Effectiveness:** Regional benches would be better positioned to address local issues and concerns that might not receive sufficient attention at the national level. Judges familiar with regional contexts could deliver more relevant and effective judgments.
- **Greater Opportunities:** Establishing regional benches could promote the development of legal infrastructure and expertise across different parts of the country, empower local legal professionals, and enhance legal awareness at the grassroots level.
- **Reduction in Pendency of Cases:** In 2023, the Supreme Court witnessed a 31% increase in the disposal of cases compared to 2022. A little more than 80,000 cases are currently pending adjudication, out of which 60,000 are civil.
 - By decentralizing the workload of the Supreme Court, regional benches could help ease the burden on the main bench in Delhi. This could lead to faster case resolution and a reduction in pending cases.

The Arguments Against the Regional Benches of the Supreme Court:

- **Fragmentation of Jurisprudence:** Regional benches may lead to divergent interpretations of laws and legal principles, resulting in inconsistencies in judicial decisions across different regions of the country.
- **Increased Litigation:** Regional benches could potentially increase frivolous or forum-shopping litigation as litigants seek favorable outcomes from benches perceived to be more sympathetic to their cases.
- **Potential Bias and Influence:** There may be concerns about the potential for regional biases or political influence to impact judicial decisions at regional benches, particularly in areas where there are strong local interests or political pressures.
- **Increased Expenditure on Resources and Infrastructure:** Establishing and maintaining regional benches would require significant financial resources and investment in infrastructure, including court facilities and support staff. This could strain already limited judicial resources and budgets.

Several measures can be considered as a way forward:

- **A Separation of Constitutional Jurisdiction Benches from Appellate Jurisdiction Benches:** The Tenth Law Commission of India proposed that the Supreme Court

be split into two divisions: the Constitutional Division and the Legal Division. The proposal stated that only issues about constitutional law would be brought to the proposed Constitutional Division.

- **Establish a National Court of Appeal for Special Leave Petitions (SLPs):** In Bihar Legal Support Society v. Chief Justice of India, 1986, the Supreme Court stated that it was “desirable” to establish a National Court of Appeal that would be able to entertain special leave petitions.
- **Increase the Number of Working Days:** The Malimath Committee suggested that the Supreme Court should work for 206 days and it also recommended that the period of vacation should be reduced by 21 days, keeping in mind the long pendency of cases.
- **Strengthen Existing Infrastructure:** Prioritize strengthening and modernizing existing judicial infrastructure, including High Courts and district courts, to improve access to justice and reduce backlog of cases.
 - Former CJI NV Ramanna proposed to set up the National Judicial Infrastructure Authority of India (NJIAI) which will help improve judicial infrastructure which currently needs urgent attention.
- **Conduct Feasibility Studies:** Conduct thorough feasibility studies to assess the potential benefits, challenges, and implications of establishing regional benches. These studies should consider factors such as legal, logistical, financial, and constitutional aspects.
 - Consider implementing pilot projects or experimental regional benches in select locations to evaluate their effectiveness and impact on access to justice, judicial efficiency, and consistency of decisions.
- **Broader Judicial Reforms:** Undertake broader judicial reforms aimed at addressing systemic issues such as judicial backlog, delay in justice delivery, and judicial vacancies, which are crucial for improving the overall functioning of the legal system.
- **Use of Technology:** Explore the use of technology, such as video conferencing and virtual courtrooms, to enhance access to justice and facilitate remote adjudication of cases, especially in remote or underserved areas.

Note:

Conclusion:

In envisioning the future of India's judiciary, we must embrace a bold vision that balances tradition with innovation, regional diversity with national unity, and accessibility with excellence.

The establishment of regional benches for the Supreme Court could signify a crucial advancement in realizing this vision.

22. The office of the Governor, often finds itself embroiled in political controversies. Suggest measures to ensure its neutrality and effectiveness in the Indian federal system. (150 Words)

Approach:

- Write a brief introduction about the Governor.
- Mention the recent examples of such incidents where the Governor falls in political controversies.
- Mention mitigating measures to maintain neutrality and effectiveness of the post of governor.
- Write a conclusion.

Introduction :

A Governor is the constitutional head of a state in India, appointed by the President of India. A Governor acts on the advice of the state council of ministers, except in certain matters where he or she can exercise discretion. The role of the Governor has been controversial since the colonial era, as it has often been seen as a tool for the central government to interfere in the affairs of the state governments.

Body :

Some of the controversies related to the Governor's role are:

- **Tamil Nadu:** The Governor of Tamil Nadu, came into conflict with the state government for not giving assent to the NEET exemption bill passed by the state legislature in September 2022, which sought to exempt Tamil Nadu students from the national medical entrance test.
 - The state government accused him of acting as an agent of the central government and violating the constitutional norms.
- **Kerala:** Similarly, the Governor of Kerala, faced criticism from the state government for delaying the approval of some bills passed by the state legislature, such as the Kerala Professional Colleges (Regularisation of Admission in Medical Colleges) Bill, 2023.

- The state government challenged his actions in the Supreme Court, alleging that he was encroaching upon the legislative and executive powers of the state.
- **West Bengal:** The Governor of West Bengal also came into loggerheads with the state government. He often came into conflict with the state government, over various issues, such as law and order, education, health, and corruption.
 - He also accused the state government of ignoring his requests for information and consultations, and violating the constitutional provisions. The state government, on the other hand, accused him of being biased, interfering, and acting as a mouthpiece of the central government.

Some possible mitigating measures to maintain neutrality and effectiveness of the post of governor are:

- **Reforming the appointment and removal process of the governor:** To ensure the neutrality and impartiality of governor, the appointment and removal process of the governor should be transparent, merit-based, and consultative.
 - According to Venkatchaliah Commission (2002), the appointment of Governors should be entrusted to a committee comprising the prime minister, the home minister, the speaker of the Lok Sabha, and the chief minister of the concerned state.
- **Reform the Current Appointment and Removal Process:** The Constitution can be amended to change the process of appointment and removal of the governor.
 - This can involve a more transparent and consultative mechanism, such as a collegium or a parliamentary committee, that can select the candidates based on merit and suitability.
 - The removal of the governors can also be made more difficult by requiring a resolution of the state legislature or a judicial inquiry. The Supreme Court, in BP Singhal vs Union of India case held that the removal cannot be based on arbitrary, capricious or unreasonable grounds.
- **Judicial Intervention:** The Supreme Court can continue to monitor the conduct of the governors and issue directions or observations to ensure that they act in accordance with the Constitution and the law. This can help to prevent arbitrary or partisan actions by the governors and uphold the federal principle of Indian polity.

Note:

- **Make him/her an Elected Representative:** The governor can be made an elected representative of the state, rather than a nominee of the Union government.
 - This can enhance the accountability and legitimacy of the office and reduce the scope for interference or influence by the Centre.
 - The election of the governor can be done by the state legislature or by the people of the state, as in the case of the president.

Conclusion:

The role of Governors in Indian states has been marked by controversies stemming from perceptions of central government interference. Mitigating measures, such as transparent appointment processes and enhanced state autonomy, are imperative to ensure the neutrality and effectiveness of this constitutional post, fostering harmonious relations between states and the Centre.

23. The New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, adopted at the G-20 under India's presidency, is a testament to equality and inclusion. Discuss. (250 Words)

Approach:

- Write a brief introduction about the New Delhi Leaders Declaration.
- Mention the actions and plans of G-20 promoting equality and inclusion.
- Write a conclusion.

Introduction

The New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, adopted at the G-20 summit is a document that reflects the vision and commitment of the G-20 members to address the global challenges of the 21st century, under the theme of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' or 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. The declaration covers various aspects of economic, social, environmental, and institutional development, and emphasizes the need for cooperation, coordination, and multilateralism among the G-20 and other stakeholders.

Body

Some of the aspects of the declaration that demonstrate equality and inclusion are:

- **Equality**
 - **Gender equality:** The declaration recognizes the importance of empowering women and girls, and ensuring their full and equal participation in all

spheres of life. The declaration also endorses the G-20 Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, which aims to close the gender gaps in labor force participation, education, health, digital access, and leadership.

- **Social equality:** The declaration reaffirms the G-20's pledge to achieve the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), based on the principle of 'leaving no one behind'.
 - The declaration also supports the G-20 Roadmap for Stronger Recovery and Resilience in Developing Countries, Least Developed Countries, and Small Island Developing States, which seeks to address the specific challenges and vulnerabilities of these countries.
- **Economic equality:** The declaration acknowledges the uneven and unequal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate change crisis on the global economy, and calls for a more inclusive and resilient recovery that benefits all people and countries.
 - The declaration also supports the G-20 Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative.

➤ Inclusion

- **Stakeholder inclusion:** The declaration acknowledges the valuable contributions and inputs of various stakeholders, such as civil society, business, labor, youth, women, think tanks, and academia, in the G-20 process and outcomes.
 - The declaration also welcomes the engagement and dialogue of the G-20 with non-G-20 countries and regions, especially Africa, as well as with international and regional organizations, such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.
- **Cultural inclusion:** The declaration endorses the G-20 Principles for Cultural Cooperation and Development, which aim to foster cultural exchange, dialogue, and cooperation, and to protect and promote cultural diversity and rights.
- **Technological inclusion:** The declaration recognizes the potential and challenges of the digital transformation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and commits to harnessing the benefits of technology for all people and sectors.

Note:

- The declaration also supports the G-20 Digital Public Infrastructure Initiative, which aims to provide universal and affordable access to digital services and platforms and to enhance digital literacy, skills, and inclusion.

Conclusion:

The New Delhi Leaders' Declaration from the G-20 summit underscores the global commitment to addressing contemporary challenges under the guiding principle of unity and cooperation. The declaration sets a foundation for a more equitable and resilient global community through its focus on equality and inclusion across various spheres. Emphasizing stakeholder engagement and cultural and technological inclusivity paves the way for collaborative efforts toward sustainable development and shared prosperity.

24. How did the diverse perspectives and ideologies within the assembly contribute to the eventual adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1950? (150 Words)

Approach:

- Write a brief Introduction about the adoption of the Indian constitution in 1950.
- Mention different perspectives and ideologies of the constituent assembly which are enshrined in the Indian constitution.
- Write a conclusion.

Introduction

The Indian Constitution, created in 1950, reflects the unity of a diverse nation. It was crafted by the Constituent Assembly, which included representatives from various regions and ideologies. This document symbolizes the collective effort of people with different perspectives coming together for a common purpose.

Body

Some of the diverse perspectives and ideologies within the assembly:

- **Liberalism:** This ideology advocated for individual rights, civil liberties, democracy, and constitutionalism. Prominent liberals such as **B. R. Ambedkar**, **Rajendra Prasad**, and **Vallabhbhai Patel** supported the adoption of a parliamentary system, a federal structure, and a bill of rights for the citizens.

- **Socialism:** This ideology advocated for social justice, economic equality, and state intervention. Leaders like **Ram Manohar Lohia**, **Jayaprakash Narayan**, and **K. T. Shah** supported the adoption of a socialist economy, a welfare state, and a directive principle of state policy for the eradication of poverty and inequality.
- **Nationalism:** This ideology advocated for national unity, independence, and sovereignty. Nationalist leaders like **C. Rajagopalachari**, and **Sarojini Naidu** supported the adoption of a strong central government, a common national identity, and a protection of national interests and integrity.
- **Secularism:** This ideology advocated for the separation of religion and state, and the equal treatment of all religions. Leaders like **Rajkumari Amrit Kaur**, **Zakir Hussain**, **Begum Aizaz Rasul**, and **K. M. Munshi** supported the adoption of a secular state, freedom of religion, and the prevention of communalism and discrimination.
- **Gandhianism:** This ideology advocated for the principles and values of Mahatma Gandhi, such as self-reliance, and rural development. Leaders such as **Mahadev Desai**, **Rajendra Prasad**, **K. G. Mashruwala**, and **R. R. Diwakar**. They supported the adoption of a non-violent and peaceful state, a decentralization of power, and a promotion of village industries and Panchayati raj.

These diverse perspectives and ideologies contributed to the eventual adoption of the Constitution in the following ways:

- **Enriched debates on constitutional issues:** Included state nature, form of government, citizen rights, federal structure, judicial system, and directive principles.
- **Ideological diversity:** Members expressed views based on ideologies and experiences, persuading through reason and logic.
- **Transparent process:** Proceedings recorded and published, allowing public participation in constitution-making.
- **Accommodated diverse interests:** Struck a balance between ideals and Indian realities, making compromises on issues like linguistic reorganization and reservation of seats.
- **Borrowed ideas from various constitutions:** Adapted features from British, American, Irish, and Weimar constitutions to suit Indian context.

Note:

- **Reflecting democracy and pluralism:** Respected diverse opinions, followed consensus and majority rule principles.
- **Collective effort:** Constitution result of collaborative work, not imposed by a single party or group.

Conclusion:

Thus, the diverse perspectives and ideologies within the assembly contributed to the eventual adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1950 by enriching, accommodating, and reflecting the diversity of India's society and culture. The constitution was a product of a democratic and deliberative process, and a manifestation of the aspirations and values of the people of India.

25. Explore the constitutional distribution of powers between the Union and States in India and assess mechanisms for resolving disputes in this context. (150 Words)

Approach:

- Write a brief introduction about the separation of power between the Union and the States.
- Highlight the mechanisms utilized for resolving conflicts between the center and states.
- Write a conclusion.

Introduction:

India's political system stands on the pillars of a federal structure with a well-defined distribution of powers between the central and state governments. This framework enables effective governance nationwide, respecting each state's autonomy within the diverse landscape.

Body:

- **Distribution of powers between the Union and States:**
 - The **distribution of powers** between the **Union** and **States** in India is delineated by **Article 246** of the Constitution which divides the subjects of legislation into three lists:
 - **List I - Union List:** This list contains subjects on which only the Parliament (Union) can legislate. It includes matters of national importance such as defense, foreign affairs, atomic energy, and communications.

- **List II - State List:** This list includes subjects on which only the State Legislatures can legislate. It covers areas of local or regional significance such as police, public health, agriculture, and land.
- **List III - Concurrent List:** This list includes subjects on which both the Union and the States can legislate.

- This constitutional framework ensures a **clear delineation of authority and responsibilities** between the central and state governments.

➤ Mechanisms for Dispute Resolution:

- **Inter-Governmental Bodies:** The **Inter-State Council (Art 263)** and the **National Development Council** provide platforms for Union and State representatives to discuss and resolve disputes.
- **Judicial Intervention:**
 - **Article 131** provides the **Supreme Court** with **original jurisdiction** over disputes between the **Union** and **States** or among States. In the **Mohit Minerals vs Union of India (2022)** case, the Court resolved a dispute on the binding powers of the **GST Council**.
- **Governor's Role:** The governor is acting as a bridge between the union and state, the governor facilitates communication and coordination, harmonizing federal relations.
- **Financial Mechanisms:** It is responsible for making recommendations to the president regarding the distribution of net proceeds of taxes between the union and the states.
- **Intergovernmental Committees:** These committees can facilitate dialogue, negotiation, and consensus-building.
 - For example, the **GST Council** provides a platform for the Centre and the States to discuss and resolve any issues or disputes arising from the implementation of the GST.

Conclusion:

India's constitutional power distribution is robust, but effective dispute resolution is crucial for harmonious federal relations. Utilizing inter-governmental bodies, judicial intervention, the governor's role, financial mechanisms, and committees can contribute to resolving disputes, ensuring cooperative federalism and system stability.

Note:

26. Discuss the constitutional powers and functions of the President of India, highlighting their role as both the ceremonial head of the state, and the guardian of the Constitution. (250 Words)

Approach:

- Write an Introduction about the President of India.
- Write the power and functions of the President assigned by the constitution of India.
- Mention the importance of the President as ceremonial head of state and guardian of the constitution.
- Write appropriate conclusions.

Introduction:

The **President of India** is the **head of state** and the **supreme commander** of the Indian Armed Forces. The powers and functions of the President are outlined in the **Constitution**. The **President's role** is largely ceremonial, but certain powers and functions are significant in the functioning of the Indian government.

Body:

Some key constitutional powers and functions of the President:

Executive Powers:

- **Appointment of the Prime Minister:** The President appoints the **Prime Minister**. The Prime Minister is usually the leader of the majority party in the **Lok Sabha (the lower house of Parliament)**. The President appoints other members of the **Council of Ministers** on the advice of the **Prime Minister**.

Legislative Powers:

- **Summoning and Proroguing of Parliament:** The President has the authority to **summon** and **prorogue** both houses of Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha). The President also has the power to **dissolve the Lok Sabha**.
- **Addressing Parliament:** The President addresses both houses of Parliament at the beginning of the first session after each general election.

Financial Powers:

- **Budget Approval:** The President causes the budget to be laid before Parliament and, after general discussion, allows it to be voted on.

Military Powers:

- **Commander-in-Chief:** The President is the **supreme commander** of the **Indian Armed Forces**, and all armed forces' commands are exercised by him/her (Art 53).

Judicial Powers:

- **Pardon and Reprieve:** The President has the power to **grant pardons, reprieves, respites, or remissions** of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offense (Art 72).

Emergency Powers:

- **Proclamation of Emergency:** The President can proclaim a **state of emergency** if he/she is satisfied that a grave emergency exists whereby the security of India or any part of its territory is threatened, whether by **war** or **external aggression** or **armed rebellion** (Art 352-360).

The President of India plays a dual role, serving as both the ceremonial head of the state and the guardian of the Constitution. These roles underscore the symbolic and constitutional aspects of the President's position:

Ceremonial Head of the State:

- **Symbolic Representation:** The President represents the unity and integrity of the nation. The ceremonial aspects of the office involve state functions, ceremonies, and events where the President acts as the symbol of the Indian state.
- **Diplomatic Protocol:** The President hosts foreign dignitaries, receives credentials of ambassadors, and participates in state visits. These activities contribute to projecting India's image on the global stage.

Guardian of the Constitution:

- **Assent to Legislation:** The President has the power to assent to bills passed by Parliament. In certain circumstances, the President can also return the bill for reconsideration or refuse assent, potentially preventing legislation that might violate the Constitution.

Conclusion:

The President holds a pivotal position, embodying both the ceremonial essence of national unity and the constitutional duty of safeguarding democratic principles. Through a careful balance of executive, legislative, diplomatic, military, and emergency powers, the President plays a crucial role in upholding the democratic fabric of the nation.

Note:

27. Discuss the significance of the Election Commission of India in ensuring free and fair elections, and analyze the challenges it faces in contemporary times. (250 Words)

Approach:

- Write an Introduction about the Election Commission of India (ECI).
- Write its importance in the Indian democratic system.
- Mention the challenges and their solutions.
- Write a conclusion.

Introduction:

The Election Commission of India (ECI) is an independent constitutional body that is responsible for conducting all elections in India, from the Lok Sabha (lower house of Parliament) to the President. The ECI derives its powers and functions from **Article 324** of the Constitution of India and has the authority to supervise, direct, and control the entire electoral process.

Body:

The significance of the ECI in ensuring free and fair elections:

- **Impartial Conduct of Elections:** The ECI is an **independent constitutional body**, insulated from **political influence**, which ensures the impartial conduct of elections. This independence is crucial for instilling public confidence in the electoral process.
- **Voter Registration and Identification:** The Election Commission oversees the maintenance of accurate voter lists and the issuance of voter identification cards. This helps in preventing electoral malpractices such as bogus voting and ensures that only eligible voters participate in the electoral process.
- **Implementation of Model Code of Conduct:** The ECI formulates and enforces a **model code of conduct** for political parties and candidates during elections. This code ensures a **level playing field, ethical campaigning**, and prevents the use of money and muscle power to influence voters.
- **Overseeing Political Expenditure:** The ECI monitors and regulates political expenditure during elections, curbing the influence of money in politics and promoting fair competition among political parties.

Some of the notable challenges include:

- **Money Power and Election Expenditure:** Despite regulations, the influence of money in elections remains a challenge. Illicit funding, unaccounted expenses, and the use of black money in campaigns can undermine the fairness of the electoral process.
- **Erosion of Model Code of Conduct:** Instances of political parties and candidates violating the model code of conduct have been on the rise. The Election Commission faces the challenge of effectively enforcing ethical standards, ensuring a level playing field, and swiftly addressing violations.
- **Election Technology and Cybersecurity:** The increasing use of technology in the electoral process introduces new challenges related to cybersecurity. Safeguarding electronic voting machines (EVMs) and voter databases from hacking or manipulation is crucial to maintaining the credibility of election results.
- **Political Influence and Independence:** The Election Commission's ability to maintain its independence and resist undue political influence is critical. Instances of allegations regarding the impartiality of the Commission can undermine public trust in the electoral process.

Measures to overcome the challenges faced by the ECI:

- **Strengthening Model Code of Conduct:** Enforce the model code of conduct rigorously, ensuring swift action against violations by political parties and candidates. Explore options for legal reforms to empower the ECI with stronger punitive measures for code of conduct breaches.
- **Granting Contempt powers to ECI:** The ECI has sought amendments to the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, to empower itself to punish those who make baseless and unfounded accusations against it.
- **Collaboration with Law Enforcement:** Strengthen coordination with law enforcement agencies to ensure the security of voters, candidates, and election officials. Develop and implement comprehensive security plans for regions prone to electoral violence.
- **Election Funding Reforms:** Advocate for reforms in political funding to reduce the influence of money in elections. Encourage transparency in political donations and expenditures, possibly through stricter financial disclosure requirements.

Note:

- **Continued Independence and Accountability:** Strengthen mechanisms to ensure the independence of the ECI from political interference. Even, the **Law Commission** in its **255th report on electoral reforms (2015)** for ensuring greater autonomy to the ECI, recommended the constitution of a selection committee.

Conclusion:

The Election Commission of India should address challenges through a strategy incorporating tech innovation, legal reforms, public awareness, and global collaboration. Enhancing electoral integrity, inclusivity, and responsiveness is crucial for upholding democratic values and ensuring the credibility of the electoral process.

28. Recently, the conduct of many governors of states have been questioned, raising doubts about the constitutional propriety of their actions. In this regard, evaluate the need for the office of Governor in India. (150 words)

Approach:

- Begin with a brief introduction to the office of Governor, mentioning its role and significance.
- Discuss the need for the office of Governor.
- You can conclude by discussing the need for a balance between the legitimate functions of the office of Governor and the potential for misuse of power.

Introduction:

The office of Governor in India is a constitutional position created under Article 153 of the Indian Constitution. Governors are appointed by the President of India to serve as the ceremonial heads of states and union territories. In recent times, the Governor's office has attracted several controversies i.e., tussle between Governor and CoM in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Body:

The need for the office of Governor can be evaluated from different perspectives:

- **Preservation of Constitutional Integrity:** The office of Governor plays a vital role in upholding the constitutional integrity of the Indian federal structure. Governors act as a link between the Union and the

states, ensuring that the state governments operate within the constitutional framework. They have the responsibility to ensure that state legislatures and governments do not transgress their constitutional limits.

- **Check and Balance:** The presence of a governor provides a system of checks and balances in states. They have the authority to withhold their assent to bills passed by the state legislature if they believe the legislation is unconstitutional or violates the principles of federalism. This ensures that states do not act in a manner that threatens the unity and integrity of the nation.
- **Representation of the President:** Governors represent the President at the state level. This representation is symbolic but important, as it reinforces the federal nature of the Indian Republic and helps maintain a sense of unity and shared identity among the diverse states of India.
- **Appointment of Chief Minister:** Governors play a crucial role in appointing the Chief Minister of a state. They are responsible for inviting the leader of the majority party or coalition in the state legislative assembly to form the government. This process helps in the smooth transition of power and ensures that the Chief Minister enjoys the confidence of the legislature.
- **Emergency Powers:** Governors are entrusted with emergency powers under Article 356 of the Constitution, allowing them to recommend President's Rule in a state if there is a breakdown of constitutional machinery. This is a safeguard against potential abuses of power by state governments.
- **Promotion of Cooperative Federalism:** The presence of governors fosters cooperative federalism by facilitating communication and coordination between the Union and the states. It encourages the sharing of resources, expertise, and responsibilities in a collaborative manner.
- **Advisory Role:** Governors often provide valuable advice to the state government on various matters, drawing upon their experience and insights. This advisory role can be particularly useful in ensuring good governance and the welfare of the people.

Note:

Conclusion:

However, the recent controversies surrounding the conduct of some governors have raised concerns about the misuse of their powers for political purposes. It is essential to strike a balance between the office's legitimate functions and the potential for misuse. There is a need for greater transparency and accountability in the appointment and functioning of governors to ensure that they act in accordance with the principles of federalism and constitutional propriety.

29. Discuss the mechanisms through which the Indian Constitution establishes a system of separation of powers among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Evaluate how this separation functions as a check on parliamentary sovereignty in the Indian context. (150 words)

Approach:

- Start your answer by providing a brief introduction to the concept of the separation of powers and its significance in a democratic system.
- Elaborate on the specific mechanisms through which the system of separation of powers is established.
- You can conclude by highlighting the significance of this system in upholding the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

Introduction:

The Indian Constitution, adopted in 1950, lays the foundation for a system of separation of powers among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, albeit with certain unique characteristics tailored to the Indian context. This separation of powers mechanism serves as a crucial check on parliamentary sovereignty, ensuring a balance of power and preventing any one branch from becoming too dominant.

Body:**Mechanism through which the Indian Constitution establishes a system of separation of powers:**➤ **Legislature Control:**

- **On Judiciary:** Impeachment and the removal of the judges. Power to amend laws declared ultra vires by the Court and revalidating it.
- **On Executive:** Through a no-confidence vote it can dissolve the Government. Power to assess works of the executive through the **question hour and zero hour**.

➤ **Executive Control:**

- **On Judiciary:** Making appointments to the office of **Chief Justice** and other judges.
- **On Legislature:** Powers under **delegated legislation**. Authority to make rules for regulating their respective procedure and conduct of business subject to the provisions of this Constitution.

➤ **Judicial Control:**

- **On Executive: Judicial review** i.e., the power to review executive action to determine if it violates the Constitution.
- **On Legislature:** Unamendability of the constitution under the **basic structure doctrine** pronounced by the Supreme Court in Kesavananda Bharati Case 1973.

How this separation of powers functions as a check on parliamentary sovereignty:➤ **Parliamentary Sovereignty vs. Judicial Review:**

- In India, parliamentary sovereignty is subject to the judicial review power of the Supreme Court. If the judiciary finds a law passed by Parliament to be unconstitutional, it can be struck down. This limits the absolute sovereignty of Parliament and ensures that it operates within the boundaries set by the Constitution.

➤ **Executive Accountability:**

- The executive branch is accountable to the legislature, and the legislature, in turn, is accountable to the people. This accountability prevents the executive from exercising unchecked power and ensures that it operates within the framework of the law.

➤ **Bicameral Legislature:**

- The presence of the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha in the Indian Parliament, with different compositions and roles, adds an additional layer of checks and balances, preventing hasty or unilateral decisions by either house.

Conclusion:

The Constitution establishes a system of separation of powers that functions as a significant check on parliamentary sovereignty. It ensures that no single branch of government can dominate, and each branch plays a vital role in maintaining the rule of law and protecting the rights and freedoms of the citizens. This system promotes a balanced and accountable government that respects the principles of democracy and the rule of law.

Note:

30. Critically examine the objectives, provisions and implications of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. (250 words)

Approach:

- Begin with a brief introduction to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.
- Discuss the primary objectives of the UAPA and describe the key provisions of the UAPA, focusing on its powers and authorities granted to law enforcement agencies.
- Analyze the implications of the UAPA.
- Can be concluded by emphasizing the need for a delicate balance between national security and individual freedoms.

Introduction:

The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA) is an anti-terror law that aims to curb terrorism and other unlawful activities in India. It was enacted in the aftermath of the 1962 war with China and the 1965 war with Pakistan, when the government felt the need to strengthen its internal security. The UAPA has been amended several times, most recently in 2019, to expand its scope and powers.

Body:

The main objectives of the UAPA are:

- To provide for the more effective prevention of certain unlawful activities of individuals and associations, such as secessionism, communalism, and extremism.
- To deal with terrorist activities, by defining and punishing various offences related to terrorism, such as raising funds, conspiring, recruiting, harbouring, or being a member of a terrorist organisation.
- To forfeit the proceeds of terrorism or any property intended to be used for terrorism².
- To ban any association or organisation that is involved in or supports terrorism, by declaring it as unlawful or terrorist.

The main provisions of the UAPA are:

- The UAPA empowers the central government to declare any association as unlawful or terrorist, by issuing a notification in the official gazette.

- Such a notification is subject to judicial review by a tribunal constituted by a sitting or retired judge of a high court.
- The UAPA prescribes various punishments for being a member of, or supporting, an unlawful or terrorist association, ranging from imprisonment for six months to life imprisonment, and fine.
- The UAPA also prescribes various punishments for committing or abetting any terrorist act, ranging from imprisonment for five years to death penalty, and fine.
- The UAPA authorises the central government to appoint an investigating officer and a designated authority to conduct investigation and prosecution of offences under the act.
 - The UAPA also grants special powers to these officers, such as arrest without warrant, search and seizure without warrant, interception of communications, and presumption of guilt.
- The UAPA provides for the forfeiture of any property that is derived from or used for terrorism, by issuing a show cause notice to the owner or possessor of such property.
 - The owner or possessor can appeal against the order of forfeiture before a high court within one month.

The main implications of the UAPA are:

- **Violation of Human rights:** The UAPA has been criticised for being draconian and violating human rights, as it gives sweeping powers to the executive and curtails civil liberties. It has been alleged that the UAPA is used to suppress dissent and target minorities, activists, journalists, and opposition parties.
- **Unconstitutional and Arbitrary Action:** The UAPA has also been challenged for being unconstitutional and arbitrary, as it does not provide adequate safeguards against misuse and abuse. It has been argued that the UAPA violates the principles of natural justice, presumption of innocence, fair trial, and proportionality.
- **Ineffective and counterproductive:** The UAPA has also been questioned for being ineffective and counterproductive, as it does not address the root causes of terrorism and unlawful activities. It has been suggested that the UAPA should be replaced by a comprehensive and holistic law that balances national security with human rights.

Note:

Conclusion:

The UAPA is a controversial law that has both positive and negative aspects. It is intended to protect the sovereignty and integrity of India from internal threats, but it also poses a threat to the democracy and diversity of India. It is imperative that the UAPA is implemented with caution and accountability, and reviewed periodically to ensure its relevance and legitimacy.

31. Critically examine the arguments for and against legalising same sex marriage in India. What are the constitutional and social implications of such a move? (250 words)

Approach:

- Begin with a brief introduction to the topic, providing a context.
- Discuss Arguments in favor and arguments against legalization of Same-Sex Marriage. Also, discuss the constitutional and social implications.
- You can conclude with a way forward approach.

Introduction:

Legalisation of same sex marriage in India is a long pending demand of LGBTQ+ community. Recently, in a verdict, the Supreme court refused to pass a judgment that legalizes the homosexual marriages, it passed on the baton to the parliament and state legislatures to formulate the law for the same.

Body:**Arguments for legalizing same-sex marriage in India:**

- **Equality and Human Rights:** The Constitution of India guarantees equal protection before the law to all citizens. The Supreme Court has also recognised that the right to life and dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution includes the right to sexual orientation and identity.
- **Personal Autonomy and Choice:** The Supreme Court in Hadiya case and Lata Singh cases has ruled that Right to choose light partner is a Fundamental Right. Therefore, same-sex couples should have the freedom to choose their partners and form their own families without being subjected to legal or social sanctions.

- **Social Justice and Inclusion:** Legalizing same-sex marriage would grant same-sex couples the same legal rights and benefits as heterosexual couples. This would reduce stigma and discrimination, ultimately leading to improved well-being and happiness for the LGBTQIA+ community.

Arguments against legalizing same-sex marriage in India:

- **Morality and Religion:** Many individuals in India hold strong religious or moral beliefs that deem homosexuality as unnatural or sinful. They fear that legalizing same-sex marriage would legitimize homosexuality, potentially eroding traditional moral values and religious teachings.
- **Legal Complexities:** Opponents also argue that legalizing same-sex marriage would necessitate significant changes to existing laws, policies, and social structures that are currently based on heterosexual marriage. This could lead to legal complexities and challenges in implementation.
- **Practicality and Feasibility:** It is also argued that if a man starts recognizing himself as a female then how will he be treated before the law.

Constitutional and social implications of legalising same-sex marriage in India

- **Constitutional Implications:** Legalizing same-sex marriage can be seen as a constitutional right and a way to uphold the dignity and equality of the LGBTQ+ community.
 - However, the Constitution also grants the freedom of religion under Article 25, which allows different religious communities to have their own personal laws governing matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc.
 - Therefore, legalizing same-sex marriage in India may face opposition from some religious groups who consider homosexuality as sinful or unnatural.
- **Social Implications:** Legalizing same-sex marriage in India has significant and diverse social implications. It can reduce LGBTQ+ stigma, improve mental health, promote inclusion, and grant legal rights. However, it may also provoke backlash, create conflicts, and challenge cultural values, potentially affecting societal harmony and evolution.

Note:

Conclusion:

Legalizing same-sex marriage in India is a complex matter with constitutional and social impacts. It demands thoughtful consideration, respectful dialogue, and a decision grounded in democratic, just, and dignified principles outlined in the Indian Constitution.

32. Discuss the need and challenges of sub-categorisation of OBCs in India. How will it affect the existing reservation policy and the social justice agenda? (250 words)

Approach:

- Define OBCs and sub-categorisation. Mention the constitutional provisions and the commission for sub-categorisation of OBCs.
- Discuss the need and challenges of sub-categorisation of OBCs in India. Explain how it will affect the existing reservation policy and the social justice agenda.
- Summarize the main points and give your opinion or suggestions.

Introduction:

OBCs are disadvantaged castes in India, comprising 52% of the population according to the Mandal Commission (1980). However, uneven socio-economic status has led to unequal reservation benefits. To address this, Article 340 of the Constitution allows the President to appoint a commission. In 2017, a five-member commission led by Justice (Retd.) G Rohini was formed to examine sub-categorization of OBCs for equitable representation.

Body:

The need for sub-categorisation of OBCs arises from the following reasons:

- To address the intra-group inequalities and horizontal imbalances among OBCs. According to a 2018 data analysis, 24.95% of jobs and seats under OBC quota have gone to just 10 OBC communities, while 983 OBC communities (37% of the total) had zero representation.
- To ensure that the benefits of reservation reach the most backward and marginalized sections of OBCs, such as de-notified tribes, nomadic tribes, etc.
- To rationalize and streamline the Central List of OBCs by removing any repetitions, ambiguities, inconsistencies and errors.

The challenges for sub-categorisation of OBCs are as follows:

- The lack of reliable and updated data on the population and socio-economic status of various OBC communities. The Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data are not considered reliable by the commission, which has requested an all-India survey.
 - The Census 2021 is also expected to collect data on OBCs, but there have been no further announcements on that.
- The political and social implications of sub-categorisation of OBCs. Sub-categorisation may create divisions and conflicts among different OBC communities over their share of reservation.
- It may also be used as a tool to appease or alienate certain vote-banks by the ruling or opposition parties.

The impact of sub-categorisation of OBCs on the existing reservation policy and the social justice agenda:

- On one hand, sub-categorisation may enhance the social justice agenda by ensuring that the most backward and deprived sections of OBCs get adequate representation and opportunities in jobs and education.
 - It may also reduce the resentment and agitation among some upper castes who feel that reservation benefits are cornered by a few dominant OBC communities.
- On the other hand, sub-categorisation may dilute the existing reservation policy by creating further fragmentation and hierarchy among OBCs.
 - It may also undermine the principle of proportional representation by reducing the share of some larger or more populous OBC communities.
 - It may also divert attention from the structural issues and systemic discrimination faced by OBCs as a whole.

Conclusion:

Sub-categorisation of OBCs is a complex and contentious issue that requires a balanced and holistic approach. While it may address some aspects of intra-group inequalities among OBCs, it may also create new challenges and problems for the reservation policy and the social justice agenda. Therefore, it is important to have a comprehensive and credible database, a clear and consistent legal framework, and a broad-based and inclusive consultation process before implementing any sub-categorisation scheme.

Note:

33. Critically examine how far the various judgments of the Supreme Court bring independence and accountability in the Central Bureau of Investigation. (250 Words)

Approach:

- Start the answer with the introduction of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).
- Discuss how far the various judgments of the Supreme Court bring independence and accountability in the CBI.
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is the premier investigating agency dealing with cases of corruption, economic offenses, terrorism, and other serious crimes. However, the CBI has often faced criticism for being influenced by political and bureaucratic pressures, compromising its autonomy and credibility. Therefore, the role of the Supreme Court in ensuring the independence and accountability of the CBI is crucial.

Body

The Supreme Court has delivered several landmark judgments to protect the CBI from external interference and to enhance its professionalism and transparency. Some of these judgments are:

- **Vineet Narain v. Union of India (1997):** This judgment laid down several steps to secure the autonomy of the CBI, such as the appointment of the CBI director by a high-powered committee, and the fixed tenure of two years for the CBI director.
- **Subramanian Swamy v. Director, CBI (2014):** This judgment quashed **Section 6-A of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946**, which required prior approval of the Central Government for inquiry or investigation into corruption cases against senior civil servants. The Supreme Court held that this provision was unconstitutional and violated Article 14 (equality before law) of the Constitution.
- **Common Cause v. Union of India (2018):** This judgment upheld the validity of **Section 4A of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946**, which provided for a selection committee comprising the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Chief Justice

of India or his nominee to appoint or remove the CBI director. The Supreme Court also directed that any transfer or change in the CBI director's duties should be done only with the prior consent of this committee.

These judgments have brought some degree of independence and accountability in the CBI by reducing political interference, ensuring stability and security of tenure, and establishing a transparent and participatory process for appointment or removal. However, there are still some challenges and limitations that need to be addressed, such as:

- **The lack of financial autonomy** and administrative control over its personnel, as the CBI depends on the Department of Personnel and Training under the Ministry of Home Affairs for its budget and cadre management.
- The **delay and difficulty in obtaining sanctions** for prosecution from competent authorities hamper the timely and effective disposal of cases.
- The **inadequate infrastructure, manpower, and resources** to deal with the increasing workload and complexity of cases.

Conclusion:

The Supreme Court has played a significant role in strengthening the independence and accountability of the CBI, but there is still scope for further reforms and improvements to make it a more efficient and credible institution.

34. "Constitutionally guaranteed judicial independence is a prerequisite of democracy." Comment. (150 Words)

Approach:

- Begin your answer with a concise and clear introduction. Define or explain what judicial independence in a democracy means.
- Discuss the various reasons for which an Independent Judiciary is crucial in a democracy. You can also provide some examples to support your arguments.
- You can conclude the answer with an emphasis on the critical role of constitutionally guaranteed judicial independence in preserving and strengthening democracy.

Note:

Introduction

Judicial independence is the principle that the judiciary should be free from any external influence or interference in its functioning. It is essential for ensuring the rule of law, protecting fundamental rights, and maintaining checks and balances in a democratic system.

Body

Judicial independence is not just an ideal, but a fundamental necessity for the functioning of a democratic society for the following reasons:

- **Checks and Balances:** The Independent Judiciary plays a vital role in ensuring that the executive and legislative branches of the government do not violate the Constitution or encroach upon the rights of the people.
 - For instance, in the case of **Kesavananda Bharati vs State of Kerala**, the Supreme Court held that the Parliament cannot amend the basic structure of the Constitution.
- **Protection of Rights:** The Independent Judiciary has been a staunch defender of the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution to all citizens. The Court has expanded the scope of these rights through various landmark judgements, such as **Indira Sawhney vs Union of India**, which upheld the reservation policy for backward classes and **Navtej Singh Johar vs Union of India**, which decriminalized homosexuality and recognized the right to sexual orientation as a part of the right to privacy.
- **Fair and Impartial Justice:** The Independent Judiciary strives to deliver justice without fear or favor, regardless of the status or identity of the parties involved. The Court has demonstrated its commitment to fair and impartial justice by taking up cases suo motu, entertaining public interest litigation (*Hussainara Khatoon vs. State of Bihar*), and appointing amicus curiae (friends of the court) to assist it in complex matters.
- **Conflict Resolution:** In a democratic society, disputes and conflicts are inevitable. An independent judiciary provides a peaceful and lawful means to resolve conflicts, reducing the likelihood of social unrest and chaos.
 - The Court has also exercised its extraordinary powers provided by the Constitution under **Article 142** to pass any order necessary for doing complete justice in any case or matter pending before it.
- Some examples of conflict resolution by the Supreme Court are *S.R. Bommai vs Union of India*, which laid down guidelines for imposition of President's rule in states; and *Ayodhya Judgement*, which settled a long-standing dispute over a religious site.
- **Protection of Minority Rights:** Democracy is not just about majority rule; it also entails protecting the rights of minorities. An independent judiciary can safeguard minority rights by preventing the majority from oppressing or discriminating against minority groups.
 - The Court has also intervened to protect minorities from discrimination, violence, or persecution, such as in **Mohd. Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum**, which granted maintenance to a Muslim woman divorced by her husband; and **John Vallamattom vs Union of India**, which struck down a discriminatory provision in the Indian Succession Act applicable to Christians.
- **Upholding the Constitution:** Constitutions are the bedrock of democratic societies. An independent judiciary ensures that the Constitution remains the supreme law of the land, guarding against unconstitutional actions by the government or any attempts to amend the Constitution in a manner that undermines its democratic principles.
 - The Court has evolved various doctrines and principles to safeguard the constitutional values, such as basic structure doctrine, doctrine of harmonious construction, doctrine of pith and substance, doctrine of eclipse, etc. to uphold the spirit of the Constitution.

Conclusion:

Constitutionally guaranteed judicial independence is indeed a prerequisite for democracy. Without it, the principles of democracy, such as the rule of law, protection of individual rights, accountability, and checks and balances, cannot be effectively upheld. An independent judiciary is a cornerstone of democratic governance, providing the necessary legal framework and oversight to ensure that the democratic system functions as intended, protecting the rights and freedoms of all citizens.

Note:

35. What role does the Preamble play in guiding the interpretation and evolution of the Constitution, especially in the context of landmark judicial decisions? (150 words)

Approach:

- Start by explaining what the Preamble is. Mention that it's the introductory statement to the Constitution, outlining the Constitution's purpose and goals.
- Describe how the Preamble plays a role in guiding constitutional interpretation. Support your arguments with examples.
- You can conclude by emphasizing the enduring relevance of the Preamble in guiding constitutional interpretation.

Introduction:

The Preamble of the Constitution is an introduction or preface that presents the principles and objectives of the Constitution. It also indicates the sources of its authority, which are the people of India. It plays an important role in guiding the interpretation and evolution of the Constitution.

Body:

Some of the ways in which the Preamble has influenced the constitutional jurisprudence are:

- **Source of Inspiration:** The Preamble inspires the interpretation of the Constitution in a manner that aligns with its core principles. It guides judges in making decisions that promote justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity, even when the Constitution itself does not explicitly address certain issues.
 - For instance, in the Keshavananda Bharati case vs. the State of Kerala (1973), the Supreme Court held that the Preamble is a part of the Constitution and that it reflects the basic structure, which cannot be amended.
- **Amending Power Limitation:** The Preamble's significance was highlighted in the landmark case of Kesavananda Bharati, where the Supreme Court held that although Parliament has the power to amend the Constitution, it cannot alter or destroy its basic structure, which includes the ideals enshrined in the Preamble. This decision acts as a check on any attempt to amend the Constitution in a manner that goes against its fundamental values.

- **Expanding Rights:** The Preamble has been used by the judiciary to expand the scope of fundamental rights and other constitutional provisions. In the Maneka Gandhi case (1978), the Supreme Court held that the right to travel abroad is an integral part of the right to life and personal liberty guaranteed by Article 21, drawing inspiration from the Preamble's emphasis on liberty and life.
- **Social Justice and Equality:** The Preamble's commitment to social justice and equality has been instrumental in interpreting various provisions related to reservation policies, affirmative action, and the protection of marginalized communities. Landmark decisions like the Mandal Commission case (Indra Sawhney v. Union of India, 1992) have drawn on the Preamble's principles to uphold affirmative action.
- **Evolving Societal Values:** As society evolves, so does the interpretation of the Constitution. The Preamble provides a flexible framework that allows for the adaptation of constitutional principles to changing societal values. For instance, the expansion of LGBTQ+ rights in Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (2018) was influenced by the Preamble's commitment to fraternity and equality.

Conclusion:

The Preamble plays a pivotal role in guiding the interpretation and evolution of the Constitution. It acts as a lodestar for judges, helping them ensure that the Constitution continues to fulfill its intended purpose of securing justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity for all citizens, even in the face of changing times and challenges.

36. "The Indian constitution was designed not for people how they are but how they ought to be". Comment (150 words)

Approach:

- Begin with a concise introduction that provides context to the statement.
- Discuss the ideals and principles enshrined in the Constitution that represent the vision of the framers.
- You can conclude by emphasizing that the Constitution continues to guide India toward an ideal future, despite the challenges, making it a dynamic and visionary document.

Note:

Introduction:

The constitution makers were aware of the realities and the challenges of Indian society, which was marked by poverty, illiteracy, inequality, etc. They did not want to create a constitution that would merely reflect the existing conditions, but one that would aspire to change them for the better. They wanted to create a constitution that would enable the people to realize their potential and to participate in the nation-building process.

Body:

The constitution, therefore, laid down the goals and the values that the people of India should strive for, such as:

- **Rights and Equality:** The Constitution guarantees fundamental rights to all citizens, irrespective of their current conditions, aiming to protect individuals from discrimination, oppression, and injustice. These rights are meant to create a society where individuals have the freedom to pursue their own aspirations and are not bound by their existing circumstances.
- **Economic Justice:** The Constitution's directive principles of state policy also reflect an aspiration for economic justice. While recognizing the economic disparities prevalent in society, the Constitution directs the state to work towards reducing these disparities by promoting economic and social justice.
- **Social Transformation:** The framers of the Indian Constitution envisioned a society where the caste system, gender discrimination, and other forms of inequality would be eradicated. Therefore, the Constitution includes provisions like affirmative action (reservation) for historically disadvantaged groups and the promotion of social justice.
- **Secularism:** The Indian Constitution also emphasizes secularism, recognizing that the country is religiously diverse. It envisions a society where all religions are treated equally and where the state does not favour any particular religion. This is in contrast to the prevailing religious hierarchies that existed at the time of independence.
- **Democratic Values:** The Constitution promotes democratic values, such as equality before the law and universal suffrage, with the aim of fostering a participatory and inclusive democracy. It envisions a society where the voices of all citizens, regardless of their socio-economic background, are heard and respected.

Conclusion:

The Indian constitution, therefore, is not a static or a rigid document, but a dynamic and a flexible one, that can adapt to the changing needs and aspirations of the people. The constitution is also not a final or a perfect document, but a progressive and a visionary one, that can inspire the people to work towards the realization of its goals and values.

- 37. How has the Supreme Court of India interpreted the law on sedition in various landmark judgments? Analyse the impact of these judgments on the freedom of speech and expression in India. Do you think sedition law is still relevant in a democratic country like India? Give reasons for your answer. (250 words)**

Approach:

- **Introduction:** Briefly introduce the sedition law.
- **Body:** Discuss key Supreme Court judgments and highlight the importance of these judgments and provide your opinion and reasons for the existence of the law.
- **Conclusion:** Provide a balanced conclusion that highlights the importance of protecting freedom of speech while ensuring national security.

Introduction:

Sedition is a criminal offense that punishes speech or actions that promote hatred, contempt, or disaffection towards the government established by law. It is defined under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The law has faced challenges for violating the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. The Supreme Court of India has interpreted the law on sedition in various landmark judgments and has provided guidelines to balance freedom of expression and the security of the state.

Body:

Some of the landmark judgments of the Supreme Court on sedition are:

- **Kedar Nath Singh vs Union of India (1962):** The Supreme Court upheld the validity of sedition law but clarified that prosecution can only happen if the act incites violence or has the intention to create public disorder. Mere criticism or disapproval of government policies without inciting hatred, contempt, or disaffection does not amount to sedition.

Note:

- **Shreya Singhal vs Union of India (2015):** Section 66A of the IT Act was declared unconstitutional and a violation of Article 19(1)(a) as it criminalised offensive online speech. The court also reiterated that sedition law can only be invoked when there is a clear and present danger of violence or public disorder.
- **Common Cause vs Union of India (2016):** The Supreme Court issued guidelines to prevent the misuse of sedition law. The court directed that no FIR should be registered for sedition without prior approval of a senior police officer and no charge sheet should be filed without obtaining legal opinion from a law officer. The court emphasised that dissent and criticism are essential for democracy and should not be curbed by invoking sedition law.

The impact of these judgments on the freedom of speech and expression in India are:

- They have upheld the constitutional validity of sedition law but also narrowed its scope and applicability by restricting it to cases involving incitement to violence or public disorder.
- They have protected the citizens' right to express their opinions and dissent against the government policies or actions without fear of prosecution as long as they do not endanger the security and integrity of the country.
- They have also cautioned the government and law enforcement agencies to exercise restraint and responsibility while using sedition law.

Sedition law is not relevant in a democratic country like India for the following reasons:

- Sedition law undermines freedom of speech, is outdated and arbitrary.
- It grants excessive authority to interpret speech as seditious, suppressing dissent and opposition.
- Sedition law is often misused and abused by the authorities.
- It also creates a chilling effect on the citizens' participation in democratic processes.
- Sedition law is a colonial relic that was used by the British to silence the freedom fighters. It has no place in independent India which is committed to uphold democracy, pluralism and human rights.

But if there is still a need of the Law as the anti-national and separatist elements exist even today, the law should be reformed:

- Clearly define sedition and its exclusions. Include safeguards against misuse and abuse.
 - The recent Law Commission has suggested to include the ratio of the Kedar Nath ruling into the provision by adding the words "with a tendency to incite violence or cause public disorder."
- Reducing the quantum of punishment for sedition from life imprisonment.
- The law should also provide for bail as a matter of right and ensure speedy trial.
- Provision to protect journalists, academics, artists, and social activists who express their opinions in good faith should be added to the law as recommended by the Law Commission.
- Including a procedural safeguard that no FIR shall be registered for sedition "unless a police officer, not below the rank of Inspector, conducts a preliminary inquiry.
- Promote citizen awareness, rights, and duties to use freedom of speech responsibly, avoiding incitement of violence or hatred.

Conclusion:

Ultimately, the relevance of the sedition law in India should be evaluated in light of its potential for misuse and its impact on freedom of speech and expression. It is essential to strike a delicate balance that protects national security while ensuring that individuals have the freedom to express their opinions without fear of reprisal.

38. Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) stand at a crossroads, calling for a comprehensive revamp. Examine the key challenges that impede the smooth functioning of ULBs and propose measures to overcome them. (250 words)

Approach:

- **Introduction:** Briefly introduce the concept of Urban Local Bodies
- **Body:** Discuss the major challenges faced by ULBs and propose measures to address them
- **Conclusion:** Summarize the key challenges faced by ULBs and the proposed measures to overcome them.

Note:

Introduction:

Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) play a crucial role in the governance and management of urban areas, ensuring the provision of essential services and the overall development of cities. However, ULBs face numerous challenges that hinder their smooth functioning. To achieve efficient urban governance, it is imperative to identify and address these challenges through comprehensive revamping measures.

Body:**Key Challenges faced by ULBs:**

- **Insufficient devolution of power and funds:** Numerous state governments have failed to fully implement the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, resulting in limited empowerment and inadequate financial resources for Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).
- **Inadequate recovery of service costs:** ULBs encounter difficulties in generating sufficient revenue from taxes and fees, leading to an inability to cover the expenses associated with essential services.
- **Limited capacity and accountability:** ULBs suffer from a shortage of skilled personnel, a lack of effective accountability mechanisms, and restricted citizen participation and transparency.
- **Political interference and fragmentation:** Frequent transfers of officials, undue political influence in resource allocation, and fragmentation of power across different levels of governance often hinder the smooth functioning of ULBs.
- **Multiple agencies and overlapping responsibilities:** Urban areas frequently contend with the involvement of multiple agencies in service provision, creating challenges in coordination and accountability.
- **Swift urbanization and evolving needs:** Urban growth presents new and evolving challenges for ULBs, such as the need to plan for sustainable development, promote social inclusion, and adapt to changing urban requirements.

Measures to Overcome Challenges:

- **Strengthening financial capacities:**
 - Improve tax collection with technology and analytics.
 - Encourage public private partnerships for infrastructure.
 - Promote innovative financing like municipal bonds.

- Explore alternate revenue sources (ads, user charges).

➤ **Enhancing institutional capacity:**

- Conduct comprehensive capacity building programs.
- Establish training institutes for professional development.
- Facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration.
- Attract and retain skilled professionals.

➤ **Ensuring autonomy and transparency:**

- Protect ULBs from political interference.
- Strengthen accountability and transparency.
- Foster citizen participation.
- Use technology for transparent governance.

➤ **Streamlining governance structures:**

- Promote decentralization and empowerment of ULBs.
- Develop interagency coordination mechanisms.
- Simplify administrative procedures.
- Adopt integrated urban planning approaches.

Conclusion:

Revamping Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) is crucial for efficient urban governance and sustainable development. It requires addressing challenges like limited funds, weak institutions, political interference, and inefficient structures. Implementing proposed measures empowers ULBs, improves performance, and tackles 21st-century urban challenges. This builds vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable cities.

39. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has been facing a crisis of credibility and confidence due to various factors. Analyse the causes and consequences of this crisis and suggest measures to restore the public trust and reputation of the CBI. (250 words)

Approach:

- Start your answer by introducing the Central Bureau of Investigation.
- Write Causes of Crisis of credibility and confidence.
- Analyse Consequences of the Crisis.
- Suggest Measures to restore the public trust and reputation.
- Conclude accordingly.

Note:

Introduction:

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is India's premier investigating agency that was established on the recommendation of the Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption, and it deals with cases of corruption, economic offences, special crimes, etc. A Supreme Court Bench in 2013 described the CBI as "a caged parrot speaking in its master's voice".

Body:**Causes of the crisis are:**➤ **Political Interference:**

- The CBI is often seen as a tool of the central government to target its political opponents or favour its allies.
- The CBI's investigations are influenced by the political considerations and pressures of the ruling party or coalition. This affects its impartiality and objectivity and erodes its public image.

➤ **Internal Conflicts:**

- The CBI has witnessed several instances of internal conflicts and rifts among its top officials over various issues such as appointments, transfers, promotions, investigations, etc.
- These conflicts reflect the lack of coordination, cooperation and trust within the organization and hamper its functioning and morale.

➤ **Lack of Transparency:**

- The CBI operates in a secretive and opaque manner and does not disclose much information about its cases, procedures, outcomes, etc. to the public or the media.
- This creates a perception of mystery and suspicion around the CBI and raises doubts about its accountability and integrity.

Consequences of the crisis are:➤ **Loss of Public Trust:**

- The CBI's credibility and confidence have been severely damaged by the various controversies and scandals that have plagued it in recent years.
- The public has lost faith and respect for the CBI as an independent and professional agency that can deliver justice and fight corruption.

➤ **Judicial Intervention:**

- The CBI's crisis has invited frequent judicial intervention and scrutiny by the Supreme Court, the High Courts, the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), etc.
- The judiciary has often criticized, censured or monitored the CBI's actions and decisions in various cases.
- This reflects the failure of the CBI to perform its duties in accordance with the law and public interest.

➤ **Impact on Governance:**

- The CBI's crisis has also affected the governance and administration of the country.
- The CBI's investigations have created a climate of fear and uncertainty among the public servants, politicians, businessmen, etc. who are involved or implicated in various cases.
- This hampers their efficiency and effectiveness and undermines their morale and motivation.

Measures to Restore the Public Trust and Reputation of the CBI:➤ **Statutory Status:**

- The CBI should be given a statutory status by enacting a separate law that defines its powers, functions, jurisdiction and limitations.
- This would provide a legal basis for its existence and operation and insulate it from political interference.

➤ **Selection Committee:**

- The CBI director and other senior officers should be appointed by a high-powered selection committee comprising representatives from the executive, judiciary and legislature.
- This would ensure a broad-based and transparent selection process that respects the principle of separation of powers.

➤ **Fixed Tenure:**

- The CBI director and other senior officers should be given a fixed tenure of at least five years with protection from arbitrary transfer or removal.
- This would enhance their stability and security of service and enable them to perform their duties without fear or favour.

Note:

- **Financial Autonomy:**
 - The CBI should be given financial autonomy by allowing it to have its own budget that is approved by Parliament.
 - This would reduce its dependence on the central government for funds and resources and enable it to plan and execute its activities efficiently.
- **Oversight Body:**
 - The CBI should be accountable to an independent oversight body that monitors its performance and conduct on a regular basis.
 - This body could be a parliamentary committee or a statutory authority that has members from different backgrounds and expertise.
 - This would ensure that the CBI acts in accordance with the law and public interest and is answerable for any lapses or violations.

Conclusion:

The CBI has a crucial role to play in combating corruption, ensuring accountability and delivering justice. However, the CBI has been facing a crisis of credibility and confidence due to various factors that have undermined its independence, professionalism and integrity. Therefore, it is imperative to reform and strengthen the CBI by addressing the causes and consequences of this crisis and by implementing the measures suggested above. This would restore the public trust and reputation of the CBI and enable it to fulfil its mandate and mission effectively and efficiently.

40. What are the main features and functions of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) in India? How effective has it been in ensuring probity and accountability in public life? (250 words)

Approach:

- Start your answer with a brief introduction of CVC.
- Explain its main features and functions.
- Write some examples where CVC has played role in ensuring probity and accountability.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction:

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) is the apex anti-corruption body in India that exercises superintendence over the vigilance administration of the central

government and its organizations. It was established by an executive resolution in 1964 on the recommendation of the Santhanam Committee and was given a statutory status by the CVC Act, 2003.

Body:

Main Features and Functions of the CVC are:

- **Composition:**
 - The CVC consists of a Central Vigilance Commissioner and not more than two Vigilance Commissioners, who are appointed by the President on the recommendation of a committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha.
 - They hold office for a term of four years or until they attain the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
- **Jurisdiction:**
 - The CVC has jurisdiction over all central government employees, except members of the armed forces, and all central government organizations, corporations, societies, local authorities, etc.
 - It also has jurisdiction over employees of public sector undertakings, nationalized banks and insurance companies.
- **Functions:**
 - Advising the central government on matters relating to vigilance policy, norms and procedures.
 - Receiving complaints of corruption or misconduct against public servants and conducting inquiries or investigations into them.
 - Exercising superintendence over the functioning of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in relation to cases under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.
 - Reviewing the progress of disciplinary cases against public servants and issuing directions for their speedy disposal.
 - Recommending appropriate action against public servants found guilty of corruption or misconduct.
 - Undertaking preventive vigilance measures such as conducting inspections, audits, reviews, etc. to detect and prevent corruption.
 - Creating awareness and educating public servants and citizens about the ill-effects of corruption and the need for integrity and honesty in public life.

Note:

The CVC has been playing an important role in ensuring probity and accountability in public life by exposing and punishing various cases of corruption and misconduct involving public servants. Some of the examples are:

- **2G Spectrum Scam:**
 - The CVC referred the case to the CBI for investigation and monitored its progress. The CVC also submitted a report to the Supreme Court on its findings and recommendations.
- **Coal Block Allocation Scam:**
 - The CVC referred the case to the CBI for investigation and monitored its progress. The CVC also submitted a report to the Supreme Court on its findings and recommendations.
- **Commonwealth Games Scam:**
 - The CVC conducted inspections, audits, inquiries and investigations into various aspects of the games such as infrastructure development, procurement, contracts, etc. Which led to the conviction of Suresh Kalamadi.

Conclusion:

The Central Vigilance Commission is often limited in its powers as it is treated as an advisory body with no power to register cases. Even though it is an independent agency, it lacks the resources and power to take action on complaints.

Such shortcomings of the systems need to be addressed to curb the menace of corruption in the rapidly growing economy.

41. Critically examine the role and relevance of Rajya Sabha in the Indian parliamentary system. Suggest some reforms to enhance its effectiveness and accountability. (250 words)

Approach:

- Start your answer with a brief introduction of Rajya Sabha.
- Explain role and relevance of Rajya Sabha.
- Suggest some reforms in Rajya Sabha.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction:

Rajya Sabha or the Council of States is the upper house of the Indian Parliament, which represents the interests of the states and the union territories in the

federal system. It is a permanent house that is not subject to dissolution, but one-third of its members retire every two years.

Body:

➤ Role and relevance:

○ Law-making:

- Rajya Sabha participates in the legislative process along with Lok Sabha or the lower house.
- It can initiate, amend or reject any bill, except money bills, which are the exclusive domain of Lok Sabha. It can also make recommendations on money bills within 14 days.
- However, in case of a deadlock between the two houses on any bill, a joint sitting can be convened, where Lok Sabha has an advantage due to its larger size and numerical strength.
- Moreover, Rajya Sabha cannot initiate or amend constitutional amendment bills, which require a special majority in both houses.

○ Oversight:

- Rajya Sabha exercises oversight over the executive by asking questions, raising motions, passing resolutions, demanding discussions, etc.
- Rajya Sabha does not have any role in the formation or dissolution of the government, which depends on the majority support in Lok Sabha only.

○ Representation:

- Rajya Sabha represents the federal principle and diversity of India by giving voice to the states and union territories in the national legislature.
- It also reflects the pluralism and heterogeneity of India by accommodating various parties, groups and interests in its composition.
- However, the representation of Rajya Sabha is not proportional to the population of the states and union territories, as there is a cap of 250 elected members and a minimum of one member for each state and union territory.
- Moreover, some states and union territories are over-represented or under-represented in Rajya Sabha due to historical reasons or political calculations.

Note:

○ **Deliberation:**

- Rajya Sabha acts as a chamber of debate and discussion on various issues of national and international importance.
- It provides a forum for expressing diverse views and opinions, as well as for scrutinizing and refining policies and laws.
- It also benefits from the expertise and experience of its members, especially the nominated ones, who enrich its deliberations with their knowledge and insights.
- However, the quality and quantity of deliberation in Rajya Sabha has declined over time due to factors such as frequent disruptions, partisan politics, lack of decorum, absence of quorum, misuse of rules, etc.

➤ **Reforms:**

○ **Strengthening law-making:**

- Rajya Sabha should be given more powers and autonomy in law-making, especially on matters concerning the states and union territories. It should also be consulted before convening a joint sitting or passing a constitutional amendment bill.
- It should also have more say on money bills, which often include non-financial matters that affect its jurisdiction.

○ **Enhancing oversight:**

- Rajya Sabha should be more proactive and effective in overseeing the executive by using various parliamentary tools and mechanisms.
- It should also have more role and influence in the appointment and removal of key constitutional functionaries, such as judges, election commissioners, CAG, CVC, etc.
- It should also have more access to information and documents from the executive to enable informed scrutiny.

○ **Improving representation:**

- Rajya Sabha should be reformed to ensure fair and equitable representation of the states and union territories in proportion to their population.
- It should also ensure adequate representation of women, minorities, backward classes, etc. in its composition.

- It should also avoid nomination of persons with political affiliations or conflicts of interest.

○ **Promoting deliberation:**

- Rajya Sabha should foster a culture of debate and dialogue among its members by adhering to the rules and norms of parliamentary conduct.
- It should also encourage more participation and attendance of its members by imposing penalties for absenteeism or indiscipline.
- It should also leverage technology and innovation to enhance its deliberative capacity and outreach.

Conclusion:

Rajya Sabha is an integral and indispensable part of the Indian parliamentary system that performs various roles and functions in the governance and development of the country. It is also a symbol of India's federalism and diversity that reflects its constitutional values and vision. However, it also faces some challenges and limitations that hamper its effectiveness and accountability. Therefore, it needs to be reformed and revitalized to meet the expectations and aspirations of the people and the nation.

42. Discuss the implications of online free speech in the digital age, examining its role in fostering democratic values and the challenges it poses to regulation and governance. (250 Words)

Approach:

- **Introduction:** Start your answer with a brief overview of online free speech and its significance.
- **Body:** Discuss the implications and role of online free speech and challenges posed by it on governance.
- **Conclusion:** Conclude your answer with a way forward approach.

Introduction:

Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution provides all the citizens a fundamental Right to free speech. Online free speech refers to the ability of individuals to express their opinions, thoughts, and ideas freely on the internet. In the digital age, online free speech has emerged as a powerful tool for individuals to express their opinions and participate in public discourse. It has brought about significant implications, while playing a crucial role in fostering democratic values.

Note:

Body:**Implications and role of online free speech in the digital age:**

- It allows democratization of information. Through social media platforms, blogs, and online forums, individuals can share their ideas, experiences, and perspectives with a global audience.
- It enables people to hold governments and other powerful actors accountable for their actions and policies.
- Online platforms have facilitated the exposure of corruption, human rights abuses, and other government misconduct, fostering transparency and demanding accountability.
- This serves as a check on the abuse of power and promotes democratic values of transparency, justice, and the rule of law.
- It has given people the ability to mobilize and organize themselves for social and political causes, leading to social movements and activism that can challenge established power structures and advocate for change.
- This has contributed to a more inclusive and participatory democracy, where multiple voices can contribute to shaping public opinion and decision-making processes.

Challenges posed by it on regulation and governance:

- **Misinformation and disinformation:** The digital age has witnessed the rapid spread of misinformation and disinformation, which can have detrimental effects on public opinion and decision-making processes.
- **Hate speech and incitement to violence:** Online platforms provide a breeding ground for hate speech, xenophobia, and incitement to violence.
- **Anonymity and accountability:** The ability to remain anonymous online can lead to a lack of accountability for harmful speech or illegal activities.
- **Jurisdictional complexities:** The internet transcends national boundaries, making regulation and governance a complex task. Different countries have varying legal frameworks and cultural norms regarding free speech.
- **Privacy concerns:** Online free speech often involves the exchange of personal information, leading to privacy concerns.
- **Ethical and legal complexities:** Online free speech raises complex ethical and legal questions. Determining the boundaries between protected speech and harmful speech.

Conclusion:

While online free speech is a crucial aspect of the digital age, it presents significant challenges for regulation and governance. Striking the right balance between protecting freedom of expression and addressing harmful content requires careful consideration of issues such as misinformation, hate speech, anonymity, jurisdictional complexities, privacy concerns, and avoiding overreach. A new Digital India Act clearly defining the boundaries of online free speech is the need of hour.

43. Evaluate the challenges of Panchayati raj institutions in India. What are the measures needed to strengthen the Panchayati raj system in India? (150 words)

Approach:

- Start your answer with a brief introduction of Panchayati Raj institutions in India.
- Write Challenges faced by Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- Suggest measures needed to strengthen the Panchayati Raj system.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction:

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 introduced the concept of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in India, aiming to decentralize power and promote grassroots governance.

It is essential to evaluate the performance of PRIs and identify the challenges they face in order to strengthen the panchayati raj system.

Body:**Challenges faced by Panchayati Raj Institutions:**

- **Financial Dependence:**
 - PRIs often face financial constraints due to inadequate devolution of funds from the state governments, limiting their capacity to execute local development projects effectively.
- **Administrative and Political Interference:**
 - Interference from higher levels of government, bureaucratic hurdles, and political influence often undermine the autonomy and decision-making powers of PRIs.

Note:

➤ **Social and Gender Biases:**

- Deep-rooted social hierarchies and discrimination can impede the effective functioning of PRIs, particularly in terms of women's participation and representation.

➤ **Capacity Building:**

- Insufficient training and skill development programs for elected representatives and functionaries hinder their ability to perform their roles effectively.

Measures to strengthen the Panchayati Raj System:

➤ **Adequate Financial Resources:**

- Ensuring an adequate and timely flow of funds to PRIs, along with transparency and accountability in financial management, is crucial for their effective functioning.

➤ **Capacity Building and Training:**

- Implementing comprehensive capacity building programs for elected representatives and functionaries to enhance their governance skills, leadership abilities, and knowledge of local development issues.

➤ **Autonomy and Decentralization:**

- Strengthening the autonomy of PRIs by minimizing bureaucratic interference and political influence, enabling them to exercise their powers and functions independently.

➤ **Social Inclusion and Gender Equality:**

- Promoting inclusive and gender-responsive governance by actively encouraging women's participation, ensuring equal representation, and addressing social biases and discrimination.

➤ **Strengthening Oversight Mechanisms:**

- Establishing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the performance of PRIs, promote transparency, and hold elected representatives accountable for their actions.

➤ **Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Integration:**

- Leveraging technology to improve transparency, access to information, and service delivery in PRIs, enabling citizens to actively engage and participate in local governance.

Conclusion:

The Panchayati Raj Institutions have made significant strides in promoting grassroots democracy and local development since the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992. However, challenges such as financial dependence, capacity building, administrative interference, and social biases persist. By implementing measures to ensure adequate resources, capacity building, autonomy, social inclusion, and leveraging technology, the panchayati raj system in India can be strengthened, empowering local communities and fostering participatory democracy at the grassroots level.



Note: