

# General Studies : Paper- II

## Model Answers

### Section-A

**Q.1 Analyse the role of the Supreme Court in evolving and safeguarding the basic structure of the Indian Constitution.**

**Ans.** The **Basic Structure Doctrine**, articulated by the Supreme Court, plays a vital role in preserving the integrity of the Indian Constitution.

Through various landmark judgments, the Court has ensured that despite political and legislative changes, the core principles of the Constitution remain intact.

#### Key Milestones:

- **Golaknath Case (1967):** Established the judiciary's role in reviewing constitutional amendments, particularly those impacting fundamental rights.
- **Kesavananda Bharati Case (1973):** The Court introduced the Basic Structure Doctrine, ruling that while Parliament can amend the Constitution, it cannot alter its core principles like democracy, secularism, and judicial review.
- **Indira Gandhi v. Raj Narain (1975):** Affirmed free and fair elections as part of the basic structure.
- **Minerva Mills Case (1980):** Reinforced the balance between Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles.
- **NJAC Case (2015):** Invalidated the National Judicial Appointments Commission, citing judicial independence as part of the basic structure.
- **The Right to Privacy Case (2017):** Declared the right to privacy as a fundamental right, affirming the dynamic evolution of the basic structure doctrine.
- **The Ayodhya Judgment (2019):** The Court reaffirmed that secularism is a core principle that forms part of the basic structure, even in the context of sensitive matter.

Since 1973, the Supreme Court has consistently upheld and evolved the Basic Structure Doctrine, ensuring the Constitution adapts to contemporary needs without compromising its foundational values. The Court's role remains critical in safeguarding India's democratic framework.

# UPPCS

## Q.2 What are the rights within ambit of Article 19 of the Indian constitution?

**Ans.** Article 19 of the Indian Constitution guarantees six fundamental freedoms to the citizens of India. These freedoms are subject to reasonable restrictions under certain circumstances.

The rights within the ambit of Article 19 are:

### 1. Freedom of Speech and Expression (Article 19(1)(a))

- The right to express one's thoughts and opinions freely, through spoken, written, or visual communication.
- **Restrictions:** Can be imposed in the interests of sovereignty, integrity, security of India, relations with foreign states, or public order.

### 2. Freedom of Assembly (Article 19(1)(b))

- The right to hold peaceful meetings and demonstrations without arms.
- **Restrictions:** The government can impose reasonable restrictions on the grounds of public order, morality, or the **sovereignty** and **integrity** of India.

### 3. Freedom of Association (Article 19(1)(c))

- The right to form associations, unions, or co-operatives.
- **Restrictions:** Can be restricted in the interest of **national security** or **public order**.

### 4. Freedom of Movement (Article 19(1)(d))

- The right to move freely throughout the territory of India.
- **Restrictions:** The state can impose restrictions on grounds of **national security**, **public order**, or morality.

### 5. Freedom of Residence (Article 19(1)(e))

- The right to reside and settle in any part of the country.
- **Restrictions:** Restrictions may be placed in areas that are **protected** by law or in the interest of **scheduled tribes** or **public order**.

### 6. Freedom of Profession, Occupation, Trade, and Business (Article 19(1)(g))

- The right to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade, or business.
- **Restrictions:** Restrictions can be imposed by the state to ensure **professional qualifications**, **public interest**, or **for regulation** of trade.

Article 19 provides a broad framework of freedoms, with the balancing act of reasonable restrictions to safeguard public interest, national security, and order.

# UPPCS

**Q.3** Mention merits and demerits of the collegium system of appointment in the higher judiciary of India.

**Ans.** The **collegium system** of judicial appointments in India, established to preserve judicial independence, involves a group of senior judges, including the Chief Justice of India, recommending appointments to the Supreme Court and High Courts.

## Merits:

1. **Judicial Independence:** The collegium ensures that the judiciary remains free from executive influence, upholding the **separation of powers**. This was upheld in the **Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association v. Union of India (1993)** case, which cemented the collegium's role.
2. **Expertise:** Judges are selected based on **merit** and **experience**, ensuring that only competent individuals with legal acumen are appointed. For instance, **Justice K.K. Mathew** was appointed based on his vast legal knowledge.
3. **Political Neutrality:** The system minimizes political interference in judicial appointments. This was particularly evident during the NJAC case (**2015**) when the government's attempts to involve itself in the process were struck down.

## Demerits:

1. **Lack of Accountability:** The collegium is criticized for being self-regulated with no external checks. The **Justice Dinakaran controversy** highlighted concerns about the system's accountability.
2. **Opacity:** The selection process is often opaque. For example, the delay in the appointment of **Justice K.M. Joseph** raised transparency concerns.
3. **Delays in Appointments:** Disagreements between the collegium and the government can lead to vacancies, affecting judicial efficiency, as seen in the delay of appointments in 2017.

In conclusion, while the collegium system ensures judicial independence, it faces challenges regarding accountability, transparency, and delays.

# UPPCS

**Q.4 Explain various reasons behind frequent disruptions in the functioning of the Parliament and state legislatures in India.**

**Ans.** Frequent disruptions in the functioning of India's Parliament and state legislatures have become a major concern, impacting the legislative process and delaying critical policy decisions.

These disruptions hinder the smooth passage of bills and the overall governance of the country.

**1. Political Polarization and Opposition Strategy:**

- **Ideological Differences:** The ideological divide between the ruling and opposition parties often leads to disruptions.
- For example, during the **Farm Laws protests (2020-2021)**, opposition parties such as **Congress** and **TMC** disrupted Parliament sessions to protest against the controversial laws.
- **Opposition Tactics:** Opposition parties also use disruptions as a strategy to gain visibility and highlight issues.
- The **Rafale Deal** in 2018 led to multiple disruptions as opposition parties sought to hold the government accountable.

**2. Lack of Consultation and Transparency:**

- **Non-Inclusive Decision-Making:** Bills are sometimes introduced without adequate consultation with opposition parties.
- For instance, the **GST Bill (2017)** faced protests due to a lack of consensus between the Centre and states on several provisions.
- **Controversial Bills:** The **Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)** was introduced without thorough consultation, leading to severe disruptions in Parliament, particularly from opposition members who argued that it undermined India's secular character.

**3. Procedural Issues:**

- **Use of Ordinances:** The government's use of **ordinances**, such as the **Triple Talaq Ordinance (2018)**, without proper debate in Parliament, has led to frequent disruptions.
- **Poor Legislative Management:** The mismanagement of time and priorities often leads to disruptions, as witnessed in several sessions where critical issues were sidelined.

**4. Regional and Identity-Based Demands:**

- **Statehood and Regional Issues:** Issues related to statehood, like the demand for **Telangana's bifurcation (2014)**, and identity-based concerns such as the **NRC (2019)** in Assam often spark protests and disruptions in legislative bodies.

Frequent disruptions in India's Parliament and state legislatures are caused by political, procedural, and regional factors. To reduce these disruptions, there is a need for better coordination, transparency in decision-making, and enhanced discipline within legislative processes. This would ensure smoother functioning and better governance in the country.

# UPPCS

**Q.5** Write a critical note on the role of pressure groups. How can they be an effective tool for supporting governance measures?

**Ans.** Pressure groups are organized entities that seek to influence public policy and government decisions, ensuring that diverse interests are represented in governance.

## **Positive Role:**

1. **Advocacy and Representation:** Groups like Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) ensure the voices of farmers are heard in policymaking.
2. **Policy Influence:** Groups like Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan played a crucial role in the Right to Information Act, 2005.
3. **Public Awareness and Mobilization:** Pressure groups help raise awareness about critical issues, often mobilizing public support for change. For ex- Anna Hazare's anti-corruption movement.
4. **Check on Government Power:** They act as watchdogs, ensuring that government policies are scrutinized and align with public interest.

## **Challenges:**

1. **Elite Dominance:** Some groups, like corporate lobbies, may prioritize elite interests over public welfare.
2. **Policy Capture:** Large groups may manipulate policies for their own benefit, compromising the common good.
3. **Lack of Accountability:** Many pressure groups lack transparency and accountability.
4. **Fragmentation:** Pressure groups may focus on narrow issues, leading to fragmented efforts instead of a unified approach for broader public good.

For pressure groups to be effective, they must operate with transparency and accountability to ensure that the public interest remains at the forefront.

# UPPCS

**Q.6 How has Artificial Intelligence (AI) been integrated into governance? Highlight opportunities and challenges.**

**Ans.** Artificial Intelligence (AI) is progressively transforming governance by enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in public administration. Countries like Estonia have integrated AI into their e-government services, offering citizens digital IDs and online voting systems.

Similarly, in India, AI is used in disaster management, such as the National Disaster Management Authority's use of AI for predicting natural disasters like floods.

## **Opportunities:**

1. **Improved Efficiency:** AI can automate routine administrative tasks, such as data processing and public grievance redressal. For example, the **Aadhaar-based system** in India streamlines welfare distribution.
2. **Data-Driven Policy:** AI helps in **predictive analytics** for better decision-making, such as **AI models used in traffic management** or **predicting economic trends**.
3. **Enhanced Public Services:** **AI-powered chatbots** are deployed in governments, like **Delhi's MyGov**, for real-time public engagement and feedback.

## **Challenges:**

1. **Data Privacy Concerns:** AI systems collect vast amounts of personal data, raising **privacy risks**. For instance, **Aadhaar's use** has been questioned on privacy grounds.
2. **Bias and Fairness:** AI models may perpetuate biases, as seen in some **facial recognition systems** disproportionately misidentifying certain demographic groups.
3. **Job Displacement:** Automation through AI may lead to **job losses** in public administration, requiring significant **reskilling efforts**.

AI offers significant potential for governance but demands a careful balance of innovation, ethics, and inclusivity.

# UPPCS

## **Q.7 Assess the impact of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in women empowerment in rural India.**

**Ans.** Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have significantly contributed to the empowerment of women in rural India, providing a platform for economic, social, and political involvement. These groups help women enhance their living standards, achieve financial independence, and have a greater voice in their communities.

### **Positive Impact:**

#### **1. Economic Empowerment:**

- SHGs provide access to microfinance, enabling women to start small businesses. In West Bengal, SHGs have helped women engage in poultry farming and fish farming, boosting their incomes. In Tamil Nadu, women run successful dairy farming and produce organic fertilizers, improving their financial stability.

#### **2. Social Empowerment:**

- SHGs help women challenge traditional norms. In Uttar Pradesh, SHG members have advocated for better sanitation facilities, and in Bihar, SHGs have helped reduce child marriage and promoted girls' education.

#### **3. Health and Nutrition:**

- In Odisha, SHGs run programs on sanitation and maternal care, while in Kerala, they focus on improving nutrition in rural communities.

### **Challenges:**

#### **1. Limited Market Access:**

- SHGs face difficulties in marketing their products. Women in rural Bihar struggle to reach larger markets.

#### **2. Sustainability Issues:**

- Some SHGs face profitability challenges due to lack of training and professional management.

SHGs have empowered women economically and socially but face challenges such as market access and sustainability. With adequate support, SHGs can further contribute to women's empowerment in rural India.



# UPPCS

**Q.8 Analyse India's role in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and assess its relevance in the evolving global geopolitical landscape.**

**Ans.** The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), founded in 1961, was a collective response of newly independent nations to avoid alignment with any major power bloc during the Cold War. India, under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, was instrumental in shaping NAM's philosophy of peaceful coexistence and strategic autonomy.

## **India's Role in NAM:**

- India was a founding member and key ideologue promoting Panchsheel principles.
- It provided leadership to nations seeking freedom from colonialism, imperialism, and bloc politics.
- India used NAM as a diplomatic platform to voice concerns of the Global South and promote development cooperation.

## **Contemporary Relevance:**

- Though Cold War politics have ended, NAM's principles remain significant amid new forms of global polarization.
- India upholds non-alignment through multi-alignment—balancing relations with the U.S., Russia, and regional powers.
- NAM must evolve to address issues like climate justice, economic equity, cyber security, and UN reforms.

India's leadership in NAM reflects its commitment to sovereign decision-making and South-South cooperation. To remain relevant, NAM must adapt to 21st-century geopolitical challenges, with India playing a proactive role in its redefinition.



# UPPCS

## Q.9 Discuss the opportunities and challenges of India-European Union Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations.

**Ans.** The India-European Union Free Trade Agreement (FTA), formally known as the India-EU Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA), has been under negotiation since 2007. As India seeks to diversify its trade partnerships and the EU pursues greater engagement in the Indo-Pacific, the FTA holds immense strategic and economic significance for both sides.

The India-European Union (EU) Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations present both significant opportunities and complex challenges.

### Opportunities

1. **Enhanced Market Access:** The EU, India's largest trading partner with bilateral trade reaching \$137.5 billion in 2023–24, offers vast potential for Indian exports in sectors like textiles, pharmaceuticals, and IT services.
2. **Investment and Technology Transfer:** The FTA could attract increased EU investments in India's infrastructure, renewable energy, and manufacturing sectors, fostering technology transfer and economic growth.
3. **Diversification of Trade Partnerships:** For the EU, strengthening ties with India aligns with its strategy to diversify trade relations beyond China and the U.S., especially amid evolving global trade dynamics.

### Challenges

1. **Tariff and Market Access Disputes:** The EU seeks significant tariff reductions on automobiles and alcoholic beverages, while India aims to protect its domestic industries, leading to contentious negotiations.
2. **Regulatory and Standards Alignment:** Differences in standards, particularly concerning the EU's stringent environmental and labour regulations, pose compliance challenges for Indian exporters.
3. **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR):** The EU's demand for stronger IPR protections, especially in pharmaceuticals, raises concerns in India about access to affordable generic medicines.
4. **Government Procurement:** The EU's push for access to India's government procurement market faces resistance due to India's intent to protect its MSMEs and maintain policy autonomy.
5. **Mobility of Professionals:** India's request for easier movement of skilled professionals is met with caution by the EU, as visa policies remain under individual member states' jurisdiction.

While the India-EU FTA holds promise for bolstering economic ties and strategic cooperation, addressing the outlined challenges requires mutual flexibility and a balanced approach. Both parties have reaffirmed their commitment to concluding the agreement by the end of 2025, indicating a shared interest in overcoming these hurdles for mutual benefit.

# UPPCS

**Q.10 Analyse India's approach in engaging with Global South and discuss how this strategy enhances its position as a major global actor.**

**Ans.** India's engagement with the Global South is rooted in its historical commitment to anti-colonial solidarity, South-South cooperation, and equitable global governance.

In recent years, this engagement has evolved strategically, aligning with India's aspiration to become a leading global actor.

## **India's Approach to the Global South:**

- **Development Partnership:** Through the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, Lines of Credit, and capacity-building initiatives, India has supported infrastructure, education, health, and digital projects in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia.
- **Vaccine and Humanitarian Diplomacy:** India's "Vaccine Maitri" initiative during the COVID-19 pandemic reinforced its role as a dependable partner.
- **Global Forums and Voice Amplification:** India has used platforms like the G20, BRICS, and the UN to articulate concerns of the Global South on debt distress, climate justice, and reform of multilateral institutions.
- **India's Voice at the Global South Summit:** Hosting the Voice of Global South Summit in 2023 demonstrated India's intent to lead consensus-building among developing nations.

## **Strategic Benefits for India:**

- **Leadership Credibility:** India is seen as a bridge between developed and developing worlds.
- **Geopolitical Influence:** It strengthens India's soft power and builds diplomatic capital, especially in Africa and Latin America.
- **Economic Opportunities:** Engagement opens new trade and investment frontiers.

India's proactive engagement with the Global South not only reflects its civilizational ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam but also strategically enhances its global influence in a multipolar world order.

# UPPCS

## Section-B

**Q.11 In what ways does the Presidential election process in the United States differ from that in India?**

**Ans.** The election of the President in both the United States and India reflects their respective constitutional and political frameworks. While both follow an indirect electoral process, the nature, structure, and significance of the position in the two democracies lead to fundamental differences in how the Presidents are elected.

| Aspect                        | United States   | India   |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Type of System                | Presidential system                                     | Parliamentary system  |
| Head of                       | State and Government                                    | State only (ceremonial role)  |
| Mode of Election              | Indirect – via Electoral College elected by citizens    | Indirect – via Electoral College (MPs and MLAs)                                       |
| Electoral College Composition | Electors from each state and D.C., based on population  | Elected MPs and MLAs; vote value differs based on population and legislative strength |
| Voting System                 | First-past-the-post among Electoral College members     | Proportional representation through single transferable vote                          |
| Role of Political Parties     | Candidates are nominated by political parties           | Though nominated by parties, President is expected to be apolitical                   |
| Frequency of Election         | Every 4 years   | Every 5 years   |
| Term Limit                    | Maximum of two 4-year terms (22nd Amendment)            | No fixed term limit; eligible for re-election   |
| Oath of Office                | Administered by Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court | Administered by Chief Justice of India  |
| Nature of Mandate             | Directly from people via electors                       | Indirect and representative, largely ceremonial                                       |

While both India and the U.S. elect their Presidents through indirect means, the comparison highlights the fundamentally different roles and systems of governance. The U.S. President holds executive power, making the election highly politicized and people-centric. In contrast, India's President symbolizes constitutional authority and unity, with an election process rooted in federal representation and consensus. This reflects the distinct democratic ethos and constitutional philosophies of both nations.

# UPPCS

**Q.12 Examine the recent changes in the appointment process of Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners. What issues have been raised with respect to these changes?**

**Ans.** The Election Commission of India (ECI) plays a vital role in safeguarding the democratic process. In 2023, the Parliament enacted the *Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act*, altering the appointment process of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs). These changes have invited significant debate over their impact on the independence of the ECI.

## **Key Changes Introduced:**

1. **Altered Composition of Selection Committee:** The 2023 Act replaces the Supreme Court-mandated selection committee (PM, Leader of Opposition, and CJI) with one comprising the Prime Minister, a nominated Union Cabinet Minister, and the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha.
2. **Role of the Search Committee:** A Search Committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary will prepare a panel of names for consideration, potentially giving the executive control over candidate shortlisting.
3. **Change in Service Conditions:** The new Act reduces the status of the CEC and ECs from equivalence with Supreme Court judges to that of the Cabinet Secretary.

## **Issues Raised:**

1. **Dilution of Institutional Independence:** Exclusion of the CJI weakens the non-partisan nature of the selection process.
2. **Executive Dominance:** With two out of three selectors from the executive, concerns of politicisation have emerged.
3. **Legal and Constitutional Challenges:** Several petitions argue the Act violates the spirit of the Constitution and Supreme Court rulings.

The recent changes have reignited concerns over the autonomy of the Election Commission. Upholding its independence is essential to ensuring free and fair elections in India's democratic framework.

# UPPCS

**Q.13 Discuss the challenges in the implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission and suggest measures to improve its effectiveness.**

**Ans.** Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), launched in 2019, aims to provide Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs) to every rural household by 2024. It envisions ensuring safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections. While the mission is ambitious and transformative, its implementation faces several critical challenges.

## Challenges in Implementation

1. **Inadequate Water Source Availability:** Many regions lack sustainable and perennial sources of freshwater, especially in drought-prone and water-stressed areas.
2. **Poor Infrastructure and Maintenance:** Existing rural water infrastructure is either inadequate or poorly maintained, leading to frequent breakdowns and leakages.
3. **Institutional Capacity Constraints:** Panchayats and local bodies often lack the technical capacity and manpower to implement and maintain water supply systems.
4. **Water Quality Concerns:** Contamination due to fluoride, arsenic, iron, and other pollutants remains a significant concern in many regions.
5. **Funding and Resource Gaps:** While JJM is a centrally sponsored scheme, delays in fund disbursement and lack of convergence with other schemes affect timely execution.
6. **Community Participation:** Lack of active involvement of local communities in planning and monitoring hampers long-term sustainability.

## Measures to Improve Effectiveness

- **Strengthen Source Sustainability:** Promote rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge, and watershed management.
- **Build Local Capacity:** Train village-level functionaries and empower panchayats for operation and maintenance.
- **Ensure Water Quality Monitoring:** Establish regular testing mechanisms and deploy low-cost purification technologies.
- **Promote Community Ownership:** Encourage Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) to take ownership.
- **Ensure Timely Fund Release and Transparency:** Use digital platforms for real-time monitoring and fund tracking.

The Jal Jeevan Mission is crucial for improving public health and rural quality of life. Addressing implementation bottlenecks through decentralized, participatory, and sustainable approaches will enhance its success and long-term impact.

# UPPCS

**Q.14 Examine the role of One Nation, One Ration Card (ONORC) scheme in improving food distribution efficiency.**

**Ans.** The One Nation, One Ration Card (ONORC) scheme, aims to ensure nationwide portability of food security benefits under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013. It allows beneficiaries to access subsidized foodgrains from any Fair Price Shop (FPS) across the country using Aadhaar-linked ration cards, thereby making food distribution more inclusive and efficient.

## **Role of ONORC in Improving Food Distribution Efficiency**

1. **Portability of Benefits:** ONORC enables internal migrants, estimated at over 37% of India's population, to avail food subsidies anywhere in the country—ensuring food security irrespective of location.
2. **Reduction in Exclusion Errors:** It helps eliminate duplicate and fake ration cards, making the Public Distribution System (PDS) more transparent and accountable.
3. **Empowerment of Migrant Workers:** The scheme empowers migrant labourers, particularly those working in urban or industrial areas away from home, by ensuring continuity of food benefits.
4. **Boost to Digital Infrastructure:** Implementation has promoted digitization and Aadhaar seeding in PDS, leading to better monitoring and grievance redressal mechanisms.
5. **Efficient Resource Allocation:** Data from ONORC transactions help in tracking inter-state demand patterns, enabling better planning and foodgrain allocation.

## **Challenges and Way Forward**

- **Technology and Connectivity Issues** in remote regions hinder real-time authentication.
- **State-level Resistance** due to fear of burden-sharing and loss of control over PDS.
- **Need for Greater Awareness** among migrant beneficiaries.

ONORC marks a transformative shift in India's food security system. By enhancing portability, transparency, and inclusion, it significantly improves distribution efficiency. Strengthening digital infrastructure and fostering inter-state cooperation are essential to maximize its impact.



# UPPCS

**Q.15 Examine the role of public-private partnerships (PPP) in strengthening healthcare infrastructure in India. What challenges hinder their effective implementation?**

**Ans.** India's healthcare system faces persistent challenges of accessibility, affordability, and infrastructure gaps, especially in rural and underserved areas.

In this context, Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) have emerged as a viable mechanism to leverage private sector efficiency and innovation for public health goals.

## **Role of PPP in Strengthening Healthcare Infrastructure**

1. **Infrastructure Development:** PPPs have facilitated the development of hospitals, diagnostic centers, and mobile health units under schemes like Ayushman Bharat and state-level initiatives (e.g., Andhra Pradesh's Rajiv Arogyasri).
2. **Service Delivery Enhancement:** Private entities help deliver high-quality services in areas such as telemedicine, diagnostics, ambulance services (e.g., 108 EMRI), and secondary healthcare.
3. **Capacity Building and Technology Transfer:** PPPs bring in advanced medical technologies, training modules, and managerial expertise, enhancing the skill set of public health personnel.
4. **Cost Efficiency and Risk Sharing:** Through shared investments and risks, PPPs reduce the burden on public finances and improve cost-effectiveness.

## **Challenges Hindering Effective Implementation**

1. **Lack of Clear Policy Framework:** Absence of standardized PPP models across states leads to ambiguity and inconsistent outcomes.
2. **Trust Deficit and Misaligned Objectives:** Conflicting goals between profit-oriented private players and equity-focused public institutions cause friction.
3. **Weak Monitoring and Accountability Mechanisms:** Inadequate oversight often results in service quality issues and cost overruns.
4. **Limited Private Interest in Remote Areas:** Low profit margins in rural areas discourage private sector participation.

PPPs hold great potential in bridging healthcare infrastructure gaps in India. However, to unlock their full impact, a robust policy framework, transparent contracts, effective regulation, and incentivization for rural outreach are essential.



# UPPCS

**Q.16** Despite multiple poverty alleviation schemes, India continues to struggle with widespread hunger and malnutrition. Analyse the reasons and suggest measures for improvement.

**Ans.** India has implemented several flagship programs like the Public Distribution System (PDS), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS), and Poshan Abhiyaan to combat poverty and malnutrition.

Yet, according to the Global Hunger Index 2024, India ranks 105 out of 127 countries, highlighting persistent gaps.

## Reasons for Persistent Hunger and Malnutrition

1. **Calorie-focused Schemes:** The PDS largely supplies rice and wheat, lacking diversity. For instance, the limited availability of millets or pulses restricts protein intake, worsening malnutrition.
2. **Implementation Gaps:** In states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, studies have shown that Anganwadi centers often lack adequate food, staff, or infrastructure, hampering ICDS effectiveness.
3. **Maternal and Child Health Neglect:** NFHS-5 reveals that over 35% of children under five are stunted, often due to poor maternal nutrition and early pregnancies, especially in tribal and rural regions.
4. **Sanitation-Linked Undernutrition:** In Odisha, the Swachh Bharat Mission significantly improved sanitation, which correlated with a decline in diarrheal diseases — yet many other states still lag, affecting nutrient absorption.
5. **Lack of Awareness:** A survey in Madhya Pradesh revealed that many households were unaware of nutrition entitlements under Poshan Abhiyaan, leading to underutilization.

## Measures for Improvement

- Diversify PDS with pulses, millets, and fortified foods as piloted in Tamil Nadu's Amma Unavagam scheme.
- Strengthen last-mile delivery using e-POS machines and social audits.
- Promote intersectoral convergence (nutrition + WASH + maternal care).
- Launch targeted awareness campaigns, especially in aspirational districts.

Addressing hunger in India demands a shift from food security to nutrition security, with inclusive, accountable, and community-driven interventions.

# UPPCS

**Q.17 E-governance initiatives have the potential to enhance efficiency and reduce corruption. Critically examine their implementation in India with examples.**

**Ans.** E-governance refers to the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to deliver government services efficiently, transparently, and inclusively.

In India, initiatives under the Digital India Mission, such as Aadhaar, UMANG, e-NAM, Digi Locker, and MyGov, have aimed to improve service delivery and curb corruption.

## Potential of E-Governance

### 1. Enhancing Efficiency

- Aadhaar-enabled Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) have reduced leakages in schemes like PM-KISAN and MNREGA, ensuring subsidies reach beneficiaries directly.
- Bhoomi Project in Karnataka digitized land records, reducing red tape and delays in land ownership verification.

### 2. Curbing Corruption

- e-Tendering platforms in states like Andhra Pradesh brought transparency in public procurement.
- Online grievance redressal systems like CPGRAMS empower citizens and hold officials accountable.

### 3. Accessibility and Inclusiveness

- Portals like UMANG and Digi Locker offer over 100 digital services, reducing bureaucratic hurdles and increasing convenience.

## Challenges in Implementation

1. **Digital Divide:** Rural areas face poor connectivity and digital illiteracy, limiting access to e-services.
2. **Cybersecurity Risks:** Data breaches, like those reported with Aadhaar, raise concerns over privacy and misuse of personal information.
3. **Capacity and Infrastructure Gaps:** Lack of trained personnel and outdated hardware/software hampers service quality, especially at the local government level.
4. **Fragmented Systems:** Lack of interoperability among platforms often leads to duplication and inefficiency.

While e-governance in India has improved transparency and reduced corruption in many areas, equitable access, robust data protection laws, and capacity building are essential to fully realize its transformative potential.

# UPPCS

**Q.18 Analyse the impact of US-imposed reciprocal tariffs on India. Also, suggest measures that India can adopt to mitigate the adverse effects of such trade restrictions.**

**Ans.** India's manufacturing faces a renewed challenge from the proposed reciprocal tariffs by the US, especially under former President Donald Trump's policy stance. Despite initiatives like 'Make in India', the sector's share in GDP declined slightly from 15.99% in 2014–15 to 15.83% in 2023–24, signalling stagnation.

With the US being India's largest export destination, such tariffs threaten to disrupt key sectors of the economy.

## Impact of Reciprocal Tariffs on Indian Exports

### 1. Sector-Wise Effects:

- **Steel and Aluminium:** 25% tariffs have already made Indian exports less competitive, resulting in reduced orders and job losses.
- **Pharmaceuticals:** Tariffs could lead to reduced profit margins and a potential shift in sourcing by US companies to China or Mexico.
- **Textiles and Apparel:** Higher costs risk loss of market share to countries like Vietnam and Bangladesh.
- **Electronics:** Tariff barriers could discourage investment and reduce exports of smartphones and semiconductors.

### 2. Economic Consequences:

- **Reduced Export Revenues:** Shrinking access to the US market may widen the trade deficit and weaken forex reserves.
- **Investment Slowdown:** Trade uncertainty may discourage FDI in export-oriented manufacturing.
- **Job Losses:** Sectors like textiles (Tamil Nadu, Gujarat), pharma (Telangana), and electronics (Noida) may witness employment shocks.

## Way Forward

- **Diversify Markets:** Accelerate FTAs with the EU, UK, ASEAN, and explore new markets in Africa and Latin America.
- **Boost Domestic Capacity:** Focus on Atmanirbhar Bharat, R&D, and PLIs to reduce cost burdens and enhance competitiveness.
- **Financial Support:** Offer subsidized credit, tax relief, and MSME-targeted incentives to cushion the impact.

While reciprocal tariffs present a formidable challenge, strategic diversification, policy support, and manufacturing reform can help India turn this crisis into an opportunity for long-term industrial growth and global integration.

# UPPCS

**Q.19** India-Bangladesh relations have entered a phase of uncertainty after the Bangladesh interim government formation. Discuss and suggest measures to navigate these emerging challenges.

**Ans.** India and Bangladesh share historical, cultural, and strategic ties, with their relationship often described as a "model of good neighbourliness."

However, the formation of the interim government in Bangladesh following the controversial 2024 general elections—marked by low voter turnout, opposition boycotts, and allegations of authoritarian consolidation—has introduced new uncertainties in bilateral ties.

## Emerging Challenges

1. **Democratic Backsliding in Bangladesh:** The legitimacy crisis of the new government led by the Awami League may strain India's diplomatic image, especially as global powers raise concerns over democratic erosion.
2. **Anti-India Sentiment:** The perceived Indian support to the current regime has fuelled anti-India narratives among opposition supporters and the youth, undermining people-to-people goodwill.
3. **China's Growing Influence:** Amid strained relations, Bangladesh may further tilt towards China for economic and military cooperation, affecting India's strategic interests in the Bay of Bengal.
4. **Border and Migration Issues:** Political instability may lead to a spike in border tensions and illegal migration, reigniting sensitive domestic concerns within India.
5. **Water Sharing and Teesta Deadlock:** Political uncertainty may stall long-pending agreements like the Teesta water-sharing treaty, exacerbating regional discontent.

## Suggested Measures

1. **Neutral Engagement with All Stakeholders:** India should engage with all democratic forces in Bangladesh, not just the ruling regime, to maintain a balanced perception.
2. **Support Democratic Institutions:** India must advocate for free media, rule of law, and electoral reforms through quiet diplomacy.
3. **Revive Regional Connectivity Projects:** Initiatives under BBIN and BIMSTEC can provide neutral platforms for cooperation, de-escalating bilateral friction.

4. **Track-II Diplomacy and Cultural Outreach:** Academic, media, and youth exchanges can help rebuild trust at the grassroots level.
5. **Calibrated Strategic Balancing:** While maintaining ties with the Awami League, India should be open to recalibrating its position to remain relevant in a changing political landscape.

Navigating this uncertain phase requires India to exercise strategic patience, diplomatic agility, and long-term vision. A stable, democratic, and cooperative Bangladesh is essential for India's Act East policy and regional security.



# UPPCS

**Q.20 Discuss the key maritime security challenges faced by India and analyse the measures taken to enhance its maritime security framework.**

**Ans.** India, with a coastline of over 7,500 km and a strategic location in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), faces multifaceted maritime security challenges.

As 90% of its trade by volume and 80% by value is sea-borne, ensuring maritime security is vital for economic and strategic interests.

The threats are both traditional and non-traditional, requiring a comprehensive and collaborative response.

## **Key Maritime Security Challenges Faced by India**

### **1. Terrorism and Coastal Infiltration**

- The 2008 Mumbai attacks exposed serious gaps in coastal surveillance and response mechanisms.
- Small fishing boats and unmonitored coastal areas pose risks of infiltration and smuggling.

### **2. Piracy and Sea Robbery**

- Incidents in the Gulf of Aden and near the Strait of Malacca affect India's maritime trade routes.
- The recent resurgence of piracy off the Somalia coast remains a concern.

### **3. China's Expanding Naval Presence (String of Pearls)**

- China's naval bases and investments in ports across the IOR (e.g., Gwadar in Pakistan, Hambantota in Sri Lanka) challenge India's regional influence and security.
- Chinese survey and research vessels near Indian waters are suspected of surveillance activities.

### **4. Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing**

- Depletes marine resources affects the livelihood of Indian coastal communities.
- Many foreign trawlers operate in India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) unlawfully.

### **5. Maritime Boundary Disputes**

- Dispute with Pakistan over Sir Creek and challenges in delineating maritime boundaries with Bangladesh (now resolved in 2014 through international arbitration).

### **6. Marine Pollution and Environmental Threats**

- Oil spills, shipping accidents, and plastic waste threaten marine biodiversity and coastal economies.

## Measures Taken to Enhance India's Maritime Security Framework

### 1. Institutional Mechanisms

- National Maritime Domain Awareness (NMDA) project integrates data from multiple agencies for real-time monitoring.
- Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) functions as the nerve centre for maritime surveillance.

### 2. Coastal Security Enhancements

- Sagar Suraksha and Coastal Surveillance Network with radar stations across the coastline.
- Inclusion of fishermen in community surveillance programmes to report suspicious activities.
- Marine Police Stations established under the Coastal Security Scheme.

### 3. Naval Modernisation and Presence

- Indigenisation through platforms like INS Vikrant (India's first indigenous aircraft carrier) and nuclear submarine INS Arihant.
- Permanent deployment of ships in the Gulf of Aden for anti-piracy patrols under Mission-Based Deployments.

### 4. International and Regional Cooperation

- Participates in Quad Naval Exercises (Malabar) with the US, Japan, and Australia.
- Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) based in Gurugram shares white shipping data with 50+ countries.
- Bilateral agreements with Seychelles, Mauritius, and Sri Lanka for maritime domain awareness and patrols.

### 5. Policy Frameworks and Doctrines

- Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) doctrine emphasizes regional maritime cooperation and capacity building.
- India's updated Maritime Security Strategy 2015 outlines layered security and ocean governance.

### 6. Technological Initiatives

- Use of satellite-based surveillance via GSAT-7 and automatic identification systems (AIS) for tracking commercial vessels.
- Digitisation of port infrastructure under the Sagarmala project for better monitoring and logistics efficiency.

India's maritime security is central to its economic growth, energy security, and strategic ambitions. While significant steps have been taken post-2008 to plug institutional and technological gaps, emerging threats like cyber intrusions, grey zone tactics, and deep-sea espionage demand continued vigilance. A holistic approach—combining indigenisation, international partnerships, and coastal community involvement—is the key to securing India's maritime future.