

# UPSC Mains (2025)

## General Studies : Paper – II

### Model Answers

#### Section – A

**Q.1.** “The blend of parliamentary supremacy with judicial review in India has evolved into the doctrine of Constitutional supremacy.” Comment. (Answer in 150 words) 10

**Ans:** Parliamentary supremacy in India refers to the sovereignty of the Parliament in the legislative process. Judicial review is the power of judiciary to examine constitutional validity of legislative and executive actions.

#### **Blend of parliamentary supremacy with judicial review evolved into Constitutional supremacy:**

- The Indian Parliament doesn't enjoy unchecked authority over legislations. Any law inconsistent with the fundamental rights is deemed void (Article 13).
  - This means **constitutionality** of legislations is ultimately ensured.
  - Ex- Supreme Court's declared the 99th Constitutional Amendment Act as ultra vires of the Constitution.
- The legislature, executive and judiciary, all are independent in their respective domain but **Constitution is the paramount** law of the land.
  - Nobody is above or beyond the Constitution, the Supreme Court observed in Minerva Mills case (1980).
- The Keshavananda Bharati case (1973) introduced the concept of the “**basic structure**” of the Constitution.
  - Parliament can amend any part of the Constitution (Article 368) but violation of basic structure would be considered null and void.
- Article 368 of the Constitution also imposes a **procedural constraint on parliamentary sovereignty** in India, ensuring a deliberative process for constitutional changes.
  - Ex- Parliament cannot unilaterally change state subjects (Schedule VII).
  - Such changes are subject to judicial review.
- Parliamentary supremacy of legislation is **limited to the extent prescribed in the Constitution** under Article 245, subject to judicial review.

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- The Constitution empowers the Supreme Court and the High Courts, under Article 32 and 226 respectively, to issue **directions or orders or writs** for the enforcement of Fundamental Rights.
  - Remedy against unchecked parliamentary supremacy provided in Constitution itself.

Constitution as a written document in India serves as the supreme law of the land. Parliamentary sovereignty has to be exercised within the Constitutional boundaries which is ensured by judicial review.



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**Q.2. Examine the role of the President and the Governor in state legislation. How does it impact the federal framework as envisaged under the Constitution of India? Discuss. (Answer in 150 words)** 10

**Ans:** The Governor is the part of the state legislature (Article 168). The role of President in state legislation is mainly guided by Article 200 and 201 of the Constitution.

## **Role of the President and the Governor in state legislation:**

- To a Bill passed by the State Legislature, the Governor can **declare or withhold assent or reserve the Bill** for the consideration of the President (Article 200).
  - **No timeline** prescribed for Governors; at times **keep Bills pending** without any action (pocket veto).
- In case of a Bill other than Money Bill, Governor can return the Bill with a message (Article 200).
  - Can be used as a **tactics to delay** state legislation.
- In case of a Bill so reserved the President may either declare his assent or withhold his assent (Article 201).
  - **No time limit** is imposed by the Constitution upon the president.
- For a Bill other than money Bill, the President may direct the Governor to **return the Bill** to the State legislature (Article 201).
  - But it is **not obligatory** upon the President to give his assent in case the Bill is presented to him again.
    - Ultimate fate of the Bill depends upon the President.
- Article 213 empowers the Governor to **promulgate Ordinances** during recess of Legislature.
  - But repeated promulgation of ordinance deemed as a “fraud on the Constitution” (D.C. Wadhwa case, 1987).

## **Impact on the federal framework:**

- **Federal division of legislative powers** (under Schedule VII) disturbed by undue interference and delays in giving assent.
- Prolonged delay in assenting to Bills can become a **source of confrontation** between Opposition-ruled States and their Governors.
  - **Weakens cooperative federalism.**
  - Ex- Tamil Nadu and Kerala filed petitions against their Governors.

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- The Supreme Court in Rameshwar Prasad (2006) and Nabam Rebia (2016) cases held that the discretionary powers of the Governor to withhold assent are **amenable to judicial review**.
  - Increased judicial tussle between centre and the states.
- **No mechanism at the State level** for the Governor to refer Bills to the constitutional courts for their advice or opinion.
  - Makes state legislature dependent on the President in this regard.

In a recent landmark judgement, the Supreme Court has put deadlines for the Governors and the President to decide on State Bills. This judicial action can resolve the issue of arbitrary pendency in future.



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**Q. 3. Sub-classification within Scheduled Castes for the purposes of reservation ensures that the most vulnerable within marginalised groups receive their fair share. Comment. (Answer in 150 words) 10**

**Ans:** Overruling its stand in E. V. Chinniah case (2004), the Supreme Court recently held that sub-categorisation within a class is a constitutional requirement to secure substantive equality.

**Sub-classification within Scheduled Castes ensures most vulnerable receive fair share:**

- Under **Article 16(4)** of the Constitution, the State can make any provision for the **reservation of appointments or posts** in favour of any backward class of citizens.
  - Sub-classification would ensure that only dominant caste groups among SCs are not benefited.
- Provisions for **reservation of seats** for SCs in local bodies, Lok Sabha and State assemblies are given under **Article 243D, 243T, 330 and 332** respectively.
  - Sub-classification would encourage inclusive political representation of most marginalised.
- Most vulnerable among SCs need **further preferential treatment** in public employment and education.
  - Hence, States have a right to sub-classify Scheduled Castes notified in the Presidential List.
  - Ex- Tamil Nadu Arunthathiyars Reservation Act, 2009, Punjab Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes (Reservation in Services) Act, 2006 etc.
- Sub-classification would achieve the **real equality** as enshrined in the Constitution.
  - Unequals have to be treated unequally (Article 14).
- Fair representation through sub-classification would act as a **necessary check against the arbitrary power and social hegemony** of dominant caste and class groups.
- The 'Scheduled Castes' notified by the President under Article 341(1) of the Constitution had **heterogeneous groups with varying degrees of backwardness**.

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- Thus requiring, further sub-classification for fair distribution of resources for the most marginalised.
- **Historical and empirical evidence** also demonstrate the imbalance over share of resources among Scheduled Castes.
  - Thus, a rational principle for differentiation through sub-classification would ensure fair share to the most marginalised.

There can be concerns of potential political misuse of sub-classification among SCs to expand vote banks. But the constitutional need for acknowledging and remedying inequality among Scheduled Castes must be fulfilled.



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**Q. 4. Briefly discuss the provisions related to citizenship at birth in India and distinguish it with that in the US Constitution. (Answer in 150 words) 10**

**Ans:** In India, citizenship by birth is governed by the Citizenship Act of 1955. Generally, a person born in India on or after January 26, 1950, is a citizen by birth, subject to exceptions.

## **Provisions related to citizenship at birth in India:**

- Under **Article 5(a)**, every person who is **born as well as domiciled in the territory of India**, irrespective of the nationality of his parents, was deemed to be a citizen of India on 26 January 1950.
- **Acquisition of citizenship by birth** under the **Citizenship Act, 1955**.
  - Every person born in India
    - (a) on or after the 26th January, 1950, but before 1st July, 1987;
    - (b) on or after 1st July, 1987, but before the commencement of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003 and either of whose parents is a citizen of India at the time of his birth;
    - (c) on or after the commencement of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2003, where atleast one of whose parents is a citizen of India and the other is not an illegal migrant at the time of his birth; shall be a citizen of India by birth.
- **Exceptions:** At the time of his birth either of his parents shouldn't be **enemy aliens or foreign diplomats**.

## **Difference with birthright Citizenship in the United States:**

- The Fourteenth Amendment to the US Constitution guarantees **birthright citizenship** to every child born within the jurisdiction of the United States.
  - **No such absolute guarantee** in Indian Constitution.
- Anyone born on U.S. soil has automatically been conferred citizenship at birth **regardless of their parents' immigration or citizenship status**.
  - Citizenship by birth **subject to exceptions** of parents citizenship, illegal migrants and enemy aliens in India.

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- Currently, the United States uses a combination of **unrestricted birthplace-based citizenship (jus soli)** and **restricted ancestry-based citizenship (jus sanguinis)** to determine birthright citizenship.
  - India follows jus soli and jus sanguinis, **both in restricted sense**.

The provisions related to citizenship has been in debate recently, both in India and the US, over concerns of illegal immigration and right of citizens over resources.





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**Q. 5. The emphasis of limitations to the Right to freedom of speech and expression by the State should be on 'reasonable' grounds maintaining substantive rights under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. Explain. (Answer in 150 words)**

**10**

**Ans:** Article 19(2) in the Constitution of India allows for reasonable restrictions to be imposed by the State in the interest of sovereignty, security, public order, morality etc.

**Emphasis of limitations should be on 'reasonable' grounds maintaining substantive rights:**

- **The Constitution (First Amendment) Act, 1951**, amended Article 19 to maintain substantive right of freedom of speech and expression as well as prevent its abuse.
  - The term '**reasonable restrictions**' inserted in Article 19(2) which deals with Article 19(1)(a).
- The **substance of the Right to free speech and expression** is much broader and restrictions must meet strict constitutional scrutiny. E.g. as laid down by the Supreme Court, it includes-
  - **Right to Silence** (Bijoe Emmanuel v. State of Kerala),
  - **Right to Information** (SP Gupta v. Union of India),
  - **Freedom of the Press** (Romesh Thapar v. State of Madras)
  - **Right to criticize the Government** (Shreya Singhal v. Union of India)
- There is **interdependence of fundamental rights**, particularly the link between Articles 19, 21, and 14, hence reasonable restrictions are more necessary.
  - Any restriction under Article 19 must also meet the **tests of reasonableness and fairness** under Articles 14 and 21 (Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India).
- Article 19(1)(a) promotes the **positive right** of liberty. As the **core of Part-III** of the Constitution, it is an **indispensable condition** of every other form of freedom.
  - State limitations without focus on reasonable restrictions will deny the Right to dignified life under Article 21.
- Essential to **balance freedom of speech and expression with public order** as a reasonable restriction.

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- Ex- Speech inciting violence is not protected (Kedar Nath Singh v State of Bihar).
- The meaning of terms ‘decency’ or ‘morality’ changes with time. They are not confined to sexual morality alone.
  - Ex- seeking votes on the ground of religion is against the norms of decency and propriety.
- State is duty bound to ensure prevalence of conditions for exercise of freedoms including under Article 19(1)(a).
  - Restriction shouldn't be excessive or arbitrary and should be reasonable not only on substantive but procedural grounds also.

Thus, emphasis on reasonable restrictions in context of Article 19(1)(a) would secure individual freedom balanced with social harmony or national integrity.



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**Q. 6. “Considering that 50 per cent of India will be residing in cities by 2050, robust urban local bodies have become more pertinent.” Examine in light of the recent CAG report over functioning of urban local bodies in India. (Answer in 150 words) 10**

**Ans:** The CAG flagged concerns on the health of urban local bodies in a recent audit report. It is important given India’s rising urban population (40% by 2030) and the trend to continue further.

**Robust urban local bodies (ULBs) have become more pertinent:**

- **Functional autonomy** for ULBs, with implementation of the 74th Constitution Amendment Act, 1992 in spirit, would be required for tackling a complex urban scenario.
  - The Amendment required the states to devolve 18 functions, including urban planning, regulation of land use etc.
  - Only four of the functions devolved with complete autonomy.
- Urban local bodies should be **self-reliant for funds** as sizeable investments will be required in urban areas.
  - 42% gap between their resources and expenditure.
  - On average, 32% of the revenue of the urban bodies was their own, with the rest coming from the Union and state governments.
- To increase the productive potential of citizens, ULBs will also need to invest in public services to improve their quality of life.
  - Central and state governments finance 72% of urban infrastructure (CAG report).
- **Staff augmentation** is essential for ULBs for effective service delivery and proper fulfillment of its mandate.
  - **average vacancy of 37%** against the sanctioned staff strength.
  - urban bodies of 16 states had **limited or no power** over recruitment.
- **Capacity building of ULBs** required to cater the **core function of implementing programmes and development works** at the local level.
  - Only 29% of the current expenditure of ULBs is directed towards programmatic and development work.

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- **Strengthening ULBs through adoption of best practices** in tackling emerging urban challenges like climate-induced water scarcity, transportation etc.
  - Ex- Dharampuri, a small town in Madhya Pradesh, has become water surplus.
  - Chennai established a nodal body to oversee, coordinate, and monitor traffic and transportation in the city, etc.

More political autonomy, alternate sources of revenue like municipal bonds, enhancing administrative and technical expertise can help ULBs manage the urban challenges in the future.



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**Q. 7. Explain the importance of 'One Health approach' towards health issues, particularly at the community level in India. How could it help in preventing incidences of public health emergencies? (Answer in 150 words) 10**

**Ans:** One Health is a collaborative, multidisciplinary approach that unites human, animal, and environmental health sectors. It recognizes the interconnectedness of these domains to optimize health outcomes.

**Importance of 'One Health approach' (OHA) towards health issues, particularly at the community level in India:**

- India with its **diverse wildlife, one of the largest livestock populations and high density of human population**, carries heightened risks.
  - considered one of the **probable global "hotspots"** for emerging and re-emerging zoonoses.
- Problem of freely roaming animals coming in frequent contact with each other and human settlements.
  - **Leading to outbreak of diseases** e.g. lumpy skin disease in cattle, avian influenza, Nipah, rabies, kalaazar etc.
- One Health Approach would facilitate **shared and effective health governance**, communication, collaboration and coordination.
  - **Essential in management of pandemics** like COVID-19.
- Makes it **easier for people to better understand** the co-benefits, risks, trade-offs and opportunities to **advance equitable and holistic solutions**.
  - Creating **public health awareness** at the community level.
- Livestock, wildlife and plant sectors impact productivity, health and conservation aspects in other areas also.
  - Ex- **high economic costs** of animal diseases to the farmers, **implications for wildlife conservation** through spread into protected species etc.
  - Requires **community involvement** going beyond individual intervention.
- Opens opportunities for **leveraging the complementarity and strengths** that are inherent at various levels of community.
  - devising integrated, robust and agile response systems.

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## Help in preventing incidences of public health emergencies:

- Coordinate across achieving **overall pandemic preparedness**.
- **Integrated disease control** against priority diseases of human, animal and environmental sectors.
- **Early warning systems** built on integrated surveillance system and response readiness in terms of clinical care for endemic as well as emerging epidemic or pandemic threat.
- **Targeted R&D** to develop critical tools such as vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics.
- **Streamline data and information linkages and access** across sectors.
- **Close community participation** to keep our readiness to respond.

Understanding its importance, the Government of India has approved to set up a National One Health Mission. It would work for a cross-ministerial effort to coordinate and integrate One Health activities.



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**Q. 8. Revamped policy processes and collaborative efforts are at the centre of the pursuit of lasting solutions to poverty and malnutrition. Explain with examples. (Answer in 150 words) 10**

**Ans:** Acknowledging the interlinkage between poverty and malnutrition, the World Health Organisation (WHO) designated **2016–2025 as the ‘decade of nutrition’** as a policy measure.

**Revamped policy processes and collaborative efforts for lasting solutions:**

- Eradication of poverty and malnutrition requires a **shift in their conventional understanding** in policy making.
  - Ex- poverty goes beyond income deficiency, obesity and overweight as a form of malnutrition etc.
- Need to focus on **urgently solving malnutrition through direct food assistance** along with addressing systemic poverty.
  - Ex- MDM scheme, Food coupons, subsidised government canteens etc.
- **Cross-sectoral coordination and convergence** to address Issues like poverty and malnutrition as they relate to various government departments.
  - Ex- under Mission Antyodaya framework.
- **Data-driven approach** with real-time dashboards and data analytics, gender and age segregated data.
  - Ex- NITI Aayog’s India SDG Index to track state-wise progress on SDG goals, fostering
  - Public Financial Management System (PFMS), a real-time online platform, to track fund flow, ensure timely payments etc.
- National and state policies and programmes to tackle poverty and malnutrition would translate into ground action through **strengthening of local bodies**.
  - Ex- decentralised planning and strong community engagement through Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).
- **Partnering with international organisations** e.g. UNDP and civil society to mobilize resources, build capacities, and ensure grassroots-level implementation.
- **Comprehensive review** of existing policies, facilitated by a wide range of stakeholders.

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- E.g. **Third party assessment** of major schemes like MGNREGA, NRLM, PMAY etc.
- **Prevention and treatment based nutrition intervention** to address malnutrition since infant stages.
  - E.g. exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, food fortification, deworming etc.
- Increasing engagements of poverty and malnutrition programmes through **grassroot workers and community level champions**.
  - E.g. Anganwadi and ASHA workers have been engaged in grassroots health and nutrition message delivery.
- More emphasis on social security nets to protect people against risk and vulnerability through a network of agencies and institutions.
  - E.g. subsidies to handle acute and chronic diseases like tuberculosis.

Multi-sectoral approach, integrating technical and policy interventions along with administrative reforms and stakeholder inclusion would provide a lasting solution to poverty and malnutrition.





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**Q. 9. BIMSTEC grouping provides a platform for not only multilateral outcomes but also bilateral engagements to promote regional cooperation. Analyse. (Answer in 150 words) 10**

**Ans:** Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), established in 1997, is an inter-regional organisation of Bay of Bengal littoral states connecting South and Southeast Asia.

**BIMSTEC grouping provides a platform for multilateral outcomes:**

- **New driver for regional integration** in South Asia after halt to the SAARC process.
  - **adoption of the charter** at the Colombo Summit in 2022.
  - **formalized its institutional mechanism** by adopting **Rules of Procedure** at 6th summit (2025).
- Twenty-one years ago, BIMSTEC achieved a significant multilateral outcome by **adopting the Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**.
  - Though it has yet to come into force.
- Platform for **major regional initiatives** through summit meetings.
  - E.g. the **BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030** the first-ever vision document of the organization.
  - agreement on **Maritime Transport Cooperation** etc.
- **Collaboration with other regional and international organizations** that have shared interests.
  - E.g. signed **Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)** with the Indian Ocean Rim Association and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.
- BIMSTEC's primary objective is to achieve multilateral outcomes such as **enhancing connectivity** among member states.
  - Improved transport and logistics networks, including highways, railways, and ports.
    - E.g. **Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project** etc.
- **Cooperation in the security domain** given common security threats, including terrorism and transnational crime.
  - E.g. first-ever BIMSTEC Joint military exercises, **MILEX-2018**.
- BIMSTEC **also cooperates in non-traditional security sectors**, including natural disasters.
  - with various mechanisms such as the Expert Group on Disaster Management, three Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HARD) exercises so far.

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## **Bilateral engagements to promote regional cooperation:**

- **Sideline meetings** of leaders gaining more attention.
  - reinforces diplomatic ties among member nations.
- The member countries of BIMSTEC **share deep historical and cultural ties** bilaterally.
  - can be leveraged to strengthen regional unity.
    - E.g. India-Bangladesh-Thailand, Nepal-Bhutan etc.
- **Strong bilateral relationships and neighborhood** (Act East, Neighborhood First) **policies** to regional integration.
  - E.g. The Bangladesh-India relationship is considered critical for consolidating the BIMSTEC.
- For **extraction of huge unexplored resources** in the region, member countries need bilateral partnerships.
- **Bilateral engagements** on border and coastal management, rule of law, illicit trades, piracy, organised crime, maritime enforcement, migration etc.
  - E.g. Resolving the **rohingya crisis** etc.
- BIMSTEC member countries are providing **disaster assistance** based on their capacity on bilateral basis also.
  - E.g. India and Sri Lanka have collaborated on **capacity-building programs**.

India must make efforts to strengthen BIMSTEC, as India's broader maritime and foreign policy interests strategically align with a robust and sustainable BIMSTEC.

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**Q. 10. Analyse the impact of readjustments in US-European Union (EU) relations on India. What potential does it hold for India-EU partnership? (Answer in 150 words) 10**

**Ans:** A shifting stand of the United States over issues like Ukraine, NATO, trade tariffs etc has increased its gap with the European Union. The readjustments showcase the breaking down of old relations.

## **Impact of readjustments in US-European Union (EU) relations on India:**

- The US has been **changing its perspective regarding multilateralism**. The US President claimed the EU was formed to hurt American interests.
  - India also faces challenges given US **threats to other multilateral groups** like BRICS.
- The **Ukrainian issue** has severely damaged US-Europe relations as **US sidelined Europe** in its initiation of peace talks over Ukraine.
  - US **aligned with Russia twice** at the UN, signalling a shift away from Europe.
  - India will be impacted in terms of **finding a balance between the US-EU** and **crafting its own strategy** over the Ukraine crisis.
- Europe sees the US threatening, indirectly or even directly, to **cut off NATO security guarantees**, in case of a Russian invasion.
  - US **opposed NATO membership** for Ukraine.
  - India's strategic and defence alliances with the US can come under **pressure for long-term reliability**.
- The EU and US represent almost **30% of global trade in goods** and services and **43% of global GDP**.
  - Recently, US initiated **high tariffs** on global imports; impacting the **largest** trade partner like EU.
  - India has also been threatened with high tariffs.
- Europeans are trying to fulfill development aid where **USAID has been cut**.
  - particularly in terms of **global environmental protection**.
  - U.S. withdrawal from the post-Kyoto treaties, such as Paris Agreement will **impact India's goal of climate justice**.
- EU nations claim **foreign interference in national elections** from US.
  - Creates a **partnership vacuum** and **opportunities for building strong partnerships** with major partners like India.

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## Potential it holds for India-EU partnership:

- EU is **India's largest trading partner** with about 6,000 EU companies in India and **bilateral trade reaching \$135 billion** in 2022-23.
  - The EU and India, both among the world's five largest economies, have the **opportunity to deepen economic ties**.
- In 2004, India and the EU **formally established a strategic partnership**, further strengthened by the **launch of free trade talks** in 2007.
  - FTA talk process **stalled in 2014**, restarted in 2022 and now offers a **reasonable chance** of delivering a bilateral free-trade agreement.
- EU, facing potential tariffs from the US, views India as a critical partner in **diversifying its trade ties**.
  - **India also seeking to diversify its trade ties**.
- India-EU brought **closer by the geopolitical situation** and their **common pursuit of strategic autonomy and global security**.
  - This like-minded outlook will **help India manage the geopolitical complexities** particularly of the Indo-Pacific region.
- Help both India and EU to **reconstruct a rules-based global order** for the new multipolar world.
  - important for the multilateral particularly climate regimes, where EU and Indian positions converge.
    - India's critical role in achieving net-zero carbon objectives.
- India has showcased its **growing international role** with the launch of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.
  - **Potential for more inter-regional engagement** in the future.

There is a significant shift in the post-war international order built under the leadership of the U.S. and EU. It can bring India-EU closer on strategic partnerships, global challenges, security and defence.

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## Section – B

**Q. 11. The impending delimitation exercise in India requires a delicate balancing of democratic representation with federal equity. Elaborate. What are the international practices in the regard? What could be an ideal solution to this issue in the Indian context? (Answer in 250 words) 15**

**Ans:** The delimitation of constituencies is to be carried out on the basis of the first **Census** after 2026. The 2021 Census was originally postponed due to COVID-19 and subsequent delays.

**Impending delimitation exercise requires a delicate balancing of democratic representation with federal equity:**

- In democracy, the government is elected by a majority with the **broad principle of 'one citizen-one vote-one value'**.
  - delicate balance required in **adjusting constituency populations, ensuring alignment with legal and constitutional mandates for fair and equal representation.**
- The primary concern lies in **selecting an appropriate method for allocating state seats.**
  - This decision will profoundly **shape the overall fairness** of political representation.
- Relying on **obsolete data can result in a misalignment** between political representation and actual demographic distribution.
  - In the **1971 Census**, UP's population was 8.8 crore.
    - Official projections estimate UP's population to be 23.1 crore in 2021.
- The **number of seats in the Lok Sabha was frozen at 543** by amending Article 81 through the 42nd Constitution Amendment Act, 1976.
  - extended by the 84th Amendment Act till 2026.
  - **demographic shifts** due to population boom, urbanization, and **migration patterns** could bring **South Indian and North-Eastern states at a disadvantage** in number of seats.
- **Careful redrawing of electoral boundaries** is also essential to **prevent gerrymandering** which is deliberate manipulation of boundaries to unfairly favor a particular political faction.
  - It disproportionately impacts minority and other marginalised communities in states.

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- **Articles 330 and 332, coupled with Section 3 of the Representation of Peoples Act, 1950**, allocates seats in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies for SCs and STs based on their proportion to the total population of the respective states.
  - The Bihar caste survey indicates a **significant rise in the SC and ST populations** compared to the 2011 Census.
- **The Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023**, inserts **Article 334A** which specifically outlines that the implementation of **women's reservation is contingent upon completing a delimitation exercise**.
  - emphasises the nuanced connection between electoral constituency adjustments and achieving gender parity.

## What are international practices?

- In the U.S., the number of seats in the House of Representatives (the equivalent of Lok Sabha) has been **capped at 435 since 1913** despite population growing for times between 1911-2023.
  - The seats among the States are **redistributed** after every Census through the **'method of equal proportion'**.
    - This **does not result in any significant gain or loss** for any of the States.
    - E.g. Based on the 2020 Census the redistribution has resulted in no change in the number of seats for 37 States.
- In the **European Union (EU) Parliament** which consists of 720 members, the number of seats is divided between 27 member countries **based on the principle of 'degressive proportionality'**.
  - The ratio of population to the number of seats increases as the population increases.

## Ideal solution to this issue in the Indian context:

- The **main work of an MP is to legislate on Union List matters** like Defence, External Affairs, etc. and hold the Union government accountable.
  - Hence, the **number of MPs in Lok Sabha may be capped** at the present number of 543.
    - would **ensure no disruption** in the present representation from various States **maintaining the federal equity principle**.

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- The **number of MLAs in each State may be increased** in line with the current population (without changing the number of Rajya Sabha seats) to **address the democratic representational requirement**.
- However, the **most important reform for strengthening federal democracy is to empower the local bodies** of panchayats and municipalities.
  - The devolution of powers and finances to these bodies must be **significantly** increased to strengthen democracy at grass root levels.

A fair delimitation process is paramount to safeguard democratic representation. Due consideration must be given to the interests of all states reflecting demographic shift while maintaining federal equity.





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**Q. 12. The Supreme Court of India has made a clear shift in its stand over the conflict between the Right to Property and the cause of social welfare by the State through redistribution. Discuss with relevant case laws. (Answer in 250 words)** **15**

**Ans:** In a recent ruling in 2024, a nine-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court held that not all private property can be deemed “material resource of the community” for acquisition and redistribution by the government.

**Clear shift in stand over the conflict between the Right to Property and state’s cause of social welfare:**

- **Part IV of the Constitution** outlines the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) which includes **Article 39(b)**.
  - It mandates the State to adopt policies ensuring the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are such distributed to subserve the common good.
- **The 25th Constitution Amendment Act, 1971 introduced Article 31C**, in an attempt to insulate economic policies from judicial review,
  - **Barred judicial review** of any law giving effect to clauses (b) and (c) of Article 39.
  - subsequently challenged in the **Kesavananda Bharati case (1973)** which held that an amendment violating the Constitution’s basic structure would be void.
- In **State of Karnataka v. Shri Ranganatha Reddy (1977)**, the Supreme Court held that “material resources of the community” under **Article 39(b)** encompassed both public and private resources.
  - This view shaped subsequent Constitution Bench decisions.
- The **42nd Constitution Amendment Act, 1976**, laid down that a law made in furtherance of any DPSP would enjoy **immunity against a constitutional challenge**.
  - The Supreme Court, in **Minerva Mills vs Union of India (1980)** struck down the amendment reinforcing the primacy of fundamental rights over DPSPs.



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- The **constitutional validity of an amendment to the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Act (MHADA), 1976**, which allowed authorities to **acquire** and transfer private lands, was challenged.
  - In 2002, the matter was put before a nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court.
- In the recent SC decision in November 2024, the Court held that **not all private property would fall within the ambit of Article 39(b)** for government acquisition to serve the “common good”.
  - **assessment of privately owned resource on a case-by-case basis.**
  - Earlier SC stand considered greater state control over private property.
- SC held that **any acquisition of private property for public use must adhere to constitutional guarantees**, including Articles 14 and 300A (right to property).

By acknowledging the state’s role in promoting social welfare while respecting individual property rights, the apex court has carved a balanced approach that aligns with India’s broader economic growth aspirations.

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**Q. 13. Explain the significance of the 106th Constitutional Amendment Act. To what extent does it exhibit the spirit of parliamentary consensus over progressive legislations? (Answer in 250 words) 15**

**Ans:** The 106th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2023 seeks to provide 33% **reservation** to women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. The law is also termed as Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam.

## **Significance of the 106th Constitutional Amendment Act:**

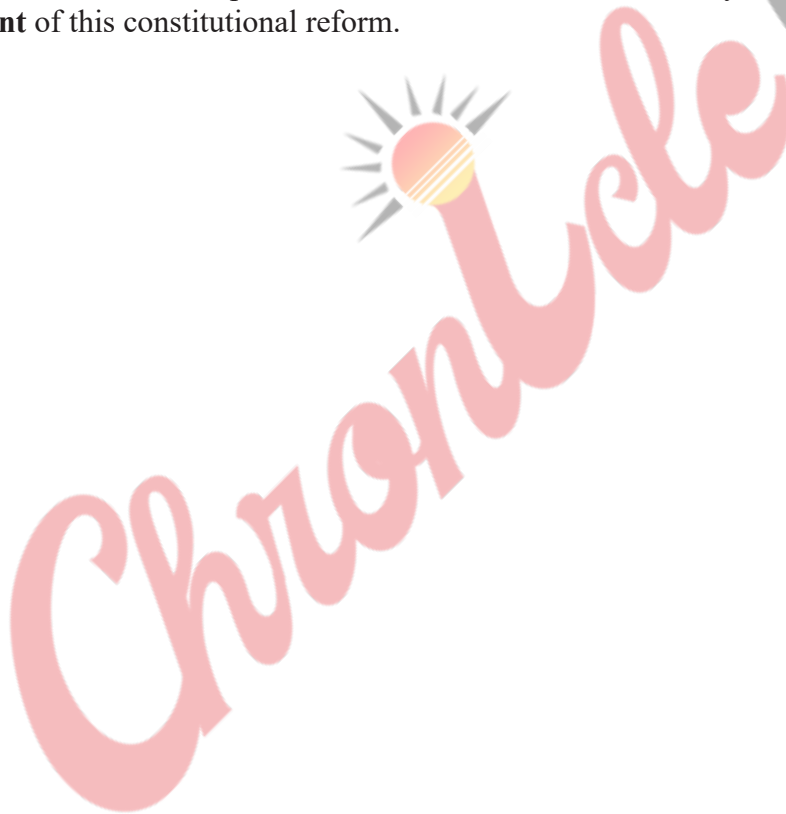
- The law will be **implemented after the next census** and the subsequent **delimitation** exercise.
  - First introduced in 1996, this fulfills a **long awaited demand** for **reservation** of seats to women.
- Marks a **watershed moment in gender equity** that would certainly boost **overall** political participation and representation of women.
  - Would **inspire more women to pursue politics** as a career
    - Women MPs account for only **15%** of the Lok Sabha seats while representation in many State Assemblies is below **10%**.
- Includes both **vertical and horizontal reservation** with **provision of quota within quota** for Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) women.
  - Would **increase political representation** of one of the most marginalised sections of society.
- **Extension of the principle of affirmative action** for advancement of women under the Constitution.
  - The Constitution already provides **reservation of seats to women in the local bodies** under 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts.
- Greater representation of women in political bodies would **significantly influence policymaking**.
  - Increased investment in public goods, social infrastructure, prioritisation of gender issues etc.
  - Ex- priority to women issues in all-women panchayats.
- The seats reserved for women will be **rotated after each delimitation** exercise.
  - Spreading the benefits of the Act for inclusive representation across **constituencies**.

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## Spirit of parliamentary consensus:

- The Constitution amendment Bill was **passed by the Lok Sabha with near-unanimity** with only two members opposing it.
- The Bill was **unanimously passed by the Rajya Sabha**.
  - 214 votes in favour of the Bill.
- It was the **first law passed in the new Parliament building during a special session**.
- But this **consensus wasn't achieved easily as it took about two decades to arrive** on a common understanding over this issue.

This Amendment starts a new chapter in India's democratic journey. The expansion and diversification of the representative base of Indian democracy is the most successful **element** of this constitutional reform.



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**Q. 14. The consequences of weak enforcement of judicial decisions are profound, undermining both governance and public trust in the judiciary. Examine. (Answer in 250 words) 15**

**Ans:** Judiciary in India is the final protector of Constitutional rights. Weak **enforcement** of judicial decisions erodes its duties and functions with severe consequences.

## **Consequences of weak enforcement of judicial decisions:**

- It **undermines the rule of law** and emboldens violators challenging good governance; the reluctance of enforcement agencies to act on judicial orders **fosters lawlessness**.
  - Ex- The 2019 Supreme Court order on firecracker bans during Diwali in Delhi is routinely flouted.
- Strengthens **bureaucratic inertia** leading to **slow pace in governance**.
  - Ex- The Supreme Court's 2025 ruling emphasizing strict enforcement of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, in Delhi faced poor compliance.
- **Unenforced judgments on sensitive issues** like caste-based reservations **fuel social unrest** passing a challenge to governance.
  - Ex- In 2024, the Supreme Court upheld **sub-classification within SC/ST quotas**, but **uneven state-level enforcement** led to protests in states.
- **Selective enforcement tendencies due to political reasons** creates a governance crisis as well as reduces public faith in judiciary.
  - Ex- The Supreme Court's scrutiny of the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) arrest powers targeting opposition CMs.
- Weak enforcement is often **prompted by allegations of judicial activism**, e.g. in the Anoop Baranwal case (2023), where the Supreme Court redefined Election Commissioner appointments.
  - Allegations of **encroachment on executive powers**, creating governance tensions due to unenforced prior directives.
- The **India Justice Report 2025** notes over **50 million pending cases**, which is compounded by delays in enforcing judgments.
  - unenforced orders, e.g. in the **2018 Common Cause vs Union of India** case on passive euthanasia, diminishes trust in timely justice.

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- **Disconnect between judicial intent and ground reality** also leads to **enforcement** reluctance in the administration and **erodes the authority of judiciary**.
  - Ex- **The Supreme Court's liquor ban near highways in K. Balu (2017) case** faced circumvention through reclassifying highways as urban roads, revealing enforcement loopholes.
- **Ineffective administration of justice promotes corruption.** allow powerful elites to exercise undue influence to interfere with or block justice processes and gain impunity.
  - **failure to swiftly execute court orders** e.g. in corruption cases, bail orders etc.

There is the imperative to establish a structured system with nodal officers in departments accountable for enforcing orders, tech-driven monitoring, clear accountability frameworks fostering public engagement.

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15. The Scheme-based workers (SBWs) like ASHAs, Anganwadi workers etc act as a bridge between the community and welfare schemes. Identify the important issues faced by these workers. What measures can be adopted to improve their condition? (Answer in 250 words) 15

**Ans:** Around 60 million workers are engaged in government schemes in India acting as a bridge to beneficiaries. Success of schemes like ICDS, NRHM, MDM etc are dependent on these scheme-based workers (SBWs).

## Important issues faced by these workers:

- SBWs have been **denied basic labour market rights** such as **workers' status**.
  - Demand for identity as other government employees.
  - Ex- In **State Of Karnataka vs Ameerbi (2006)**, the Supreme Court **didn't consider Anganwadis as workers** as they don't carry any function of the state, or don't hold a post under a statute.
- There is the **persistent issue of low and delayed remuneration** as well as **lack of minimum wages**.
  - The issue persists despite the Gujarat High Court directed the government in 2024 to frame a policy to regularise Anganwadi workers and helpers.
    - Directed to pay them minimum wages.
- SBWs are often **overworked** as the workers frequently face long hours without adequate rest.
  - **Nature of work is also physically demanding**, operating in **hazardous conditions**.
    - Ex- ASHA workers often cover large geographical areas, traveling on foot to visit households.
- **Absence of social security features** like pension, health insurance and provident fund etc adds to the poor job conditions of SBWs.
- Issue of **gender-violence** faced by ASHA, Anganwadi workers etc becomes more severe as they are **informally employed**.
- **Attempts to privatise components of government schemes** like the **Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS)**, **Mid Day Meal (MDM)** scheme etc.
  - E.g. Involvement of private organisations in MDM taking away jobs of SBWs.

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- SBWs are left with no option other than highlighting their problems through **strikes, legal action and social dialogue**.
  - Frequent strikes and legal measures impacts their work and damages their financial condition further.

## **Measures that can be adopted to improve their condition:**

- **Treating the SBWs** as workers as recommended by the 45th Indian Labour Conference unanimously.
- **Long-term policy** for their welfare including minimum wages and not mere honorariums, along with other social security benefits and workplace safety.
- **Providing job-specific equipment** e.g. protective gear to ASHA workers to prevent infections as they accompany patients for long hours during grassroot health activities.
- Their **working hours must be limited** to ensure enough rest and good health as well as boost productivity.
- **Improvement in training, job security, organisational infrastructure** would create a better work environment for SBWs.
- It is also essential to **promote coordination and better work relationships amongst SBWs and other community level workers** due to overlapping and interconnected domains.

There is the need to acknowledge and appreciate the role of SBWs. Their welfare is not just crucial for the success of government programmes but also a moral obligation.

# UPSC

**Q. 16. Discuss the need to review conduct rules governing civil servants in India. Suggest measures to improve performance and professionalism among civil servants in light of rapidly changing governance scenarios. (Answer in 250 words)** **15**

**Ans:** Civil servants in India are primarily governed under the All India Services (AIS) Conduct Rules, 1968, Central Civil Services (CCS) Conduct Rules, 1964 and different State level Civil Services (Conduct) Rules.

**Need to review conduct rules governing civil servants in India:**

- **Increasing instances of abuse of power** where official positions are viewed as symbols of power rather than public service.
  - Ex- Probationers using red beacons on private vehicles.
- **Weakening of mechanisms** like the Right to Information Act, 2005, and Public Grievance Redressal Acts have reduced accountability.
- **Ambiguous nature of conduct rules** with potential application in cases of any kind of wrongdoing, even if the allegations are not covered under any specific rules.
  - Ex- while promoting casteism is not covered under any specific Conduct Rules, casteist behaviour can be interpreted as unbecoming of a member of the Service.
- More number of **bureaucrats are joining electoral politics** just after retirement or even resigning while in service.
- **Ever-expanding digital space and emphasis on e-governance** has brought civil servants to the forefront instead of working anonymously.
- There is a **greater demand for transparency and responsiveness** from civil servants with increasing engagement and awareness among the public.

**Measures to improve performance and professionalism in a dynamic governance scenario:**

- Need for **more consistent updation of Conduct Rules** given overlapping **responsibilities** and overburdened systems in civil services.
  - Ex- Rules must also focus on workload and stress management.



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- **Specific rules with respect to cooling-off period** is required for bureaucrats joining politics to ensure political neutrality.
- **Introducing conduct rules in the digital space** including social media to **prevent** populist and unprofessional behaviour.
  - Training officers in **digital literacy and ethical social media use** to handle public interactions professionally.
- Providing **specific rules for timely grievance redressal, regular public interaction** etc for improving public satisfaction.
- Continuous **upskilling with revamped cross-sectoral training programmes** at various stages of career.
- Performance-based appraisals should be **linked to measurable outcomes** e.g. timely project completion or grievance redressal rates.

A professional and efficient bureaucracy is essential for maintaining public trust in **governance** aligning with the needs to tackle modern governance challenges.

# UPSC

**Q. 17. Corporate foundations have become a crucial component of ‘development industry’ influencing government policies and resource allocations. Analyse with suitable examples. (Answer in 250 words) 15**

**Ans:** The ‘development industry’ includes governments, international organisations, global charities, civil society groups, etc who are all working to uplift the **conditions** of people.

**Corporate foundations are a crucial component of development industry:**

- Corporate foundations with roots in corporate firms have the **capacity to pursue long-term goals** with **permanent endowments** to contribute.
  - Ex- Azim Premji Foundation’s role in education sector.
- With direct or indirect links to big corporate firms and known investors/entrepreneurs, they have **proximity to senior political leaders and officials**.
  - makes it relatively easier for them to influence decision-making.
- Foundations **work in a formal arrangement** with governments.
  - These agreements are in the form of **broadly-defined MOUs** with shared responsibilities and joint goals.
    - Ex- Five-year **Ananya Partnership** between Government of Bihar and Gates Foundation in the health sector.
- They are **relatively free or autonomous** in decision-making. Hence, they could be seen as **independent of political forces**.
  - Considered a **neutral player** with respect to shaping government policies.
- **Collaborations between foundations and governments** are a way to bring in **private-sector efficiency** in the social sector or the delivery of public services.
  - Saves scarce public resources to be allocated elsewhere.
- Corporate foundations have the **capacity of risk-taking, steering innovative activities and emulating best practices** which can be scaled up further for **widespread** adoption.
  - Ex- Piramal Foundation’s partnership with state governments for healthcare interventions through technology platforms.

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- Foundations with **decades of experience and deep ties to local communities** increase the impact and scale of government programmes.
  - Governments acknowledge their policy inputs and suggestions on resource allocation for their experience as well.
    - Ex- Central Square Foundation presented its insights to the NEP **drafting** committee.
- Influences government decisions through **building dialogue and exchange of ideas** organising forums, meetings and conferences.
  - Brings broader insights including experts to guide public policies.

Collaboration between government and corporate foundations can be improved with reducing trust deficit, more flexibility in government processes and dedicated dialogue platforms.

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**Q. 18. What do you understand by the ‘Saturation Approach’ adopted by the Government of India for inclusive human resource development and social justice? Discuss in the particular context of welfare schemes for the Scheduled Tribes (STs). (Answer in 250 words)** **15**

**Ans:** The Union government announced the adoption of ‘Saturation Approach’ for inclusive human resource development and social justice in the Union Budget 2024-25.

**‘Saturation Approach’ for inclusive human resource development and social justice:**

- Saturation approach refers to a strategy where the government aims to ensure that **all eligible individuals are covered** by various programmes and initiatives.
  - Ex- Food security through **PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana** covers more than 80 crore people with focus on tribal areas.
- This approach ensures **comprehensive coverage** and **eliminates exclusion errors**.
  - Exclusion errors have historically hindered the effectiveness of welfare programmes.
  - Ex- Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana (PMVDY) aims to cover the entire tribal population across 27 states by establishing 80,000 Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs).
- Aims to **create a more equitable society** where benefits of development are shared widely.
  - Programs are **tailored** to address specific needs of vulnerable populations including tribals.
- The **PM Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan** aims to improve socio-economic conditions of tribal communities.
  - It follows a saturation approach with an allocation to cover 63,000 tribal **villages** and benefit 5 crore tribal people.
- Saturation approach **brings the primary focus of the government on enhancing welfare programmes** for marginalised communities and improving infrastructure for social services.
- It involves a **multi-sectoral approach** like education, health, employment, and

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infrastructure to create a holistic impact on human development and social justice.

- The approach **leverages data to identify gaps and monitor progress**.
  - Ex- in initiatives like the **Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP)** that includes districts with a significant tribal population.
    - 41 of the aspirational districts have a tribal population exceeding 50%.

By ensuring universal access and prioritizing marginalized groups, saturation approach would accelerate human development and social justice in India.



**Q. 19. There is no specific global treaty addressing crimes against humanity. How does the Rome statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) define ‘crime against humanity’? Evaluate the need for such a treaty to prevent and punish these crimes. (Answer in 250 words) 15**

**Ans:** Crimes against humanity have proliferated across the world. But there is currently no specific and comprehensive international treaty for it creating a significant gap in international law.

**Definition of ‘crime against humanity’ according to the Rome statute of ICC:**

- Crimes against humanity consist of **specific fourteen types of criminal acts including** murder, rape, torture, apartheid, deportation, and persecution, etc.
  - when **committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack** directed **against any civilian population** according to a **state or organizational policy**.
- These are **among the gravest offenses** under international law.

**Need for such a treaty to prevent and punish these crimes:**

- In recent years, **state and non-state actors**, including armed insurgent groups, have committed crimes against humanity against civilian populations all around the world.
  - E.g. in Myanmar, Syria, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, **Ethiopia**, Ukraine etc.
- The Rome Statute, which is the founding document for the International Criminal Court, has **specific treaties for genocide, war crimes, torture, and enforced disappearances** etc.
  - But there is **no specific international treaty** prohibiting crimes against humanity despite it being defined.
- Crimes against humanity **can be committed in non-armed conflict situations** also.
  - International humanitarian law, the laws of war, do not adequately protect against potential crimes against humanity.
- **Gravity of crimes against humanity**, considering their **seriousness** particularly in comparison to genocide and other war crimes.
  - Without a treaty, **diminished awareness** in public understanding and governmental response.

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- A crimes against humanity treaty could **focus international attention** on these offenses as egregious international crimes.
- Need for a specific treaty also as there is **no dedicated body of experts** focused on interpreting and monitoring situations of crime against humanity.
  - The explanation and interpretation from an authoritative body could **assist in investigating and prosecuting** these crimes.
- States often fail to uphold their obligations under the Convention shrinking **genocide, torture, etc.**
  - A specific treaty would **allow a pathway to litigate violations of state responsibility** at the International Court of Justice.
- State parties to a crimes against humanity treaty would have a **binding legal obligation to incorporate these crimes into their domestic law** for national prosecution.
  - They will also have to **cooperate with other treaty member states** in investigating and prosecuting suspects, regardless of whether they have **ratified** the Rome Statute.
- Would **provide national authorities with more tools**, through their national courts, to conduct impartial proceedings against an accused.

In 2024, the UN **General Assembly's Sixth Committee** adopted a resolution to negotiate a draft global treaty on crime against humanity. It requires broader consensus, clear mandate and timelines to complete negotiations.

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**Q. 20. Multi-alignment is essential for India to safeguard its interests in an increasingly disordered international system. Comment on India's continued involvement with the BRICS grouping, despite the complexities of its expansion. (Answer in 250 words) 15**

**Ans:** Multi-alignment is the strategy of broadening alliances, without any ideological constraints, with major global and regional powers to enhance mutual opportunities and reduce geopolitical risks.

## **India's continued involvement with the BRICS grouping:**

- India pursuing a **multi-aligned foreign policy** with an increasingly **polarised international scenario**.
  - **multi-pivot** towards both the Indo-Pacific and the Global South, especially through the **enlargement of the BRICS**.
- Established in 2009, BRICS was founded on the premise of **domination of international institutions** by Western powers.
  - India needs to **consolidate its role** as a rising global power, acting as the leader of the global South.
- BRICS grouping comprises about 45% of the world's population, 35% of global GDP and produces 30% of world's oil.
  - For India, it gives a platform for greater international socio-economic integration.
- Continued Indian involvement in BRICS as a significant participant in rewriting international rules along with increasingly ambitious middle and regional powers.
  - E.g. Iran, Saudi Arabia etc.
- BRICS countries have also established an **extensive network of intergovernmental cooperation**.
  - Ex- **founding dedicated institutions** such as the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA), New Development Bank (NDB) etc.
- The coalition has also developed **networked minilateralism, transnational partnerships** and **working groups** on topics of shared interests.
  - Ex- energy security to health, climate change, sustainable development, technology transfer etc.



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## Complexities of expansion of BRICS:

- At the **2024 summit** (Kazan, Russia) **four new members**- Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and UAE were added.
  - In **2025, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia** became the bloc's tenth and eleventh members.
  - Includes many partner countries, some nations have either been invited or expressed interest to join, such as Turkiye.
- Rapid expansion of BRICS could **complicate prospects for multilateralism, including by deepening divisions** within the G20 and the United Nations.
- **Domination of the grouping by Russia, China** amidst heightened tensions with the US may **cast BRICS as an anti-US bloc**.
  - Expansion would strengthen such concerns further.
- **Uncertainties about the motivations** of individual BRICS countries and aspirants eager to join the grouping.
- BRICS has **struggled with internal divisions** on a range of issues, including **relations** with the United States and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The 2025 BRICS summit in Brazil focused on global governance reforms, as well as cooperation among the global south community. It aligns with Indian foreign policy objectives also.