

# UPSC CSE (Main) 2015

## General Studies Paper-II

**Q1. Discuss the possible factors that inhibit India from enacting for its citizen a uniform civil code as provided for in the Directive Principles of State Policy. (200 words) [12½]**

### Approach to question:

1. **Political opposition:** Several political parties and religious groups have opposed the idea of a uniform civil code, citing concerns about the protection of minority rights and cultural diversity.
2. **Constitutional limitations:** The Constitution of India allows citizens to follow their personal laws, which are based on religion, for matters such as marriage, divorce and inheritance.

### Answer:

The Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) of the Indian Constitution under Article 44 mandates the enactment of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) for all citizens. However, the Indian government has not been able to enforce it for various reasons.

### Factors inhibiting the enactment of a UCC in India:

1. **Political considerations:** UCC is a politically sensitive issue, with potential backlash and resentment from certain religious groups. Some political parties view it as a tool of "Hindutva" and resist its implementation.
2. **Resistance from religious groups:** India's secular nature means diverse religious communities have their personal laws. Some fear the UCC could undermine their beliefs and practices, leading to vehement opposition.
3. **Lack of political will:** Successive governments lack the political will to implement the UCC, fearing social unrest and jeopardizing their vote bank.
4. **Socio-cultural diversity:** Enacting a UCC would supersede the personal laws of various communities, potentially causing social unrest and resistance.

The UCC's implementation in India faces hindrances from political considerations, resistance from religious groups, lack of political will, socio-cultural diversity, legal challenges and lack of awareness. Achieving a UCC would require a comprehensive political consensus and

dialogue involving all stakeholders, including religious leaders and communities.

**Q2. The concept of cooperative federalism has been increasingly emphasized in recent years. Highlight the drawbacks in the existing structure and extent to which cooperative federalism would answer the shortcomings. (200 words) [12½]**

### Approach to question:

1. **Drawbacks in the existing structure of federalism in India:**  
Over-centralization of power in the Union government leading to a lack of autonomy for the states.
2. **Cooperative federalism can address these shortcomings by:**  
Giving greater autonomy and decision-making power to the states.  
Encouraging the sharing of resources and responsibilities between the Union and state governments.
3. **Cooperative federalism can also lead to the following benefits:**  
Promoting the spirit of federalism and strengthening the unity and integrity of the country.

### Answer:

**Cooperative federalism** is a concept that emphasizes cooperation between the central government and state governments in the decision-making process. In recent years, India has increasingly emphasized this concept to address drawbacks in the existing federal structure.

### Drawbacks in the existing structure:

1. **Centralized decision-making:** Indian federalism is highly centralized, limiting state autonomy in decision-making.
2. **Unequal resource distribution:** The central government controls most financial resources, leading to fiscal imbalances among states.
3. **Lack of coordination:** Poor coordination between central and state governments results in inefficiencies and delays in policymaking and implementation.

**Extent to which cooperative federalism would answer the shortcomings:**

1. **Decentralized decision-making:** Cooperative federalism empowers states with more autonomy in decision-making and policy making.
2. **Balanced resource distribution:** It ensures a fairer distribution of financial resources, enhancing fiscal autonomy for states.

Cooperative federalism offers solutions to the drawbacks of India's existing federal structure. By promoting decentralized decision-making, balanced resource distribution, better coordination and political consensus, cooperative federalism can lead to more efficient and effective governance.

**Q3. In the absence of well – educated and organised local level government system, Panchayats and Samitis have remained mainly political institutions and not effective instrument of governance. Critically Discuss. (200 words) [12½]**

**Approach to question:**

1. Panchayats and Samitis are the grassroots-level local self-government bodies in India, responsible for the governance and development of rural areas.
2. While the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 aimed at strengthening the institutional framework of Panchayats, their effectiveness has been limited due to various reasons.

**Answer:**

The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), comprising Panchayats and Samitis, were established in India to decentralize power and promote local self-governance. However, due to the absence of a well-educated and organized local-level government system, PRIs have remained primarily political institutions and not effective instruments of governance.

**Advantages of PRIs:**

1. **Decentralization of power:** PRIs facilitate local self-governance, leading to efficient resource utilization and better decision-making.
2. **Grassroots level representation:** PRIs ensure representation at the grassroots level, enabling effective delivery of public services.

**Drawbacks of PRIs:**

1. **Lack of education and training:** PRI members lack adequate education and training, hampering their understanding of roles and responsibilities.
2. **Politicization:** PRIs have become highly politicized, used by political parties to advance their agendas.

**How to make PRIs effective instruments of governance:**

1. **Education and training:** PRI members should receive adequate education and training to fulfill their roles effectively.

2. **Depoliticization:** PRI members should be selected based on merit and experience, reducing political influence.

To enhance their effectiveness, addressing these challenges is crucial. Educating and training PRI members, depoliticizing the institutions, providing financial autonomy, ensuring transparency and accountability and promoting better coordination can transform PRIs into powerful agents of local self-governance and development.

**Q4. Khap panchayats have been in the news for functioning as extra – constitutional authorities, often delivering pronouncements amounting to human right violations. Discuss critically the actions taken by the legislative, executive and judiciary to set the things right in this regard. (200 words) [12½]**

**Approach to question:**

1. The Khap Panchayats are caste-based councils that exist in some rural areas of India and have been notorious for delivering harsh and often illegal punishments in the name of protecting traditions and honor.
2. Several incidents of honor killings, mob violence and human rights violations have been attributed to Khap Panchayats in recent years.

**Answer:**

Khap Panchayats are informal village councils in North India, known for violating human rights through extra-constitutional pronouncements. Legislative, executive and judicial actions have been taken to address the issue, but challenges remain.

**Actions by the legislative:**

1. **Amendment of IPC:** Stricter punishment for honor killings in 2013.
2. **Invocation of PUA Act:** Preventing interference in personal lives.
3. **NCW recommendations:** Proposing laws to regulate Khap Panchayat functioning.

**Actions by the executive:**

1. **Strict state actions:** Directed to take action against violating Khap Panchayats.
2. **Police directives:** Instructed to act against crimes at Khap Panchayats' behest.
3. **Awareness scheme:** Raising awareness about women's rights and crime prevention.

**Actions by the judiciary:**

1. **Preventive measures:** Directing governments to prevent honor killings and related crimes.
2. **Strict judicial action:** Punishing those involved in such crimes.

3. **Pronouncement strikes:** Striking down Khap Panchayat pronouncements violating individual rights.

**Challenges:**

1. Lack of political will.
2. Awareness deficit among Khap Panchayat members.
3. Sociocultural justification of Khap Panchayat actions.

Efforts by the legislative, executive and judiciary are addressing Khap Panchayat issues, yet challenges like political will, awareness deficits and sociocultural factors require continuous efforts to curb human rights violations and promote individual rights awareness.

**Q5. Resorting to ordinances has always raised concern on violation of the spirit of separation of power doctrine. While noting the rationales justifying the power to promulgate, analyse whether the decision of the Supreme Court on the issue have further facilitated to resorting to this power. Should the power to promulgate the ordinances be repealed? (200 words) [12½]**

**Approach to question:**

1. Ordinances are temporary laws issued by the President or Governors of states when the parliament is not in session and there is an urgent need for legislation.
2. The power to promulgate ordinances is provided under Article 123 of the Constitution of India.
3. Critics argue that ordinances undermine the principle of separation of powers as it gives the executive a legislative role.

**Answer:**

Resorting to ordinances, while constitutionally permissible, has indeed raised concerns about the potential violation of the spirit of the separation of powers doctrine. Ordinances are temporary laws that can be issued by the President of India or the Governors of states under Article 123 and 213 of the Indian Constitution when the legislature is not in session.

**Resorting to Ordinances and the Separation of Power Doctrine:**

1. **Rationales justifying the power to promulgate ordinances:**
  - (a) **Emergencies:** Necessary when the legislature is not in session and immediate action is required.
  - (b) **Urgency:** Required when legislative delay is not in the public interest.
2. **The decision of the Supreme Court on the issue:**
  - (a) Extraordinary power to be used sparingly.
  - (b) President/Governor can promulgate ordinances only in urgency and necessity.

3. **Facilitation by the Supreme Court's decision:**

- (a) Clarity on permissible circumstances may encourage use.
- (b) Limited judicial review may further facilitate its use.

4. **Debate on repealing the power to promulgate ordinances:**

- (a) Necessary in emergencies and urgency, according to some.
- (b) Frequently misused, undermining legislative process and separation of powers, as argued by others.

The power to promulgate ordinances, while necessary in emergencies and urgency, is prone to misuse, raising concerns about the separation of power doctrine. The Supreme Court's decision provides clarity on permissible circumstances but may also facilitate its use. The debate on repealing this power remains open, but it would require a constitutional amendment, making the decision complex and challenging.

**Q6. What are the major changes brought in the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, through the recent ordinance promulgated by the President? How far will it improve India's dispute resolution mechanism? Discuss. (200 words) [12½]**

**Approach to question:**

The ordinance brings some significant changes to the Act, including the following:

1. The definition of "court" has been revised to include the High Court exercising original jurisdiction, in addition to the courts designated by the Chief Justice of India or the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court.
2. The time line for completing the arbitration process has been reduced from 12 months to 6 months for fast-track arbitration and from 18 months to 12 months for regular arbitration, with the possibility of extension for up to 6 months and 6 more months with the consent of all parties.

**Answer:**

The recent ordinance promulgated by the President has brought significant changes to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, impacting India's dispute resolution mechanism.

**Changes and their impact on India's dispute resolution mechanism:**

1. **Definition of "Court":**
  - (a) Addition of High Courts designated by Chief Justices extends the availability of courts for arbitration proceedings.
  - (b) Increased number of courts will expedite the process, making it faster and more efficient.

2. **Time limit for arbitration proceedings:**
  - (a) Introduction of a 12-month time limit for arbitration proceedings (extendable by 6 months).
  - (b) Faster process reduces backlog and improves the ease of doing business in India.
3. **Composition of the arbitration tribunal:**
  - (a) Parties can now choose arbitrators, even if not on approved lists maintained by institutions.
  - (b) Enhanced autonomy empowers parties for a more satisfactory dispute resolution process.

The recent changes to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act through the President's ordinance will significantly impact India's dispute resolution mechanism. Improvements in court availability, time limits, tribunal composition, confidentiality and arbitrator qualifications will lead to a faster, more efficient and fair dispute resolution process.

- Q7. Does the right to clean environment entail legal regulations on burning crackers during Diwali? Discuss in the light of Article 21 of the Indian Constitution and Judgement(s) of the Apex Court in this regard.**  
(200 words) [12½]

**Approach to question:**

1. Article 21 of the Indian Constitution guarantees the right to life and personal liberty, which includes a right to a clean environment.
2. The use of firecrackers during Diwali causes air and noise pollution, which negatively affects the environment and public health.
3. The Supreme Court of India has passed several judgements in recent years regulating the use of firecrackers during Diwali, aiming to protect the environment and public health.

**Answer:**

The right to a clean and healthy environment is a fundamental right guaranteed under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. Analyzing whether legal regulation on burning crackers during Diwali is necessary involves considering its impact on air quality, public health, existing legal regulations and the public interest.

**Points on legal regulation on burning crackers during Diwali:**

1. **Impact on air quality:**
  - (a) Crackers cause air pollution, affecting the right to breathe clean air, an aspect of the right to a clean environment.
  - (b) Supreme Court recognizes harmful effects on air quality and health in its judgments.
2. **Public health:**
  - (a) Noise pollution from crackers can harm public health and violate the right to a clean environment.
  - (b) Supreme Court recognizes the right to health under Article 21.

The fundamental right to a clean environment under Article 21 necessitates legal regulation on burning crackers during Diwali. The detrimental effects of firecrackers on air quality and public health make such regulation imperative. The Supreme Court recognizes the need for legal measures to protect this right and has issued guidelines accordingly.

- Q8. Examine critically the recent changes in the rule governing foreign funding of NGOs under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 1976.** (200 words) [12½]

**Approach to question:**

1. The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Act, 2020, has brought significant changes to the FCRA, 1976.
2. The amendment empowers the government to suspend an NGO's FCRA registration for 180 days if it violates the provisions of the Act.
3. It also mandates the Aadhaar card for all office bearers of an NGO and prohibits transfer of foreign contribution to any other person.

**Answer:**

Recent Changes in FCRA Rules Governing Foreign Funding of NGOs:

1. **Restrictions on sub-granting:**
  - (a) Prohibition on NGOs sub-granting foreign funds to other NGOs limits their work effectiveness.
  - (b) Smaller NGOs lacking capacity may face funding challenges.
2. **Mandatory Aadhaar:**
  - (a) NGOs required to link bank accounts to Aadhaar can be problematic for those working with marginalized communities.
  - (b) Donors may be reluctant due to concerns over sharing personal information.
3. **Renewal of FCRA license:**
  - (a) New rules mandate NGOs to apply for FCRA license renewal six months before expiry.
  - (b) Delays in renewal process can hinder foreign-funded NGOs' operations.
4. **Suspension and cancellation of FCRA license:**
  - (a) FCRA license can be suspended or canceled for any violation.
  - (b) Potential misuse to target government-critical NGOs or those working on sensitive issues.

The recent changes in FCRA rules governing foreign funding of NGOs have faced criticism for potentially limiting NGO effectiveness and hindering foreign funds flow. The mandatory Aadhaar linkage may pose challenges for NGOs working with marginalized communities. Timely renewal process and avoiding misuse of license suspension/cancellation are crucial to ensure NGOs' smooth functioning and continued ability to carry out their work.



**Q9. The Self Help Group (SHG) Bank Linkage Program (SBLP), which is India's own innovation, has proved to be one of the most effective poverty alleviation and women empowerment programme. Elucidate.**

**(200 words) [12½]**

**Approach to question:**

1. The Self Help Group (SHG) Bank Linkage Program (SBLP) was launched in 1992 by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).
2. The program aims to provide financial assistance to poor and marginalized people in rural areas, especially women, through SHGs.
3. SHGs are groups of 10-20 individuals who come together to save small amounts of money, which is then used to provide loans to members at reasonable interest rates.

**Answer:**

The Self Help Group (SHG) Bank Linkage Program (SBLP) in India is a successful poverty alleviation and women empowerment program that has yielded positive outcomes.

**Reasons for the success of the SHG Bank Linkage Program:**

1. **Empowering Women:**
  - (a) SHGs empower women by fostering financial independence and control over their lives.
  - (b) Access to resources and skills enables women to initiate and manage businesses, improving their income and living standards.
2. **Financial Inclusion:**
  - (a) The program promotes financial inclusion by offering formal financial services to marginalized individuals.
  - (b) SHGs serve as intermediaries, facilitating easier access to loans and financial assistance.
3. **Social Mobilization:**
  - (a) Successful community mobilization encourages people to collaborate towards shared objectives.
  - (b) Strong social networks established through SHGs provide support and assistance during times of need.

The SHG Bank Linkage Program's success in poverty alleviation and women empowerment can be attributed to its focus on empowering women, promoting financial inclusion, fostering social mobilization, ensuring sustainability and receiving strong government support. By enabling women to achieve financial independence and fostering inclusivity, the program has contributed to a more empowered and sustainable society in India.

**Q10. How can the role of NGOs be strengthened in India for development works relating**

**to protection of the Environment? Discuss throwing light on the major constraints.**

**(200 words) [12½]**

**Approach to question:**

1. NGOs can play a crucial role in environmental protection by mobilizing communities, creating awareness and pushing for policy change.
2. To strengthen their role, the government can provide funding, technical support and create an enabling environment for their operations.
3. Collaborative partnerships between NGOs, government agencies and the private sector can lead to more effective and sustainable solutions.

**Answer:**

The role of NGOs in environmental protection and sustainable development in India is crucial. Strengthening their contributions through capacity building, advocacy, collaboration, funding, research and documentation is vital.

**Ways to strengthen the role of NGOs:**

1. **Capacity Building:** Provide technical and financial support for effective environmental and sustainable development work through training and skill-building programs.
2. **Advocacy:** Empower NGOs to raise public awareness, influence policies and collaborate with stakeholders for environmental protection.
3. **Collaboration:** Facilitate partnerships between NGOs, government agencies, academia and private sector organizations to achieve sustainable outcomes.
4. **Funding:** Ensure NGOs have adequate financial support from governments, international organizations and private donors.

**Constraints limiting NGO roles:**

1. **Legal and Regulatory Framework:** Complex and restrictive laws hinder NGO operations, funding, collaboration and advocacy.
2. **Political Interference:** Harassment and intimidation from political interference hinder effective NGO work.
3. **Resource Constraints:** Limited budgets restrict large-scale projects and the development of expertise and human resources.

Strengthening NGOs' roles in environmental protection and sustainable development in India is vital through capacity building, advocacy, collaboration, funding, research and documentation. Addressing constraints related to legal frameworks, political interference, resource limitations and capacity is crucial to empowering NGOs and achieving sustainable outcomes.

**Q11. The quality of higher education in India requires major improvement to make it internationally competitive. Do you**

**think that the entry of foreign educational institutions would help improve the quality of technical and higher education in the country? Discuss. (200 words) [12½]**

**Approach to question:**

1. The entry of foreign educational institutions can bring in advanced teaching methodologies, infrastructure and faculty.
2. Foreign institutions can provide students with exposure to global standards of education, research and development and career opportunities.

**Answer:**

The entry of foreign educational institutions in India has become a subject of debate, with proponents arguing that it can improve the quality of education, while opponents express concerns about potential drawbacks. Here are some arguments for and against this move:

**Arguments in favour of entry of foreign educational institutions:**

1. **Access to global knowledge and expertise:** Indian students can benefit from exposure to global knowledge and expertise, enhancing their competitiveness in the global job market.
2. **Improved infrastructure and facilities:** Competition from foreign institutions may encourage domestic institutions to upgrade their infrastructure and facilities, leading to overall improvement in education quality.
3. **Enhanced academic standards:** Competition with foreign institutions can drive Indian institutions to raise their academic standards to match international levels.
4. **Increased foreign investment:** The presence of foreign institutions can attract foreign investment into the education sector, benefiting the economy.

**Arguments against the entry of foreign educational institutions:**

1. **Threat to domestic institutions:** Domestic institutions may face stiff competition from foreign institutions, leading to a decline in student enrolment and financial strain.
2. **Financial burden:** Providing financial incentives to attract foreign institutions can strain the government's budget and resources.
3. **Loss of cultural identity:** The adoption of foreign practices and culture by domestic institutions may lead to the dilution of India's cultural identity.
4. **Quality control:** Ensuring the quality of education provided by foreign institutions requires robust monitoring mechanisms to prevent a decline in overall education quality.

The entry of foreign educational institutions can bring both benefits and challenges. While it can enhance access to global knowledge and infrastructure, the potential threat to domestic institutions and cultural identity should not be overlooked. The government must carefully weigh the pros and cons before making a decision. Ensuring quality control and promoting healthy competition between domestic and foreign institutions is crucial for maintaining the integrity and growth of India's education sector. A balanced approach is necessary to leverage the potential advantages while mitigating the potential drawbacks.

**Q12. Public health system has limitation in providing universal health coverage. Do you think that private sector could help in bridging the gap? What other viable alternatives do you suggest?**

**(200 words) [12½]**

**Approach to question:**

1. Private healthcare sector has been playing a significant role in providing healthcare services in India, particularly in urban areas. It accounts for around 80% of outpatient care and 60% of inpatient care in the country.
2. However, the private healthcare sector is largely unregulated and has been criticized for high costs, lack of transparency and unethical practices such as unnecessary procedures and overcharging. Moreover, it tends to cater to the needs of affluent sections of the society, leaving out the poor and marginalized.
3. Thus, relying solely on the private sector to bridge the gap in universal health coverage may not be a viable option.

**Answer:**

India's public health system faces challenges in providing universal health coverage due to underfunding, inadequate infrastructure and lack of human resources. The role of the private sector in filling this gap is a subject of debate, with some arguing for its potential to improve healthcare access and quality, while others raise concerns about exacerbating health inequities. This answer examines both perspectives and proposes viable alternatives.

**Advantages of the private sector in improving healthcare access and quality:**

1. **Greater access to resources:** The private sector's financial and technological resources can enhance healthcare infrastructure and services.
2. **Greater efficiency:** Market-driven efficiency can lead to improved healthcare delivery and reduced waiting times.
3. **Better quality of care:** Private healthcare providers prioritize patient satisfaction and customer service, often resulting in perceived better quality of care.

### Disadvantages of the private sector in improving healthcare access and quality:

1. **Limited coverage:** The private sector may focus on profitable areas, neglecting marginalized and low-income communities.
2. **Affordability:** Private healthcare services may be expensive and unaffordable for many, particularly the impoverished.
3. **Profit motive:** Profit-driven practices may lead to unnecessary procedures and overcharging.

### Viable alternatives:

1. **Strengthening the public health system:** Increased funding, infrastructure and human resources can bolster the public health system's capacity.
2. **Public-private partnerships:** Collaborating with the private sector can improve healthcare access and quality while ensuring affordability and equity.

While the private sector can contribute to improving healthcare, it must be regulated and equitable. Strengthening the public health system and promoting community-based healthcare initiatives are essential in ensuring universal health coverage. Finding a balanced approach that combines public and private sector efforts will be crucial in achieving a more inclusive and accessible healthcare system for all.

**Q13.** Though there have been several different estimates of poverty in India, all indicate reduction in poverty levels over time. Do you agree? Critically examine with reference to urban and rural poverty indicators.

(200 words) [12½]

### Approach to question:

1. According to the World Bank, the poverty rate in India fell from 60% in 1981 to 30% in 2010. However, there are still around 270 million people in India living below the poverty line.
2. The poverty reduction has been more pronounced in urban areas, where poverty fell from 40% in 1993-94 to 10% in 2011-12, compared to rural areas where poverty fell from 50% to 25% during the same period.

### Answer:

Since India's independence, poverty has remained a significant concern. Various poverty estimates have been made to track progress in poverty reduction. This answer critically examines different poverty estimates in India and their implications for poverty reduction, with a focus on urban and rural poverty indicators.

### 1. Different Estimates of Poverty:

**Tendulkar Committee:** In 2005, the Tendulkar Committee redefined the poverty line and estimated a poverty rate of 21.9% in 2011-12.

**Rangarajan Committee:** In 2014, the Rangarajan Committee reviewed the poverty line and estimated a poverty rate of 29.5% in 2011-12.

### 2. Reduction in Poverty Levels:

All estimates indicate a decline in poverty rates over time.

**Tendulkar Committee:** Poverty rates declined from 37.2% in 2004-05 to 21.9% in 2011-12.

**Rangarajan Committee:** Poverty rates declined from 38.2% in 2009-10 to 29.5% in 2011-12.

### 3. Urban and Rural Poverty Indicators:

While poverty rates have decreased in both urban and rural areas, rural poverty rates remain higher.

**Tendulkar Committee:** Rural poverty rate was 25.7% in 2011-12 and urban poverty rate was 13.7%.

### 4. Criticism of Poverty Estimates:

Poverty estimates have been criticized for being too low and not reflecting the true extent of poverty.

There are calls for revising the poverty line to consider rising living costs and the multi-dimensional nature of poverty.

India has made progress in reducing poverty as indicated by various estimates, but rural areas still face higher poverty rates. Criticisms suggest the need for a comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach to address poverty effectively, considering diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts.

**Q14.** In the light of Satyam Scandal (2009), discuss the changes brought in the corporate governance to ensure transparency and accountability. (200 words) [12½]

### Approach to question:

1. The Satyam Scandal, which involved falsification of financial statements, led to a loss of credibility in the corporate sector.
2. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and the Ministry of Corporate Affairs have introduced various changes to improve corporate governance.

### Answer:

The Satyam Scandal in 2009 was a significant corporate governance failure that shook India's corporate landscape, raising concerns about the credibility of Indian companies. In response, several changes were introduced in the corporate governance system to ensure transparency and accountability.

### Changes in the Corporate Governance System:

1. **Companies Act, 2013:** The Companies Act, 2013, replaced the outdated 1956 Act and introduced provisions to strengthen corporate governance.
2. **SEBI Regulations:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) brought in new regulations for listed companies, mandating disclosure of related-party transactions, implementing a whistle-blower



policy and requiring the appointment of a woman director.

3. **National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA):** NFRA was established as an independent regulator for the auditing profession to enforce compliance with accounting standards and ensure high-quality audits.
4. **Strengthened Role of Independent Directors:** Independent directors' appointment and removal process was made transparent and they were given a more prominent role in overseeing companies' interests.
5. **Internal Controls and Risk Management:** Companies were required to strengthen their internal control systems and implement robust risk management processes.
6. **Revised Auditing Standards:** Auditing standards were revised to clarify auditors' responsibilities and ensure accurate financial assessments.
7. **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** The Companies Act, 2013, introduced mandatory CSR spending for qualifying companies, holding them accountable for their social and environmental impact.
8. **Whistle-Blower Policy:** Companies were mandated to have a whistle-blower policy, enabling employees to report unethical or illegal activities without fear of retaliation.

The changes in the corporate governance system have significantly strengthened transparency and accountability. However, continued vigilance and monitoring are essential to ensure companies comply with these regulations and prevent future corporate scandals. The focus on strong governance practices has bolstered investor confidence and improved India's standing in the global market.

**Q15. If amendment bill to the Whistleblowers Act, 2011, tabled in the Parliament is passed, there maybe no one left to protect. Critically Evaluate. (200 words) [12½]**

**Approach to question:**

1. The Whistleblowers Protection Act, 2011, was enacted to provide a mechanism for receiving and investigating complaints of corruption and wilful misuse of power against public servants and to provide for the protection of whistleblowers.
2. The Amendment Bill proposes changes that would limit the scope of protection offered by the Act by, among other things, increasing the burden of proof on the whistleblower and reducing the types of complaints that can be filed.

**Answer:**

The Whistleblowers Act, 2011 is an important piece of legislation that seeks to protect individuals who

come forward to disclose information on corruption, malpractice or wrongdoings within their organization. The recent amendment bill tabled in Parliament has been a subject of controversy, with some critics arguing that the changes will weaken the protections afforded to whistleblowers.

**Arguments in Favor of the Amendment Bill:**

1. **Strengthening of existing provisions:** The amendment bill seeks to strengthen the existing provisions of the Whistleblowers Act by providing greater protection to whistleblowers and imposing stricter penalties on those who retaliate against them.
2. **Broader definition of whistleblowers:** The bill expands the definition of whistleblowers to include not only employees of government and private organizations but also those who may have access to information on wrongdoing, including journalists, activists and researchers.

**Arguments against the Amendment Bill:**

1. **Weakening of Protections:** The amendment bill removes the safeguards that were earlier in place, such as the requirement for a public interest test, which could weaken protections afforded to whistleblowers.
2. **Exclusion of some categories:** The amendment bill excludes certain categories of information from disclosure, such as those related to national security and foreign relations, which could be used to silence whistleblowers.

The Whistleblowers Act, 2011, is an important piece of legislation that seeks to protect whistleblowers and promote transparency and accountability in government and private organizations. The proposed amendment bill has both positive and negative aspects, with proponents arguing that it will strengthen protections for whistleblowers, while critics argue that it will weaken existing safeguards.

**Q16. For achieving the desired objectives, it is necessary to ensure that the regulatory institution remain independent and autonomous. Discuss in the light of experiences in recent past. (200 words) [12½]**

**Approach to question:**

1. The regulatory institutions in India have often been criticized for their lack of independence and autonomy.
2. The recent experiences have shown that regulatory institutions that are not independent and autonomous can be influenced by political and business interests, which can compromise their effectiveness.

**Answer:**

Regulatory institutions serve a vital role in maintaining fairness and welfare across sectors. Their independence



and autonomy are crucial to ensure effective regulation and prevent undue influences. This answer discusses the significance of independence in regulatory bodies, examining recent experiences in India.

#### Importance of Independence and Autonomy:

1. Regulatory institutions ensure fair competition, protect consumer interests and prevent abuse of power.
2. Independence frees them from external influence, ensuring objective and transparent enforcement of regulations.
3. Autonomy maintains the integrity of the regulatory process.

#### Recent Experiences in India:

1. Instances of political interference and influence in institutions like CVC, CBI, RBI and TRAI have raised concerns.
2. Pressure on RBI to relax regulatory norms highlighted threats to its autonomy.
3. TRAI faced challenges due to powerful lobbies and political interests.

#### Consequences of Compromised Independence:

1. Erosion of trust in institutions and misuse of public resources.
2. Hindrance to economic growth, innovation and competition.
3. Impacts on citizens' welfare and democratic governance.

#### Measures to Ensure Independence and Autonomy:

1. Statutory provisions guaranteeing fixed tenure and transparent appointment processes.
2. Adequate funding and resources to facilitate efficient functioning.
3. Accountability mechanisms to ensure transparency and prevent malpractices.
4. Institutional checks and balances to avoid undue influences.

Independence and autonomy of regulatory institutions are vital for transparency, accountability and good governance. Recent experiences in India underscore the need to protect and strengthen their effectiveness through appropriate measures. Ensuring their independence will lead to more robust and trustworthy regulatory mechanisms, benefiting society and promoting fair competition in the economy.

#### Q17. Increasing interest of India in Africa has its pro and cons. Critically Examine.

(200 words) [12½]

##### Approach to question:

##### Pros:

1. **Access to natural resources:** Africa is home to several natural resources that India requires for its economic development, such as oil, gas, minerals and timber.

2. **New markets:** India can expand its trade relations with African countries and tap into new markets for its products and services.

##### Cons:

1. **Lack of infrastructure:** Many African countries lack basic infrastructure and connectivity, which can make it challenging for India to do business with them.
2. **Security concerns:** Some African countries are plagued by political instability, terrorism and civil unrest, which can pose security threats to Indian interests.

##### Answer:

India has increased its interest in Africa in recent years, leading to significant engagement with the continent. This has both positive and negative impacts, which are discussed below:

##### Pros:

1. **Economic Opportunities:** Africa is home to several emerging economies and is rich in natural resources, which provide ample opportunities for India to expand its trade and investment interests in the continent.
2. **Development Cooperation:** India has been providing development assistance to African countries in sectors such as healthcare, education and agriculture. This has helped in strengthening India's relations with African nations.
3. **Strategic Partnerships:** India has been forming strategic partnerships with African countries to enhance cooperation in areas such as defense, security and counter-terrorism.

##### Cons:

1. **Competition with China:** China has been increasing its engagement with Africa in recent years, leading to intense competition with India for economic and strategic interests.
2. **Security Challenges:** Africa is known for its security challenges, including terrorism, piracy and civil conflicts. These pose significant risks to Indian investments and interests in the continent.
3. **Lack of Infrastructure:** African countries lack adequate infrastructure, which can hinder Indian investments and trade.

In conclusion, India's increased engagement with Africa has both positive and negative impacts. While it provides significant economic and strategic opportunities, it also poses challenges such as intense competition with China, security risks and lack of infrastructure in African nations. India needs to carefully navigate these challenges to ensure that its engagement with Africa remains mutually beneficial for both parties.

#### Q18. Discuss the impediments India is facing in its pursuit of a permanent seat in UNSC.

(200 words) [12½]

**Approach to question:**

1. India has been advocating for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for several decades, but it faces some major impediments in this pursuit.
2. One of the main impediments is the opposition from other permanent members of the UNSC, particularly China, which has been blocking India's bid for a permanent seat.

**Answer:**

India, along with other countries, has been making a strong pitch for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). However, the pursuit of this goal has been hindered by various impediments. Some of these are:

1. **Veto Power:** One of the primary impediments to India's bid for a permanent seat on the UNSC is the opposition from the five permanent members of the Council - USA, Russia, China, UK and France - who have veto power.
2. **Opposition from other countries:** India's bid for a permanent seat on the UNSC has been opposed by other countries, including Pakistan, which has a long-standing dispute with India over the issue of Kashmir.
3. **Lack of support from some countries:** Despite India's growing economic and military power, some countries are not convinced that India has the diplomatic and political clout to effectively represent the developing world's interests.
4. **Regional and global instability:** The global order is constantly evolving, with new security challenges and threats emerging.
5. **Lack of consensus on the criteria:** There is no consensus on the criteria for selecting new permanent members of the UNSC.

Despite these impediments, India remains committed to its bid for a permanent seat on the UNSC. The country has been taking various measures to strengthen its case, including expanding its diplomatic outreach, increasing its contribution to UN peacekeeping missions and highlighting its growing economic and military power. However, for India to succeed in its bid, it will need to garner the support of a large number of countries, especially the existing permanent members of the UNSC.

**Q19. Project 'Mausam' is considered a unique foreign policy initiative of the Indian government to improve relationship with its neighbours. Does the project have a strategic dimension? Discuss. (200 words) [12½]**

**Approach to question:**

1. Project Mausam is a cultural diplomacy initiative launched by the Indian government in 2014 to revive and showcase the historical maritime routes linking the Indian Ocean littoral countries.

2. The project aims to promote India's soft power in the region and enhance cultural and economic linkages with the participating countries.

**Answer:**

Project Mausam is a multi-disciplinary project launched by the Indian Government in 2014 to explore and revive the ancient maritime cultural and economic links between India and its neighbours in the Indian Ocean region. The project has a strategic dimension as it aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. **Strengthening Ties:** The project seeks to strengthen India's cultural and economic ties with its neighbours by promoting mutual understanding and sharing of knowledge and skills.
2. **Countering China's Influence:** China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean region has been a matter of concern for India. Project Mausam aims to counter China's influence by deepening India's cultural and economic engagement with the countries in the region.
3. **Promoting Regional Stability:** The project seeks to promote regional stability by fostering cooperation and collaboration among the countries in the Indian Ocean region.

However, there are some limitations to the project as well:

1. **Limited Resources:** The project has limited financial and human resources, which may hinder its effectiveness in achieving its objectives.
2. **Lack of Political Will:** The success of the project depends on the political will of the participating countries. Some countries may not be willing to participate due to geopolitical reasons.
3. **Security Concerns:** The project involves sharing sensitive information and data, which may raise security concerns among the participating countries.

In conclusion, Project Mausam has a strategic dimension as it seeks to strengthen India's cultural and economic ties with its neighbours and counter China's influence in the Indian Ocean region. However, the project also faces some challenges, such as limited resources, lack of political will, security concerns and cultural differences.

**Q20. Terrorist activities and mutual distrust have clouded India – Pakistan relations. To what extent the use of soft power like sports and cultural exchange could help generate goodwill between the two countries? Discuss with suitable examples. (200 words) [12½]**

**Approach to question:**

1. India and Pakistan have had a long-standing conflict due to various issues, including terrorism and territorial disputes.

2. The use of soft power, such as sports and cultural exchange, could be a way to ease tensions and build bridges between the two nations.

**Answer:**

India and Pakistan have had a troubled relationship since their independence, with various issues like terrorism, Kashmir and mutual distrust straining the ties. The use of soft power like sports and cultural exchange can be a tool to generate goodwill and bring the people of both countries closer.

**Importance of sports and cultural exchange:**

1. Sports like cricket, hockey and kabaddi have a huge following in both India and Pakistan and have the potential to bring people together. Cultural exchange programs like music and dance festivals, film festivals and art exhibitions can also facilitate greater people-to-people contact and help bridge the gap between the two countries.

**Examples of successful sports initiatives:**

1. Cricket has been one of the most successful initiatives in bringing the two countries closer.

The cricket matches between India and Pakistan generate massive interest and are watched by millions of people on both sides of the border.

**Examples of successful cultural exchange initiatives:**

1. The Delhi International Arts Festival (DIAF) is an example of a successful cultural exchange initiative between India and Pakistan. The festival showcases music, dance, theatre and art from various countries, including Pakistan.

**Challenges and limitations:**

1. The use of soft power like sports and cultural exchange initiatives can face challenges due to political tensions and security concerns.
2. Despite the challenges, the use of soft power like sports and cultural exchange initiatives can be an effective tool to generate goodwill and bring the people of India and Pakistan closer. The initiatives can promote greater understanding, encourage people-to-people contact and help in building trust between the two nations.