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UPSC Mains 2017 GS II

Year-wise PYQ pack · WRAP model answers with canonical links

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<https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains/gs-2/2017/>

Q1 · 10 marks

"The local self government system in India has not proved to be effective instrument of governance". Critically examine the statement and give your views to improve the situation.

GS II · 2017 · Governance and Policy

Revision summary

The 73rd and 74th Amendments created a third tier with elections, reservations and two Schedules of functions.

Articles 243G and 243W still leave funds, functions and functionaries to State law, so devolution is uneven.

Parastatals, late State Finance Commissions and administrator rule keep real governance above the ward.

PESA, Finance Commission grants and a few State activity maps show what works when power is actually transferred.

Improvement needs exclusive functions, notified SFC awards, and elected control of the staff who deliver services.

Introduction

The Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992, and the Constitution (Seventy-fourth Amendment) Act, 1992, made panchayats and municipalities a third tier of government. After twenty-five years the form is constitutional, but day-to-day governance in many States still sits with the collector, the parastatal and the line department. A critical examination must admit both the gains and that unfinished devolution.

Body

Gains that the statement underplays

- Part IX and Part IXA, with Articles 243 to 243ZG, created regular elections, reservations for women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and a State Election Commission, so local bodies are no longer a gift of the State government.
- The Eleventh Schedule lists 29 panchayat subjects and the Twelfth Schedule lists 18 municipal functions; Gram Sabhas and ward committees give a legal forum for the voter below the Assembly.

- The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, extends village self-rule in **Fifth Schedule** areas, and the **Fourteenth Finance Commission** raised the share of grants that go straight to local bodies.
- Where States have transferred activity mapping, as in Kerala's people's plan and in some West Bengal and Karnataka phases, local bodies have run schools, anganwadis and roads with visible results.

Why the instrument is still weak

- **Article 243G** and **Article 243W** leave devolution to the State legislature; most States have not transferred the three Fs of funds, functions and functionaries in a matching set.
- Parallel bodies - DRDAs, water boards, development authorities and centrally sponsored missions - spend the money that the Schedules name as local, so the elected council plans on paper and the department executes on the ground.
- **State Finance Commissions** under **Articles 243I and 243Y** are often late; their awards are partly accepted; property tax, profession tax and user charges remain capped; GST later removed octroi without a city share.
- Prolonged administrator rule, delayed polls, and a State-appointed commissioner or CEO split political authority from the file.
- **Capacity is thin:** accounts are not audited on time, Gram Sabhas are poorly attended, and the **Second Administrative Reforms Commission** noted that activity mapping and social audit are still incomplete.

Views to improve the situation

- Make a minimum list of exclusive local functions and a predictable share of State tax a constitutional or statutory floor, so devolution is not only a State choice.
- Time-bind **State Finance Commission** reports and their notification, on the model of the **Union Finance Commission**, and publish activity mapping for every Eleventh and **Twelfth Schedule** head.
- Merge or subordinate parastatals to the elected council for water, sanitation and town planning, and place the municipal commissioner under a mayor-in-council where the city is large.
- Follow the Balwant Rai Mehta, Ashok Mehta, G.V.K. Rao and L.M. Singhvi line of thought: the village and the ward must control the functionary who delivers the service, not only pass a resolution.
- Tie Union local-body grants to audited accounts, online budgets and completed elections, which the Fourteenth and **Fifteenth Finance Commissions** already began to do.

Flow diagram

73rd and 74th Amendments -> Elections and reservations
 73rd and 74th Amendments -> 11th and 12th Schedules
 11th and 12th Schedules -> State legislature devolution
 State legislature devolution -> Weak three Fs
 Weak three Fs -> Parastatals and departments
 SFC and FC grants -> Effective local government

Conclusion

Local self-government has not yet become an effective daily instrument because the 73rd and 74th Amendments constitutionalised elections more firmly than they constitutionalised money and staff. The statement is largely right. It will become wrong only when exclusive functions, **State Finance Commission** awards and control of parastatals actually reach the Gram Panchayat and the municipality.

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WRAP Exams

Q2 · 10 marks

Critically examine the Supreme Court's judgement on 'National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014' with reference to appointment of judges of higher judiciary in India.

GS II · 2017 · Executive and Judiciary

Revision summary

The Second and Third Judges Cases made the collegium the method of appointing Supreme Court and High Court judges.

The 99th **Amendment and the NJAC Act, 2014**, tried to share that power with the Law Minister and two eminent persons.

SCAORA (2015) struck both down as damaging basic-structure judicial primacy, with Justice Chelameswar dissenting.

The Court asked for a better Memorandum of Procedure; that transparency work is still unfinished.

Independence of appointment was protected; openness of appointment was not delivered by the judgment alone.

Flow diagram

Collegium Second and Third Judges Cases -> 99th Amendment and NJAC Act 2014
99th Amendment and NJAC Act 2014 -> SCAORA 2015 struck down
SCAORA 2015 struck down -> Judicial primacy restored
SCAORA 2015 struck down -> Memorandum of Procedure pending
Judicial primacy restored -> Independent higher judiciary

Conclusion

- Finalise a Memorandum of Procedure with written reasons, eligibility criteria and a timeline for filling High Court vacancies.
- Keep judicial primacy, but add a secretariat and limited non-judge inputs on integrity and diversity, without a political veto of the 2014 kind.

The 2015 judgment saved judicial primacy in appointments and struck down the NJAC and the 99th Amendment as a threat to independence. It did not cure the collegium's secrecy. Higher-judiciary appointment in India still needs a transparent, judge-led process, not a return to executive veto dressed as a commission.

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Q3 · 10 marks

'Simultaneous election to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies will limit the amount of time and money spent in electioneering but it will reduce the government's accountability to the people' Discuss.

GS II · 2017 · Parliament and State Legislatures

Revision summary

A common poll calendar would reduce **Election Commission** cost, party spend and Model Code freezes.

Articles 83 and 172 set five-year terms that can end earlier; forcing one date can cut or stretch those bargains.

Off-year Assembly verdicts are a real accountability tool that simultaneity would weaken.

National waves may swamp State issues and federal diversity of mandates.

Clustered cycles and an honest dissolution rule are safer than a rigid one-nation lockstep.

Introduction

India already held simultaneous polls in the first two decades of the Republic. After mid-term dissolutions, the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies drifted onto separate clocks. A discussion paper from **NITI Aayog (2017)**, the **Law Commission**, and a **Parliamentary Standing Committee** revived "one nation, one election". The statement is half right on cost and campaign time, and seriously right on the risk to accountability if terms are forced into one calendar.

Body

Time and money: the case for simultaneity

- The **Election Commission of India** spends a large sum on each general and Assembly cycle; parties spend more on campaigns; the Model Code of Conduct freezes new schemes and senior postings for weeks.
- Security forces, teachers on poll duty, and the administrative machine are pulled into election mode several times in five years, which the **Law Commission's** electoral-reform reports and the **Standing Committee** on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice have treated as a real drag on governance.
- A single national roll revision, a single EVM-VVPAT deployment, and a single campaign season would cut repetition, which is the honest part of the statement.
- Voter fatigue and continuous polarising campaigns also have a social cost that a staggered calendar multiplies.

Accountability: why a separate State clock matters

- **Article 83** fixes the Lok Sabha term at five years unless dissolved sooner; **Article 172** does the same for a State Assembly; **Article 174** and **Article 356** allow early dissolution or President's Rule. Those tools exist so that a House that has lost confidence does not sit out a national timetable.
- A State voter today can punish a State government in an off-year without having to vote on the Union at the same time; that mid-term verdict is a form of accountability that simultaneity would thin out.

- National waves can drown local issues if every Assembly is polled with the Lok Sabha; federal diversity of mandates, which S.R. Bommai protected as part of the basic structure of federalism, would be harder to express.
- If Assemblies are extended or cut to fit the Lok Sabha clock, the voter's five-year bargain with that House is rewritten by a Union-centred calendar, which is a democratic cost, not only a legal tweak.
- Collective responsibility in the Council of Ministers is tested by no-confidence and by the next election; fewer elections mean fewer such tests, even if they save money.

A balanced discussion

- Saving time and money is a governance argument, not a constitutional trump card; the **Representation of the People Act, 1951**, can be amended, but **Articles 83, 85, 172, 174 and 356** need a coherent design so that a hung House is not frozen for years or dissolved only to serve a national date.
- Clustered regional cycles, as a middle path, can cut the number of Model Code freezes without making every State a passenger on the Lok Sabha train.
- Accountability can be protected by keeping the right to dissolve a House that has lost majority, even if the default is a common poll year, and by not using **Article 356** to manufacture a simultaneous calendar.
- Campaign-finance ceilings, a longer Model Code only where polls are actually on, and a stronger **Election Commission** are cheaper reforms than a forced lockstep of all Houses.

Flow diagram

Separate LS and Assembly clocks -> Repeated MCC and cost
 Simultaneous elections -> Lower time and money
 Simultaneous elections -> Thinner mid-term accountability
 Arts 83 172 356 -> Term and dissolution
 Term and dissolution -> Need a design that keeps federal verdicts

Conclusion

Simultaneous elections would likely cut campaign time, security cost and Model Code disruption. They would also reduce the number of moments when the people can hold a State or Union government to account on its own record. The statement is therefore useful as a warning: efficiency is not the same as accountability, and any common calendar must keep the voter's right to a mid-term federal verdict.

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Q4 · 10 marks

How do pressure groups influence Indian political process? Do you agree with this view that informal pressure groups have emerged as powerful than formal pressure groups in recent years?

GS II · 2017 · Governance and Policy

Revision summary

Pressure groups shape Indian policy through consultation, strikes, donations, litigation and identity politics.

Formal groups are registered unions, cooperatives and industry chambers with a seat in ministry talks.

Informal groups are movements, media swarms and identity networks that can force the weekly agenda.

Recent years have raised informal visibility, especially after anti-corruption and farmer mobilisations.

Durable economic law is still often written with formal groups in the room; both need transparency, not a ban.

Introduction

Pressure groups try to influence policy without themselves forming the government. [Article 19\(1\)\(a\)](#) and (c) protect speech and association, so lobbying, strikes, petitions and campaigns are part of constitutional politics. In India both formal organisations and informal networks now shape the political process; the second half of the question asks which of the two has more bite in recent years.

Body

How pressure groups influence the process

- **They set the agenda:** farmer unions, industry chambers and caste associations decide which Bills, subsidies and reservations reach the Cabinet and the street.
- They bargain inside parties and legislatures through donations, vote banks, and membership on standing committees and ministry consultations, which the [Second Administrative Reforms Commission](#) treated as a normal, if poorly regulated, part of governance.
- They use industrial action and bandhs under the [Trade Unions Act, 1926](#), and the [Industrial Disputes Act, 1947](#), as INTUC, BMS, CITU and AITUC have done on labour-code and public-sector issues.
- Business groups such as FICCI, CII and ASSOCHAM shape finance Bills, GST design and sector regulation through formal consultation and through informal access to ministries.
- Professional bodies - the Bar, medical councils, and teachers' associations - influence appointment, education and ethics laws.
- Identity groups (caste mahasabhas, religious organisations, language movements) influence delimitation debates, personal law, and reservation lists under [Articles 15, 16 and 340](#).
- Direct action, public-interest litigation, and media campaigns turn a group demand into a court or [Election Commission](#) issue, as seen in environment and anti-corruption politics.

Formal and informal groups

- Formal groups have a registered constitution, office-bearers, and a recognised bargaining status: trade unions, cooperative federations, chambers of commerce, and statutory consultative bodies.
- **Informal groups are networks without a lasting legal personality, or with a thin one:** street movements, social-media swarms, khap and caste panchayats, celebrity-led campaigns, and ad hoc business lobbies.
- The India Against Corruption movement around the Lokpal demand, farmer sit-ins, and online campaigns on women's safety showed that a loosely organised crowd can force the legislative timetable faster than a registered union.
- 24-hour television and later social media lowered the cost of informal mobilisation; a hashtag can outrun a memorandum from a recognised federation.

Have informal groups become more powerful?

- **In visibility and agenda-setting, yes:** informal movements often decide what Parliament must discuss this week, while formal unions have lost density after informalisation of work.
- **In durable policy capture, not always:** Finance Bills, GST rates, and labour codes are still heavily shaped by formal chambers and recognised unions that sit in the room when the file is written.
- **Informal power is spiky:** it peaks during a scandal or a farm law protest and fades when the camera moves; formal groups remain in the rules of business of ministries.
- **Unregulated informal pressure also has a dark side:** paid news, anonymous troll farms, and extra-legal caste councils can coerce without the disclosure that the **Representation of the People Act** and company law try to impose on formal actors.
- A balanced answer therefore agrees that informal groups have become more powerful in public opinion and in forcing ordinances and repeals, but it does not write off FICCI, CII or the central trade unions, which still structure economic legislation.

Flow diagram

Article 19 association -> Formal unions and chambers
 Article 19 association -> Informal movements and media
 Formal unions and chambers -> Bills subsidies regulation
 Informal movements and media -> Bills subsidies regulation
 Bills subsidies regulation -> Political process and policy

Conclusion

Pressure groups influence Indian politics by agenda-setting, bargaining, strikes, litigation and identity mobilisation under **Article 19**. Informal groups have grown stronger in the street and on the screen in recent years, yet formal chambers and unions still write much of the economic detail. Healthy politics needs both voice and rules: disclosure of lobbying, not a ban on association.

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han-formal-pressure-groups-in-recent-years/](https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2017/how-do-pressure-groups-influence-indian-political-process-do-you-agree-with-this-view-that-informal-pressure-groups-have-emerged-as-powerful-than-formal-pressure-groups-in-recent-years/)

Q5 · 10 marks

Discuss the role of Public Accounts Committee in establishing accountability of the government to the people.

GS II · 2017 · Transparency and e-Governance

Revision summary

The CAG audits public money; **Article 151** puts those reports before the legislature.

The PAC, chaired by convention by an Opposition member, examines the reports and calls the executive to account.

It works after the spend, through public reports and Action Taken replies, not through punishment.

Big CAG findings become political facts when the PAC and the press follow them.

Limits are delay, volume, and lack of executive members in the witness box; the reform is faster follow-up, not turning the PAC into a court.

Introduction

The people do not audit the Union Budget themselves; they do it through the Lok Sabha, and the **Public Accounts Committee** is the House's main tool for following the money after it is spent. **Article 151** places the Comptroller and Auditor General's reports before the legislature. The PAC's role is to turn those reports into public answers from the executive.

Body

Constitutional and procedural place

- **Article 148** creates an independent CAG; **Article 149** and the Comptroller and Auditor General's (Duties, Powers and Conditions of Service) Act, 1971, define audit of Union and State accounts; **Article 151** requires the reports to be laid in Parliament or the State legislature.
- The PAC is a parliamentary committee under the Rules of Procedure of the Lok Sabha, not a fourth branch; it has members from the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, and by convention since 1967 a member of the Opposition chairs it.
- It examines appropriation accounts, finance accounts, and CAG performance and compliance reports, and it calls secretaries as witnesses.
- Sister committees - **Estimates Committee** and the Committee on Public Undertakings - cover budget estimates and PSUs; together they are the financial committees of Parliament.

How the PAC builds accountability to the people

- **It is post-facto:** it asks whether money voted by Parliament was spent for the purpose, with economy, and within the law, which is the core of legislative control of the purse.
- Public hearings and printed reports name ministries, excesses, and idle funds; the press and the Opposition use those findings in debate, so the people hear of waste that the Budget speech will not advertise.
- Action Taken Reports force the government to reply; a ministry that ignores a PAC recommendation does so on the record.
- Because the chair is from the Opposition, the committee is less of a government cheerleader than a departmentally related standing committee often is.
- Landmark CAG reports on 2G spectrum, coal block allocation, and Commonwealth Games were politically potent because the PAC and the public debate around them translated audit

paragraphs into a demand for ministerial answerability.

Limits that a discussion must record

- The PAC cannot punish; it recommends. Prosecution, surcharge and recovery still need the executive, the courts, or a special law.
- It sits after the spend, so it cannot stop a bad contract in real time; preventive accountability needs internal financial advisers and a live CAG audit, not only the PAC.
- Party whip and delayed laying of CAG reports weaken bite; secretaries appear, ministers often do not, so political responsibility can hide behind bureaucratic testimony.
- State PACs vary widely in quality; many CAG findings on panchayat and scheme funds never get a serious PAC hour.
- Volume of reports exceeds sitting time, so selectivity, not full audit follow-up, is the actual practice.

Strengthening the role

- Fix a time limit for Action Taken Reports and for laying CAG reports in the House.
- Allow PAC sub-committees more field evidence and, where the House agrees, public broadcast of non-sensitive hearings.
- Keep the Opposition chair convention and resist treating the PAC as a parallel court; its job is legislative accountability, which is how the people are owed an explanation of public money.

Flow diagram

Article 148 Article 148 CAG audit audit -> Article 151 reports to House
 Article 151 reports to House -> Public Accounts Committee
 Public Accounts Committee -> Secretaries and Action Taken
 Secretaries and Action Taken -> Accountability to the people

Conclusion

- **The PAC is the people's audit arm inside Parliament:** it takes **Article 151** reports and asks the executive to explain the spend. It establishes accountability when its reports are timely, public and followed by Action Taken replies. It cannot replace criminal process or live budget control, but without it CAG paragraphs would remain expert literature rather than political facts.

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Q6 · 10 marks

'To ensure effective implementation of policies addressing water, sanitation and hygiene needs, the identification of beneficiary segments is to be synchronized with the anticipated outcomes'
Examine the statement in the context of the WASH scheme.

GS II · 2017 · Governance and Policy

Revision summary

WASH is water, sanitation and hygiene, delivered in India through NRDWP, **Swachh Bharat** and health and school missions.

- **The statement is correct:** the person on the subsidy list must be the person for whom the outcome was promised.

Toilets without water, covered habitations with dirty water, and split ministries break that link.

SECC targeting, paired water and toilets, and joined health dashboards resynchronise lists with ODF and disease outcomes.

Hardware counts are inputs; sustained use and water quality are the outcomes that identification must follow.

Introduction

WASH means water, sanitation and hygiene, not a single old scheme name. In India the work sits in the National Rural Drinking Water Programme, the **Swachh Bharat** Mission (Gramin and Urban) launched in 2014, school and anganwadi hygiene under Sarva Shiksha and ICDS, and urban water boards. The statement is right: if we list the wrong beneficiary, or count a toilet without water and behaviour change, the outcome we announced will not arrive.

Body

What the statement is asking

- **Identification of beneficiaries is the targeting step:** who gets a household toilet, a piped tap, a community sanitary complex, menstrual-hygiene support, or a school WASH block.
- **Anticipated outcomes are public goods:** open-defecation-free villages, fewer diarrhoeal deaths, less stunting, dignity for women, and safe water at the point of use.
- Synchronisation means the list, the subsidy, and the success indicator must describe the same person and the same behaviour, not a construction target that ignores use.

Where Indian WASH policy has slipped out of sync

- The Total Sanitation Campaign and Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan often paid for latrines on a BPL list while water was still a distant handpump; a toilet without water is not a hygiene outcome.
- **Swachh Bharat** Mission, 2014, shifted the political goal to Open Defecation Free status and individual household latrines, which is closer to an outcome, yet verification has sometimes counted a structure rather than sustained use, and urban slums, tenants and floating populations sit awkwardly on a household-ownership list.
- NRDWP habitations were covered on a 40 litres per capita per day design; quality (arsenic, fluoride, bacteriological contamination) is a different beneficiary need from mere "covered habitation", so a village can be covered and still drink unsafe water.

- Hygiene is split across the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (National Health Mission), the Ministry of Human Resource Development (school toilets), and the Ministry of Women and Child Development (ICDS); the child who should stop getting diarrhoea is one beneficiary, the budgets are four.
- Manual scavengers, persons with disability, and women who need bathing and menstrual privacy are named in law and in SBM guidelines, but they disappear when the only dashboard is "number of toilets built".

How to synchronise lists with outcomes

- Define the beneficiary as the user of a safely managed service, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goal 6 language, not only as a BPL card-holder or a plot owner.
- Pair every SBM toilet with a water point and a behaviour-change worker, which the Nirmal Gram and later SBM-G guidelines already stress, and audit use after twelve months, not only geo-tagged construction.
- Use SECC 2011 deprivation criteria, not a stale BPL list, for hardware subsidy, and keep community sanitary complexes for the landless and for tenants so the outcome is ODF, not owner-occupier sanitation.
- Make school and anganwadi WASH a named outcome of SSA/ICDS funds, with child-friendly toilets and handwash, because child stunting and attendance are WASH outcomes as much as rural development outcomes.
- Publish district dashboards that join NHM diarrhoea caseload, water-quality tests from the National Rural Drinking Water Programme, and SBM ODF status, so identification of "left-out hamlets" follows the health outcome, not the last campaign photograph.
- The National Rural Health Mission's ASHAs and Swachhagrahis should share the same village list; otherwise hygiene messages miss the households that just received a pan.

Examination of the statement

- **The statement is sound public administration:** inputs (taps, pans, IEC) must be aimed at the group whose outcome was promised.
- It is also a warning against scheme silos. WASH fails when sanitation is a toilet mission, water is a habitation mission, and hygiene is a poster.
- Effective implementation therefore means one beneficiary frame - household plus school plus slum cluster - and outcome indicators of use, quality and health, not three unconnected physical targets.

Flow diagram

Beneficiary list -> Water NRDWP
 Beneficiary list -> Sanitation SBM
 Beneficiary list -> Hygiene NHM ICDS school
 Water NRDWP -> SDG6 and ODF health outcomes
 Sanitation SBM -> SDG6 and ODF health outcomes
 Hygiene NHM ICDS school -> SDG6 and ODF health outcomes

Conclusion

WASH works when the person counted as a beneficiary is the same person whose water is safe, whose toilet is used, and whose child is not repeatedly sick. **Swachh Bharat**, NRDWP and NHM already have the pieces. They will meet the statement only when lists, water, and behaviour-change sit on one outcome dashboard instead of three construction scores.

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WRAP Exams

Q7 · 10 marks

Does the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ensure effective mechanism for empowerment and inclusion of the intended beneficiaries in the society? Discuss.

GS II · 2017 · Governance and Policy

Revision summary

The 2016 Act replaced the 1995 law to give effect to the UNCRPD.

It widened disabilities to 21, raised job reservation to 4 per cent, and created Commissioners and accessibility duties.

Articles 14, 15, 16, 21 and 41 supply the constitutional frame; the Act is the working statute.

Implementation gaps in UDID, schools, transport and private jobs mean the mechanism is legally strong and socially incomplete.

Empowerment of intended beneficiaries still needs certificates that travel, audited buildings, and jobs beyond government rosters.

Introduction

India ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, replaced the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, to match that Convention. The 2016 Act is a stronger rights statute on paper. Whether it empowers the intended beneficiaries depends on notification, budgets, and accessibility on the ground.

Body

What the 2016 Act added

- It recognises 21 specified disabilities, against seven in the 1995 Act, including acid-attack survivors, Parkinson's disease, thalassemia, and multiple disabilities, so more people enter the legal circle of beneficiaries.
- It defines discrimination, reasonable accommodation, and barrier-free access, and it treats disability as a rights and social issue, not only as charity or a medical certificate.
- Reservation in government jobs and in higher education rose from 3 per cent to 4 per cent, with a 5 per cent reservation in seats in government and government-aided higher educational institutions.
- It provides for guardianship, special courts, a Chief Commissioner and State Commissioners, and national and State funds, which is a thicker institutional mechanism than the old Act.
- Articles 14, 15, 16, 21 and 41 already framed equality, non-discrimination in public employment, and public assistance in cases of disablement; the 2016 Act is the detailed statute that those clauses needed after the UNCRPD.
- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017, and the Harmonised Guidelines on accessibility give the executive the standards that buildings, transport and websites are supposed to meet.

Does this ensure an effective mechanism?

- **On design, yes:** definition, reservation, accessibility, education, skill, social security, and grievance officers are all in one Act, which the 1995 law treated more thinly.

- On inclusion, the Act still depends on State rules, UDID (unique disability ID) coverage, and medical boards that can be slow or narrow, so many intended beneficiaries never receive the certificate that unlocks the mechanism.
- Private establishments have duties, but inspection and penalties are weak; most offices, buses and polling stations remain only partly accessible, which the Commissioner's reports keep recording.
- Inclusive education needs trained teachers and accessible NCERT material; the Act mandates it, while the Right of Children to **Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009**, and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan still leave many children with high support needs outside the neighbourhood school.
- The Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) is the flagship for built environment and ICT; progress on audited buildings has been slower than the statute's ambition.
- Employment reservation applies mainly to government; the private sector, where most new jobs are, is under a weaker "incentive" logic, so economic empowerment lags legal recognition.
- Intersectional beneficiaries - women with disability, Dalit persons with disability, and those in rural blocks without specialists - still meet a certificate-and-travel hurdle that an urban, literate claimant does not.

Discussion and way forward

- The 2016 Act is necessary and not yet sufficient. It is an effective legal mechanism in the sense of rights, institutions and a wider beneficiary list.
- It is not yet an effective social mechanism until UDID, accessible transport, school enrolment, and private-sector jobs move at the same pace as the gazette notification.
- Time-bound accessibility audits, portable certificates, and linking MGNREGA, **Skill India and the National Action Plan** for Skill Development of Persons with Disabilities to the 21-category list would turn the Act into inclusion rather than a better statute book.

Flow diagram

UNCRPD 2007 -> RPwD Act 2016
 RPwD Act 2016 -> 21 disabilities and 4 percent reservation
 RPwD Act 2016 -> Commissioners and accessibility
 Commissioners and accessibility -> Inclusion if implemented
 Certificate and budget gaps -> Empowerment delayed

Conclusion

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, does create a stronger mechanism than the 1995 Act: more disabilities, higher reservation, Commissioners, and accessibility duties aligned with the UNCRPD. It does not by itself ensure empowerment and inclusion. Those arrive only when certificates, schools, buildings and jobs implement the Act as a daily right, not as a file.

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Q8 · 10 marks

Hunger and Poverty are the biggest challenges for good governance in India still today. Evaluate how far successive governments have progressed in dealing with these humongous problems. Suggest measures for improvement.

GS II · 2017 · Poverty and Hunger

Revision summary

Article 47 and Article 21 frame nutrition and a life free of starvation as State duties.

MGNREGA (2005) and the NFSA (2013) are the main legal steps beyond older poverty schemes.

Famine-type hunger has fallen; NFHS undernutrition and weak targeting show the job is unfinished.

POSHAN, sanitation and health must join grain schemes if hunger is to fall in the body, not only in the ration shop.

Improvement needs better lists, timely wages, a more diverse food basket, and women's control of entitlements.

Introduction

Article 47 asks the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living as among its primary duties. Hunger and poverty are therefore not only welfare themes; they are tests of good governance. Successive governments have built a large rights and scheme architecture. Extreme destitution has fallen, yet undernutrition and insecure livelihoods remain wide enough that the statement is still fair.

Body

Progress against poverty

- Planning-era programmes - Integrated Rural Development, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, and later Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar - treated poverty as a subsidy and self-employment problem; leakage was high, which the Tendulkar and earlier expert groups documented in consumption data.
- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, turned wage work into a legal entitlement for rural households, which the World Bank and Indian evaluations link to a rural wage floor and distress migration control, even with delays in payment and incomplete social audit.
- The National Food Security Act, 2013, made a legal claim to subsidised grain for a large share of the population, building on the targeted PDS and on PUCL v. Union of India, where the Supreme Court treated hunger as an Article 21 issue.
- Housing (IAY then PMAY), rural roads (PMGSY), NRLM self-help groups, and Direct Benefit Transfer with Aadhaar reduced some duplication, though exclusion errors remain a governance failure of their own.
- Official poverty ratios under the Tendulkar method fell over the 2000s; the Rangarajan committee proposed a higher line and a larger poor population, which shows that "progress" depends on the line one uses, not only on scheme names.

Progress against hunger

- ICDS, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (after the 2001 Court orders in the PUCL litigation), and the PDS cut starvation deaths of the 1960s-80s type in most States; that is real progress in famine prevention.
- Stunting, wasting and anaemia in NFHS rounds remain high; India still ranks poorly on global hunger indices, which means calorie access through cheap grain has moved faster than diet quality, sanitation and care.
- Antyodaya Anna Yojana and State extras (eggs, pulses, fortified food) show that the Union floor can be raised; implementation still varies by State capacity, which is a federal governance fact.
- The National Nutrition Mission (POSHAN Abhiyaan was approved in 2017) tries to join ICDS, health and sanitation; it is an admission that foodgrain schemes alone do not end hunger.

Why they remain a governance challenge

- **Identification:** SECC, older BPL lists, and NFSA coverage still leave out migrants, the urban homeless, and some tribal hamlets, while including better-off households in leaky rings.
- **Nutrition is multi-sectoral:** water, sanitation (**Swachh Bharat**), women's anaemia, and child feeding sit in different ministries, so good governance is coordination, not one more scheme.
- Farm incomes, informal urban work, and inflation of pulses and milk can recreate hunger even when the poverty ratio on a past line looks better.

Measures for improvement

- **Complete NFSA reforms:** doorstep delivery, transparent FPS automation, and inclusion of the actual hungry (migrants, urban poor) rather than only a percentage ceiling.
- Pay MGNREGA on time, strengthen social audit under the Act, and expand urban wage or employment support for the informal poor.
- Shift from grain-heavy PDS toward a more diverse basket or DBT where markets work, without abandoning the food-security floor in deficit districts.
- Treat POSHAN, SBM, NRDWP and NHM as one child-outcome mission at district level, with a collector-level dashboard on stunting and anaemia.
- Raise women's control of entitlements (ration cards, wages, land records), because intra-household hunger is a governance blind spot that household surveys undercount.

Flow diagram

Article 47 and Article 21 -> NFSA PDS MDM ICDS
 Article 47 and Article 21 -> MGNREGA NRLM PMAY
 NFSA PDS MDM ICDS -> Less famine still high undernutrition
 MGNREGA NRLM PMAY -> Poverty ratio down insecure work remains
 District nutrition dashboard -> Better governance outcomes

Conclusion

Successive governments have moved from charity and IRDP-style subsidy to legal entitlements under MGNREGA and the NFSA, and mass starvation has receded. Hunger and poverty are still the biggest governance tests because undernutrition, bad targeting and insecure work remain. Improvement now means accurate lists, on-time wages, diverse diets, and one district outcome for the child, not another overlapping scheme name.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2017/hunger-and-poverty-are-the-biggest-t-challenges-for-good-governance-in-india-still-today-evaluate-how-far-successive-governments-have-progressed>

d-in-dealing-with-these-humongous-problems-suggest-measures-for-improvement/

WRAP Exams

Q9 · 10 marks

'China is using its economic relations and positive trade surplus as tools to develop potential military power status in Asia', In the light of this statement, discuss its impact on India as her neighbor.

GS II · 2017 · India and its Neighbourhood

Revision summary

A trade surplus funds China's military modernisation and overseas infrastructure, which is the core of the statement.

India faces a large goods deficit, a live LAC, and Chinese ports and corridors around the subcontinent, including CPEC in PoK.

Doklam in 2017 showed that commerce does not cancel Himalayan military pressure.

AIIB membership and BRI refusal show India's split between economic forums and sovereignty.

The reply is diversified supply, indigenisation, neighbourhood alternatives and border infrastructure, not naive decoupling or naive partnership.

Introduction

China's rise in Asia is both commercial and military. A large merchandise surplus funds modernisation of the People's Liberation Army, and trade, credit and infrastructure create dependence that can be used in a crisis. India shares a disputed land border with China and a growing trade deficit. The statement is a fair description of Beijing's method; the impact on India is strategic, not only commercial.

Body

Economic tools and military status

- China's positive trade surplus with much of Asia, including India, supplies foreign exchange and industrial scale; that scale supports shipbuilding, missiles, and dual-use technology.
- **Belt and Road projects, cheap credit, and port leases convert surplus capital into presence:** Gwadar in Pakistan, Hambantota in Sri Lanka, and other Indian Ocean footholds sit in the "string of pearls" debate that New Delhi watches as a naval problem, not as ordinary FDI.
- The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor runs through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, so an economic corridor is also a sovereignty affront to India and a logistics spine for a partner military.
- Export of telecom, rare-earth dependence, and industrial overcapacity let China set standards and prices; in a sanction or wartime scenario those commercial ties become pressure.

Impact on India as neighbour

- **Trade:** India runs a large goods deficit with China, importing intermediates, electronics and capital goods, and exporting fewer manufactures. That deficit is a vulnerability if supply is politicised, as border tensions already showed in calls for boycotts and tighter FDI screening.
- **Boundary:** the 1962 war, the **Line of Actual Control**, and the 2017 Doklam stand-off with Bhutan in the background show that economic partnership did not freeze the military contest in the Himalaya.

- **Neighbourhood:** Chinese finance in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar competes with Indian connectivity (BBIN, Kaladan, port projects). Delhi cannot treat a surplus-funded port as a private commercial fact when it sits on India's sea lines.
- **River and ecology:** Brahmaputra (Yarlung Tsangpo) dams and data-sharing are another dual-use file; upstream infrastructure is economic development with downstream security meaning for India's Northeast.
- **Multilateral space:** AIIB and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation give China institutional weight in Asia; India is a member of AIIB and SCO but resists BRI and CPEC, which is a split between economic forum and sovereignty line.
- **Domestic industry:** cheap Chinese imports hollow out some Indian manufacturing, which weakens the defence-industrial base that a neighbour of China needs.

India's responses

- Diversify imports, use anti-dumping and safeguard duties where WTO-consistent, and raise **Make in India** and defence indigenisation so surplus-funded Chinese scale is not India's only source of components.
- Tighten FDI rules in sensitive sectors (as later border-linked screening did in spirit), without closing ordinary trade that Indian firms still need.
- Deepen the Quad-leaning maritime partnerships, Malabar exercises, and Indian Ocean presence, and complete border infrastructure that the China study group and later road projects have long flagged as lagging.
- Offer neighbourhood alternatives - credit, power, and port calls - so smaller States are not locked into one creditor.
- Keep diplomatic channels (WMCC, Special Representatives) because economic decoupling cannot be total, yet do not let the trade surplus buy silence on the LAC.

Flow diagram

China trade surplus -> PLA and dual-use scale
 China trade surplus -> BRI ports and CPEC
 BRI ports and CPEC -> Pressure on India neighbourhood
 LAC and Doklam -> India security cost
 Diversify Make in India Malabar -> Manage the neighbour risk

Conclusion

China does use surplus, credit and infrastructure as tools of comprehensive national power, including military reach in Asia. For India the impact is a sticky trade deficit, a militarised LAC, and a contested neighbourhood sea. Good policy is not a slogan of boycott; it is diversification, border readiness, and enough domestic industry that a neighbour's surplus cannot double as a veto.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2017/china-is-using-its-economic-relations-and-positive-trade-surplus-as-tools-to-develop-potential-military-power-status-in-asia-in-the-light-of-this-statement-discuss-its-impact-on-india-as-her-neighbor/>

Q10 · 10 marks

What are the main functions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)? Explain different functional commissions attached to it.

GS II · 2017 · International Institutions

Revision summary

ECOSOC is a principal UN organ under **Articles 61** to 72 for economic and social cooperation.

Its functions are studies, recommendations, draft conventions, conferences, agency coordination, member reports, help to the Security Council, and NGO consultative status.

Article 68 is the base for commissions; functional commissions cover statistics, population, social development, women, drugs, crime, science and technology, and forests.

Regional commissions are separate geographic bodies under the same Council.

The old Commission on Human Rights was replaced by the Human Rights Council, which is not a current ECOSOC functional commission.

Introduction

The United Nations Economic and Social Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. Chapter X of the UN Charter (**Articles 61** to 72) makes it the centre for economic, social, cultural, educational and health questions, and for coordinating the specialised agencies. Its functional commissions are the expert bodies through which that mandate becomes agendas, standards and reports.

Body

Main functions of ECOSOC

- **Article 62** lets ECOSOC make or initiate studies and reports on international economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters, and make recommendations to the General Assembly, to members, and to specialised agencies.
- It may prepare draft conventions for the General Assembly and call international conferences on matters within its competence.
- **Article 63** directs it to enter into agreements with specialised agencies (ILO, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, and others) and to coordinate their activities through consultation and recommendation.
- **Article 64** allows it to obtain reports from the specialised agencies and from members on steps taken to give effect to its recommendations and to those of the General Assembly.
- **Article 65** lets it furnish information to the Security Council and assist that Council upon request, which links socio-economic work to peace and security.
- **Article 71** is the Charter base for consultative status of non-governmental organisations, so civil society has a formal door into UN economic and social work.
- After expansion, ECOSOC has 54 members elected by the General Assembly for three-year terms, on a regional pattern; it holds a high-level segment that now also reviews sustainable development follow-up.
- In short, its functions are deliberation, recommendation, coordination of the UN development system, NGO consultative status, and a bridge to the Security Council on the socio-economic roots of conflict.

Functional commissions attached to ECOSOC

- The Charter (**Article 68**) requires ECOSOC to set up commissions in economic and social fields and for the promotion of human rights; the functional commissions are those standing bodies.
- **Statistical Commission:** sets global statistical standards, including national accounts and SDG indicators, so that members report comparable data.
- **Commission on Population and Development:** follows the International Conference on Population and Development agenda - fertility, migration, urbanisation and reproductive health.
- **Commission for Social Development:** follows the World Summit for Social Development themes of poverty, employment and social inclusion.
- **Commission on the Status of Women:** the principal global intergovernmental body on gender equality and the empowerment of women, feeding the Beijing Platform and related conventions.
- **Commission on Narcotic Drugs:** the central drug-policy organ, working with the UNODC treaties on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
- **Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice:** sets policy on crime, criminal justice and the UN crime congresses.
- **Commission on Science and Technology for Development:** advises on technology, digital divides and innovation for development.
- **United Nations Forum on Forests:** though styled a forum, it functions as the global body on forests under the ECOSOC umbrella.
- Historically the Commission on Human Rights was a functional commission; it was replaced in 2006 by the Human Rights Council, which reports to the General Assembly, a change students should not confuse with the surviving commissions listed above.

Related machinery (so the answer is complete)

- Regional commissions - ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA - are also ECOSOC commissions, but they are geographic, not "functional" in the narrow sense the question asks.
- Expert bodies on tax, public administration, and indigenous issues sit under ECOSOC as well; they are not all titled functional commissions.
- ECOSOC does not command armies or bind members like a Security Council resolution; its power is agenda-setting, standards, and coordination of agencies that States have already created.

Flow diagram

UN Charter Chapter X -> ECOSOC 54 members
 ECOSOC 54 members -> Study recommend coordinate
 ECOSOC 54 members -> Functional commissions
 Functional commissions -> Statistical Population Social CSW
 Functional commissions -> Narcotic Drugs Crime CSTD Forests
 Study recommend coordinate -> General Assembly and agencies

Conclusion

ECOSOC's main functions under Chapter X are study, recommendation, draft conventions, conferences, coordination of specialised agencies, reports from members, assistance to the Security Council, and NGO consultative status. Its functional commissions - statistics, population, social development, status of women, narcotic drugs, crime prevention, science and technology, and the forests forum - are the standing expert engines of that mandate. They make the Council's socio-economic role concrete; they do not replace the sovereignty of member States.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2017/what-are-the-main-functions-of-the-united-nations-economic-and-social-council-ecosoc-explain-different-functional-commissions-attached-to-it/>

WRAP Exams

Q11 · 15 marks

Explain the salient features of the constitution(One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016. Do you think it is efficacious enough 'to remove cascading effect of taxes and provide for common national market for goods and services'? (250 words).

GS II · 2017 · Indian Constitution

Revision summary

The 101st Amendment inserted **Articles 246A, 269A and 279A** for GST, IGST and the GST Council.

Dual GST with input-tax credit is the tool against cascading.

A common market needs destination-based IGST and a single compliance spine.

Petroleum, alcohol, multiple slabs and inverted duty keep some cascade and some borders.

The Amendment is legally sufficient; working efficacy is still partial.

Introduction

The Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016 inserted a goods and services tax into the federal bargain so that a chain of Union and State levies could become one destination-based tax. Cascading means tax on tax when credit is denied. A common national market means a trader can move goods and services across State borders without a fresh fiscal wall at each check-post. The Amendment is the legal engine; efficacy is whether credit, rates and the GST Council actually deliver that promise.

Body

Salient features of the 101st Amendment

- It inserted **Article 246A**, which gives Parliament and the State legislatures concurrent power to make laws on GST, while exclusive power over inter-State GST remains with Parliament.
- **Article 269A** provides for levy and collection of integrated GST on inter-State supplies, with apportionment between the Union and the States on GST Council recommendations.
- **Article 279A** constitutes the GST Council, chaired by the Union Finance Minister, with State finance ministers as members, to recommend rates, exemptions, model laws, and the principles of supply and place of supply.
- Council decisions need a three-fourths weighted majority of members present and voting, with one-third weight for the Union and two-thirds for the States taken together, which is cooperative federalism written as a voting rule.
- **The Seventh Schedule was recast:** Union and State entries on excise and sales tax were narrowed so that GST could occupy the field, while alcoholic liquor for human consumption stayed with the States, and specified petroleum products, electricity and a few other items were kept outside GST until the Council recommends otherwise.
- **Article 366** was amended to define GST, and the older service-tax **Article 268A** was omitted. Compensation to States for revenue loss for a transition period was written into the Amendment's statement of objects and later into the GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017.
- **Dual GST is the working form:** Central GST and State GST on intra-State supplies, and IGST on inter-State supplies and imports, with input-tax credit intended to flow along the chain.

Removing the cascading effect

- **Cascading fell where the credit chain is complete:** a manufacturer or trader can set off GST paid on inputs against GST on output, which the old Central Sales Tax and many cascading State levies did not allow across the full chain.
- Efficacy is incomplete while petrol, diesel, natural gas, aviation turbine fuel, crude oil and electricity remain outside GST, because freight and factory costs still carry a buried tax that cannot be credited.
- Multiple rate slabs, cess on luxury and sin goods, and inverted duty structures (higher tax on inputs than on output) recreate pockets of unusable credit, which is cascading by another name.
- E-way bills, invoice matching and anti-profiteering were meant to police the credit trail; they reduce evasion but also raise compliance cost for small firms, so some cascading is replaced by a paperwork tax.

A common national market

- Octroi-style check-posts and the Central Sales Tax origin bias were the old map of a fragmented market. Destination-based GST plus IGST is designed as one market with a credit trail across State lines.
- The GST Network, a common registration and return spine, and the Council's power to harmonise rates, are the institutional market, not only the tax name.
- **The market is still not fully common:** State compensation politics, rate wars through exemptions, and delayed refunds on exports and inverted duty break the promise of frictionless trade.
- Alcohol and petroleum staying out means two large consumption goods still face State-wise fiscal borders.

Is it efficacious enough?

- **As a constitutional design, yes:** 246A, 269A and 279A are enough to kill the old cascade and to build a national market if credit is universal and rates are few.
- **As a working tax in 2017 and after, only partly:** the Amendment opened the door; exclusions, slabs and federal bargaining keep some cascade and some borders alive.
- Efficacy will rise when petroleum and electricity enter GST, refunds are timely, and the Council treats one-rate simplicity as a market good, not only as a revenue good.

Flow diagram

101st Amendment 2016 -> Art 246A dual GST
 101st Amendment 2016 -> Art 269A IGST
 101st Amendment 2016 -> Art 279A GST Council
 Art 246A dual GST -> Input tax credit
 Art 269A IGST -> Destination based trade
 Input tax credit -> Less cascading
 Destination based trade -> Common national market

Conclusion

The 101st Amendment's salient features are concurrent GST power, IGST, the GST Council, a recast **Seventh Schedule**, and a dual destination-based tax with credit. That design is efficacious enough in law to remove cascading and to found a common national market. It is not yet efficacious enough in practice while petroleum, alcohol, inverted duties and multi-slab politics keep tax-on-tax and State-wise friction alive.

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WRAP Exams

Q12 · 15 marks

Examine the scope of Fundamental Rights in the light of the latest judgement of the Supreme Court on Right to Privacy. (250 words).

GS II · 2017 · India and its Neighbourhood

Revision summary

A nine-judge Bench in **Puttaswamy (2017)** held privacy to be a fundamental right.

M.P. Sharma and Kharak Singh were overruled insofar as they denied privacy.

Privacy covers space, personal data and intimate decisions, read through **Articles 14, 19 and 21**.

Limits are law, legitimate aim and proportionality, not a blank cheque to the State.

Part III is open-textured; privacy is an unenumerated right located in existing Articles.

Introduction

On 24 August 2017 a nine-judge Bench in **Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India** held that the right to privacy is a fundamental right. That judgment is the latest and controlling reading of how far Part III reaches. Scope here means whose liberty is protected, against whom, and with what limits. Privacy does not add a new numbered Article; it thickens **Articles 14, 19 and 21**, and the liberty cluster around them.

Body

What the Puttaswamy Bench held

- Privacy is intrinsic to life and personal liberty under **Article 21** and to the freedoms and equality that make a person a constitutional subject, not a data point of the State.
- Earlier contrary observations in **M.P. Sharma (1954)** and **Kharak Singh (1962)**, so far as they denied a right to privacy, were overruled.
- **Privacy has at least three aspects:** spatial privacy (a private space), informational privacy (control over personal data), and decisional autonomy (intimate choices of family, faith, food and orientation).
- The right is not absolute. A restriction must rest on law, serve a legitimate State aim, and be proportionate - suitable, necessary, and balanced against the right.
- Dignity, ordered liberty and the idea of a constitutional republic of individuals, not only of majorities, were the moral grounds of the holding.

How the judgment widens the scope of Fundamental Rights

- **Unenumerated rights:** Part III is not a closed list of named heads. If a claim is part of dignity and liberty, the Court may locate it inside existing Articles, as it did earlier for travel, livelihood and legal aid, and now for privacy.
- **Horizontal shadows:** the primary duty is still on the State (**Article 12**). Yet informational privacy implies that the State must also regulate private databases, because a fundamental right that stops at the police station but dies at a private server is hollow.
- **Equality and freedom travel together:** a privacy holding under **Article 21** is read with **Article 14** against arbitrary profiling and with **Article 19** against a chill on speech, association and movement.

- Later use of the same cluster - for example on sexual orientation, adultery law, and data protection debates - shows that Puttaswamy is a gateway judgment, not a one-case rule about Aadhaar alone.
- Reasonable restrictions remain. National security, crime investigation, and taxation can still enter private life if they pass the proportionality test. Scope expanded; State power was not abolished.

What the scope still does not cover

- Privacy is not a veto on every welfare database or every criminal search. The Bench asked for justification, not for a vacuum of governance.
- Economic and social rights in Part IV do not become justiciable merely because privacy is fundamental; budgets and statutes still do that work.
- Group claims (caste, language, religion) remain in their own Articles; privacy is primarily a personal liberty tool, though it can protect a stigmatised group's intimate life.
- **Parliamentary competence to make a data-protection statute is affirmed in spirit:** a fundamental right often needs a detailed law to be usable against both the State and the market.

Examine, do not inflate

- The latest judgment enlarges the living content of Part III without rewriting the text.
- **The real scope test is future proportionality:** surveillance, Aadhaar-like seeding, and commercial profiling will show whether privacy is a right or a recital.

Flow diagram

Puttaswamy 2017 -> Article 21 life and liberty
 Puttaswamy 2017 -> Articles 14 and 19
 Puttaswamy 2017 -> Spatial informational decisional
 Spatial informational decisional -> Proportionality test
 Proportionality test -> Law legitimate aim necessity

Conclusion

Puttaswamy places privacy inside **Articles 14, 19 and 21** as spatial, informational and decisional liberty, and it overrules the old denials of that right. Fundamental Rights therefore reach intimate choice and personal data, subject to a law that is legitimate and proportionate. The scope of Part III grew; it did not become unlimited.

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Q13 · 15 marks

The Indian Constitution has provisions for holding joint session of the two houses of the Parliament. Enumerate the occasions when this would normally happen and also the occasions when it cannot, with reasons thereof. (250 words).

GS II · 2017 · Parliament and State Legislatures

Revision summary

Article 108 allows a Presidential joint sitting when an ordinary Bill is rejected, stuck on amendments, or delayed over six months.

Passage is by majority of members of both Houses present and voting.

Money Bills cannot use joint sitting because **Article 109** gives the Lok Sabha the last word on the purse.

Constitution amendments cannot use it because **Article 368** needs a special majority in each House separately.

- **Use has been rare:** 1961, 1978 and 2002 are the known central examples.

Introduction

A joint sitting is a deadlock-breaking device for the Union legislature, not a second chamber. **Article 108** allows the President to summon both Houses together when an ordinary Bill is stuck. The Constitution also says, by silence and by special procedure, when that sitting must not be used. Enumeration with reasons is the whole demand.

Body

When a joint sitting would normally happen

- **Article 108** applies to a Bill (other than a Money Bill) passed by one House and rejected by the other, or when the Houses finally disagree on amendments, or when more than six months pass from receipt of the Bill by the other House without it being passed.
- The President may then notify a joint sitting unless the Bill has already lapsed because the Lok Sabha was dissolved, with the special saving in **Article 108(5)** for a Bill pending when dissolution occurs after the President has already notified the intention to summon a joint sitting.
- In the joint sitting the Lok Sabha's larger numbers normally prevail. Passage needs a majority of members of both Houses present and voting, and only amendments agreed to by both Houses earlier, or relevant to disagreement, are in order (**Article 108(4)**).
- The device is meant for ordinary legislation on the Union List and Concurrent List where the Rajya Sabha's revising role should not become a permanent veto of a Lok Sabha majority.
- **Historical use has been rare:** the Dowry Prohibition Bill, 1961; the **Banking Service Commission** (Repeal) Bill, 1978; and the Prevention of Terrorism Bill, 2002. Rarity is the convention; **Article 108** is the occasion.

When a joint sitting cannot be held, and why

- Money Bills (**Article 110**) cannot go to a joint sitting. **Article 109** gives the Rajya Sabha only fourteen days to recommend; the Lok Sabha may accept or reject those recommendations. A joint sitting would erase the Lok Sabha's special money power and the Rajya Sabha's limited money role, so the text excludes it.

- A Bill seeking to amend the Constitution under **Article 368** cannot go to a joint sitting. Each House must pass the amendment separately by a special majority. Federal and rights changes are not meant to be carried by the Lok Sabha's numerical weight in a combined hall.
- A Money Bill is also not an "ordinary Bill" for **Article 108**; Finance Bills that are not Money Bills may still deadlock and, in principle, could use **Article 108**, but a certified Money Bill cannot.
- There is no joint sitting to resolve a deadlock on a motion of confidence, adjournment, or other non-Bill business. **Article 108** is Bill-specific.
- If the Bill has lapsed on dissolution of the Lok Sabha and the President has not already notified a joint sitting, the occasion dies. A new House must start the Bill again.
- There is no joint sitting of Parliament with a State legislature, and no joint sitting to pass a Rajya Sabha-only category that the Constitution does not create for ordinary law; the Rajya Sabha's special powers (for example **Article 249, 312**) follow their own clauses, not **Article 108**.
- **Ordinance replacement follows the Bill path:** if the replacing Bill is a Money Bill or a Constitution amendment, joint sitting remains closed for the same reasons.

Reasons in one line

- Joint sitting exists where democracy's popular House should be able to break a bicameral stall on ordinary law.
- It is barred where the Constitution has already given one House a special purse power, or has demanded a House-wise special majority to protect the charter.

Flow diagram

Ordinary Bill deadlock -> Article 108 joint sitting
 Money Bill Art 109 110 -> No joint sitting
 Constitution amendment Art 368 -> No joint sitting
 Article 108 joint sitting -> Lok Sabha numbers usually prevail

Conclusion

A joint sitting normally happens under **Article 108** on an ordinary Bill that is rejected, amended into deadlock, or delayed beyond six months in the other House. It cannot happen for a Money Bill, because **Article 109** already settles the purse in the Lok Sabha, or for a Constitution amendment, because **Article 368** requires each House's special majority. The device is a rare ordinary-law unlock, not a general merger of the two Houses.

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Q14 · 15 marks

To enhance the quality of democracy in India the Election Commission of India has proposed electoral reforms in 2016. What are the suggested reforms and how far are they significant to make democracy successful? (250 words).

GS II · 2017 · Constitutional Bodies

Revision summary

In 2016 the ECI pushed disqualification on serious charges, false-affidavit teeth, paid news and bribery as live offences.

It asked for a ceiling on party expenditure, one-constituency contests, a vote totaliser, and a freeze on government ads.

Independence of the Commission's secretariat, finances and appointments was part of the same bundle.

These reforms matter because money, crime and a weak referee hollow out adult franchise.

Lists succeed only when they become statute and practice.

Introduction

Free and fair elections are how Indian democracy authorises government. In 2016 the **Election Commission of India** pressed a known bundle of reforms - on criminalisation, money, paid news, party finance, and the Commission's own independence - so that the vote remains a choice, not a purchase or a fear. Significance is measured by whether those suggestions close the gap between adult franchise and equal political influence.

Body**Suggested reforms pressed around 2016**

- **Decriminalisation:** disqualify a candidate against whom a court has framed charges for a serious offence punishable with a long term of imprisonment, instead of waiting for a rare final conviction.
- **False affidavit:** make a lie in Form 26 a ground for prompt disqualification, not only a delayed prosecution.
- **Paid news and bribery:** treat paid news as a corrupt practice and make bribery of electors a cognizable offence so that police can act in time, not after the result.
- **Money power:** put a legal ceiling on the expenditure of political parties, not only of candidates, and audit party accounts with the Commission's teeth, not only with voluntary statements.
- **One constituency rule:** allow a person to contest from only one seat, so that bye-elections do not mock the first mandate.
- **Totaliser:** mix votes of several polling stations before counting, so that a booth-level vendor of fear cannot see which hamlet voted which way.
- **Government advertising:** freeze taxpayer-funded publicity for a period before the announcement of polls, so that the ruling party does not campaign on the Consolidated Fund.
- **Independence of the Commission:** an independent secretariat, charge of expenditure on the Consolidated Fund, and a collegial, bipartisan method of appointing **Election Commissioners**, so that the referee is not a ministry's guest.

- **Inner-party democracy and registration:** require parties to hold regular elections and to disclose donors above a low threshold if they want the privileges of the Symbols Order.
- **Inclusive franchise:** easier proxy or e-postal voting for service voters and a workable overseas-electors method, plus a common electoral roll for local, State and national polls to cut duplication.

How far they matter for successful democracy

- Success here means competitive, peaceful, and reasonably equal elections whose loser still accepts the count. Criminalisation and cash undermine that more than any missing electronic gadget.
- Charge-sheet disqualification is significant if it is paired with fast-track trials; used alone it can be abused through motivated complaints. The direction is right; the drafting must protect the innocent.
- Party expenditure caps and donor disclosure attack the real budget of Indian elections. Candidate ceilings without party ceilings are a leaky bucket. This is among the highest-yield reforms.
- Paid news and bribery as live offences protect the poor voter whose ballot is bought in kind. Without them, the Model Code is a sermon.
- The totaliser protects secret suffrage in villages where social power reads booth data as a hit list. That is quality of democracy at the polling station, not only in Delhi.
- Institutional independence of the ECI is the reform that makes every other reform enforceable. A weak referee cannot police strong parties.
- **One-seat contest and advertising freeze are modest but clean:** they reduce waste, incumbency abuse, and cynicism.
- Some 2016 ideas later moved in the opposite political direction (for example opaque party funding instruments). That shows significance: the suggestions named the right diseases even when the statute did not always take the Commission's medicine.

Limit of reform lists

- Electoral reform cannot replace inner-party ticket distribution, social cleavage, or the first-past-the-post map. It can still make the contest cleaner.
- Democracy is successful when the ECI's suggestions become law and practice, not when they remain annual memoranda.

Flow diagram

ECI 2016 reform set -> Crime and false affidavit
 ECI 2016 reform set -> Party spend paid news bribery
 ECI 2016 reform set -> Totaliser one seat ad freeze
 ECI 2016 reform set -> Independent ECI secretariat
 Crime and false affidavit -> Cleaner contest
 Party spend paid news bribery -> Cleaner contest
 Independent ECI secretariat -> Cleaner contest

Conclusion

The 2016 reform set aimed at crime, cash, paid news, party finance, booth secrecy, incumbency advertising, and a more independent Commission. Those items are highly significant for a successful democracy because they equalise the voter against fear and money. They work only if Parliament writes them as enforceable law and if the referee stays independent.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2017/to-enhance-the-quality-of-democracy-in-india-the-election-commission-of-india-has-proposed-electoral-reforms-in-2016-what-are-the-suggested-reforms-and-how-far-are-they-significant-to-make-democracy-successful-250-words/>

WRAP Exams

Q15 · 15 marks

Is the National Commission for Women able to strategize and tackle the problems that women face at both public and private spheres? Give reasons in support of your answer. (250 words).

GS II · 2017 · Governance and Policy

Revision summary

NCW is a statutory Commission under the 1990 Act, not a constitutional court.

It can investigate, recommend, inspect custodial places, and support important litigation.

Public-sphere tools (POSH, police, local-body reservation) do the heavy tackling; NCW watches.

Private-sphere harm needs the **Domestic Violence Act**, economic rights and local officers, which NCW cannot command.

It can strategise in both spheres; it cannot adequately tackle either without the executive.

Introduction

The **National Commission** for Women is a statutory body under the **National Commission** for Women Act, 1990. It can inquire, advise, litigate in a limited way, and run awareness. Public-sphere harms are workplaces, streets, police stations and political office. Private-sphere harms are the household, personal law, and unpaid care. The Commission can strategise on both; it cannot, by itself, tackle either with the power of a court or a ministry.

Body

What the Commission can do

- **Section 10** of the 1990 Act lets it investigate deprivation of women's rights, inspect jails and remand homes, fund litigation of a typical importance, and recommend on law and policy.
- It can summon, call for documents, and receive complaints of violence, dowry, workplace harassment, and denial of property or maintenance, which is a national letterbox for both spheres.
- It has used public hearings, research, and draft Bills (for example on trafficking, sexual harassment before the 2013 Act, and parts of criminal law) to set an agenda the government may pick up.
- As a specialised body it can coordinate with **State Commissions** for Women, the police, and the National Legal Services Authority, which is strategy by network, not by command.

Public sphere: partial reach

- Street violence, trafficking, political under-representation, and workplace harassment are public problems. The Commission can shame, recommend POSH compliance, and ask for more women in the force and in tickets.
- It cannot prosecute, cannot pass a budget, and cannot post a Superintendent of Police. Those remain with the criminal system and the executive.
- After Vishaka (1997) and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, the legal tools in the public workplace are stronger than the Commission's own teeth; NCW is a watchdog, not the **Internal Committee**.
- Reservation in local bodies (**Articles 243D and 243T**) did more for public political presence than any NCW circular. The Commission can support that presence; it did not create it.

Private sphere: structural limits

- The family is where most unpaid labour, domestic violence, and personal-law inequality sit. The Protection of Women from **Domestic Violence Act, 2005**, and criminal provisions are the tackling instruments; NCW is a referral and monitoring voice.
- Personal law and the household are politically sensitive. A recommendatory Commission will hesitate, or will be ignored, when reform touches marriage, divorce, guardianship, or the marital home.
- Privacy of the home, social stigma, and economic dependence mean many women never reach a Commission office. Strategy that does not include local protection officers, shelters, and independent income will fail the private sphere.
- NCW has no all-India field army. **State Commissions** are uneven. A Delhi-centred body cannot casework every private harm.

Reasons for a balanced answer

- **Able to strategise:** yes, because statute, visibility, and a complaint mandate let it name problems in both spheres and push model laws.
- **Able to tackle:** only in a weak sense - inquiry, recommendation, and occasional court intervention. Tackling needs police, prosecutors, labour inspectors, and fiscal rights (land, wages, pensions).
- The body is not constitutional, unlike the **National Commission** for Scheduled Castes. Governments can starve it of members, money, and independence, which is why performance swings with political will.
- A honest answer is therefore "strategise, yes; tackle, not adequately, unless the executive and courts carry the load."

Flow diagram

NCW Act 1990 -> Inquire advise recommend
 Inquire advise recommend -> Public sphere work street politics
 Inquire advise recommend -> Private sphere family personal law
 Public sphere work street politics -> Needs police labour law
 Private sphere family personal law -> Needs DV Act shelters property rights

Conclusion

The **National Commission** for Women can strategise on public and private harms through inquiry, draft law, and complaint handling under the 1990 Act. It cannot tackle those harms by itself because it lacks prosecution power, field staff, and control of personal-law or budget reform. It is a necessary watchdog; it is not a substitute for a gender-just State.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2017/is-the-national-commission-for-women-able-to-strategize-and-tackle-the-problems-that-women-face-at-both-public-and-private-spheres-give-reasons-in-support-of-your-answer-250-words/>

Q16 · 15 marks

'The emergence of Self Help Groups(SHG) in contemporary times points to the slow but steady withdrawal of the state from developmental activities'. Examine the role of the SHGs in developmental activities and the measures taken by the Government of India to promote the SHGs. (250 words).

GS II · 2017 · Governance and Policy

Revision summary

SHGs pool savings, access bank credit, and run livelihoods and social campaigns.

They are often the last mile of State missions, not a proof that the State has left development.

NABARD's SHG-Bank Linkage Programme (1992) and DAY-NRLM are the main Union measures.

Interest subvention, priority-sector credit and Jan Dhan support the same architecture.

The quote is half true about changing instruments and false if it means the State may exit public goods.

Introduction

Self Help Groups are small, mostly women's savings-and-credit circles that then take up livelihoods, health, and local public-goods work. Their rise after the 1990s NABARD bank-linkage programme is real. The claim that this rise means the State is withdrawing from development is only half true. SHGs often work as the last mile of State schemes, not as a substitute for the State.

Body

Role of SHGs in developmental activities

- **Thrift and credit:** members save, lend internally, and then borrow from banks as a group. That role cuts the moneylender and builds a credit history for women who had no collateral.
- **Livelihoods:** groups run micro-enterprises, farm aggregation, livestock, and non-farm work. Under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission they are meant to be the organisational unit of poverty reduction, not a hobby circle.
- **Human development:** SHGs have been used for immunisation, sanitation, nutrition (including links with anganwadis), and school attendance, which is social development through peer pressure and local knowledge.
- **Governance:** federations of SHGs sit in gram sabha processes, monitor wages under MGNREGA, and sometimes bid for local contracts. That is voice, which is a developmental outcome.
- **Disaster and inclusion:** groups have channelled relief, bank accounts, and insurance to members faster than a distant block office. They fail when capture by local elites or one caste occurs, or when credit becomes over-indebtedness without a market.

Does emergence mean State withdrawal?

- **The slogan of withdrawal mixes two stories. One is liberalisation:** the State stepped back from some production and subsidy channels. The other is a new public-management story: the State delivers through groups, banks, and missions instead of only through departments.

- Bank linkage, refinance, interest subvention, and NRLM salaries are State money and State design. An SHG that exists because a mission paid a community resource person is not evidence of exit; it is evidence of a changed instrument.
- Where the State has truly thinned - understaffed health centres, weak agricultural extension - SHGs cannot replace doctors or irrigation. Treating groups as a full developmental State is a category error.
- **The better examination is complementary:** SHGs socialise credit and women's agency; the State still owes infrastructure, law, and counter-cyclical welfare (food, work, health).
- If "withdrawal" means less licence-raj production, the statement has a grain of truth. If it means the State may stop funding poverty work because SHGs exist, the statement is false and dangerous.

Measures taken by the Government of India

- **NABARD's SHG-Bank Linkage Programme (from 1992) is the parent financial measure:** groups, then savings, then bank credit without traditional collateral.
- Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana and then **NRLM (2011)**, later DAY-NRLM, made SHGs and their federations the core of rural livelihood policy, with community professionals, revolving funds, and interest subvention.
- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, and earlier RMK-type micro-credit, plus SIDBI and MUDRA channels, widened non-farm credit around the SHG and related micro units.
- Priority-sector tagging of SHG loans, Business Correspondents, and Jan Dhan accounts made the bankable last mile possible.
- Women-centred missions (National Rural Health Mission community processes, **Swachh Bharat** local mobilisation, and State Kudumbashree-type models supported in national learning) used SHGs as implementation partners.
- Legal and regulatory easing for mutually aided cooperatives and for bank agents helped federations operate, though a full SHG law is not the main Union instrument; mission guidelines are.

Examine, then judge the quote

- SHGs are a developmental actor in credit, livelihoods and social norms.
- Their emergence is largely a State-promoted strategy. That is reconfiguration of the State, not a quiet goodbye.

Flow diagram

SHG savings credit -> Livelihoods NRLM
 SHG savings credit -> Health sanitation education
 GoI measures -> NABARD bank linkage
 GoI measures -> DAY-NRLM subvention
 NABARD bank linkage -> SHG savings credit
 DAY-NRLM subvention -> Livelihoods NRLM

Conclusion

SHGs matter in development as savings-credit groups, livelihood platforms, and local monitors, especially for rural women. The Government of India promoted them through NABARD linkage, NRLM/DAY-NRLM, interest subvention and bank inclusion. Their rise does not prove a steady withdrawal of the State; it shows the State working through groups. Withdrawal is a risk only if missions replace, rather than complement, public goods.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2017/the-emergence-of-self-help-groups-shgs-in-contemporary-times-points-to-the-slow-but-steady-withdrawal-of-the-state-from-developmental-activities-examine-the-role-of-the-shgs-in-developmental-activities-and-the-measures/>

WRAP Exams

Q17 · 15 marks

'Poverty Alleviation Programmes in India remain mere show pieces until and unless they are backed by political will'. Discuss with reference to the performance of the major poverty alleviation programmes in India. (250 words).

GS II · 2017 · Poverty and Hunger

Revision summary

Political will is timely money, last-mile staff, and protection of the poor against local capture.

IRDP/SGSY often looked like showpieces because assets and targeting failed.

MGNREGA and NFSA/PDS work where States own them and fail where they are starved.

PMGSY and rural housing show that visible, ring-fenced assets can perform better than fuzzy subsidies.

The quote is mostly right; design still matters alongside will.

Introduction

Poverty alleviation in India is a stack of wage, food, asset, housing and livelihood programmes, not one scheme. Political will means budgets on time, staff at the last mile, honest targeting, and a willingness to let the poor enforce rights against the local powerful. Without that will, even a well-drafted law becomes a board on a wall. Performance of the major programmes shows both the cost of missing will and the gain when will appears.

Body

Why political will sits at the centre

- Poverty is local power as much as missing income. A programme that threatens contractors, ration dealers, or land-controllers needs protection from the top and from the law, not only a guideline PDF.
- Federal finance, State capacity, and panchayat agency all depend on parties treating the poor as a constituency worth angering other lobbies for.
- Showpiece means a launch, a logo, and a thin evaluation. Will means social audits that sting, vacancies filled, and delays punished.

Major programmes and their performance

- Integrated Rural Development Programme and later SGSY mixed assets and subsidy. Leakage, poor asset quality, and one-off cattle-and-pump stories made them easy to call showpieces. Will failed at selection and follow-up, not only at the [Planning Commission](#).
- [MGNREGA \(2005\)](#) is the test case of will. Where States paid wages on time, opened works in peak distress, and allowed social audits, rural poverty and distress migration eased. Where funds were throttled, works delayed, and audits blocked, it became a notice-board right. Performance tracks political ownership more than the text of the Act.
- Public Distribution System and then the [National Food Security Act, 2013](#), cut hunger where States ran e-PoS, sealed leaks, and expanded coverage; they failed where cards were missing and grain was diverted. The same central law, different State will.
- National Rural Livelihoods Mission and SHG credit work when federations are not captured and when markets exist. Without will, revolving funds stop at the book.

- Housing (Indira Awaas, then PMAY-G) and rural roads (PMGSY) show that engineering programmes with ring-fenced money and visible assets often outperform fuzzy "beneficiary" subsidy schemes - partly because roads and houses are harder to hide, which is a kind of built-in will.
- Urban missions (earlier SJSRY, then NULM, and housing for the urban poor) lagged because urban poor votes are fragmented and municipal capacity is weak. Under-performance here is political geography, not a mystery of design.
- Direct Benefit Transfer, Aadhaar seeding, and Jan Dhan reduced some ghost leakage and created new exclusion errors. Technology is not will; it can serve will or decorate its absence.

Discussing the quote

- The quote is largely right for IRDP-type subsidy and for any right-based Act that the treasury starves.
- **It is too sweeping if it ignores design:** a badly targeted scheme can fail even with speeches of will, and a simple infrastructure scheme can succeed with boring bureaucratic continuity.
- Best performance has come when law, finance, and local organisation align - MGNREGA plus PDS in committed States, PMGSY nationwide, NFSA in reforming States.
- Political will must also mean the will to measure poverty honestly and to accept that growth, health, and education are poverty policy, not only named "alleviation" yojanas.

What would make programmes more than showpieces

- Statutory rights with time-bound wages and food, independent social audit, and panchayat control of plans.
- Stable, on-budget finance rather than year-end rushes.
- **Convergence:** livelihood, housing, health and work on the same poor household, which needs a ministry that can lose turf.

Flow diagram

Political will -> Budget staff audit
 Budget staff audit -> MGNREGA NFSA NRLM
 Budget staff audit -> PMGSY PMAY
 No will -> Showpiece leakage delay
 MGNREGA NFSA NRLM -> Poverty reduction
 Showpiece leakage delay -> Persistent poverty

Conclusion

Major poverty programmes perform when political will funds them, staffs them, and defends the poor against local capture, as seen in better MGNREGA and PDS States and in visible assets like PMGSY. They remain showpieces when subsidy lists, delayed wages, and starved rights laws meet a silent treasury. The quote is a fair diagnosis of Indian poverty policy, provided design quality is not ignored.

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Q18 · 15 marks

Initially Civil Services in India were designed to achieve the goals of neutrality and effectiveness, which seems to be lacking in the present context. Do you agree with the view that drastic reforms are required in Civil Services. Comment (250 words).

GS II · 2017 · Civil Services in a Democracy

Revision summary

Civil services were meant to be merit-recruited, politically neutral, and administratively effective.

Politicised transfers, oral orders and skill gaps now weaken both goals.

T.S.R. Subramanian (2013) and ARC reports asked for stable tenure and a Civil Services Board.

Lateral entry and capacity missions help if they do not become patronage.

Drastic reform of personnel systems is due; drastic politicisation is not.

Introduction

- **The Indian Civil Service was built as a neutral, merit-based steel frame:** recruit by examination, serve any lawful government, and deliver administration across a continent. Neutrality means the file follows the Constitution and the law, not the party. Effectiveness means the State can actually build, regulate, and include. Both are under strain from politicised postings, outdated skills, and a culture of delay. Drastic reform is needed in some parts of the system; wrecking tenure and impartiality in the name of reform would be the wrong drama.

Body

Design: neutrality and effectiveness

- **Sardar Patel's** argument in the Constituent Assembly was an All-India Service that would hold the Union together and speak truth to ministers within the cabinet system.
- Neutrality was institutionalised through UPSC recruitment, security of tenure in principle, a written code of conduct, and the idea of anonymous, reasoned notings.
- **Effectiveness was the generalist who could run a district:** law and order, revenue, and development in one office, which matched a poor, newly independent State.

What is lacking now

- Posting, transfer and suspension are used as rewards and punishments. A collector who fears a midnight transfer cannot be neutral or effective.
- The **Second Administrative Reforms Commission**, Hota and other committees documented delay, rule-obsession, weak domain knowledge, and poor accountability for outcomes.
- Coalition and intense media cycles increased ministerial pressure. A "committed bureaucracy" slogan from some political quarters collides with the constitutional duty to the lawful government of the day, not to a faction.
- Effectiveness gaps are real in regulation, urban management, digital public goods, and climate and health logistics - fields where a purely generalist rotation under-prepares officers.
- **Neutrality is also hurt from inside:** partisan social-media conduct, and a comfort with informal oral orders that leave no file.

Do drastic reforms follow?

- Agree that status quo is not enough. Recruitment still works better than many countries'; the crisis is after recruitment - tenure, skill, and political-bureaucratic bargain.
- **Needed reforms that are drastic in effect but constitutional in spirit:** a Civil Services Board for postings as the Supreme Court indicated in [T.S.R. Subramanian \(2013\)](#); fixed minimum tenures; protection against oral instructions without written follow-up; and real performance appraisal linked to outcomes, not only to ACR loyalty.
- Lateral entry at senior levels for scarce skills can raise effectiveness if UPSC-like integrity and cooling-off rules apply. If lateral entry becomes a political side door, neutrality dies.
- Mission Karmayogi-type capacity building, mid-career exams, and specialist streams inside the service are reform, not revolution.
- Local government cadres, genuine devolution, and fewer parallel "mission" societies would make the district effective again; that is structural, not cosmetic.
- **What should not be drastic:** replacing UPSC with patronage, contractualising the entire district magistracy, or legally commanding officers to be ideologically committed. That would copy the disease.

Comment, with a measured yes

- Neutrality and effectiveness are lacking in important pockets, not in every officer and every State.
- Drastic reform of personnel management, tenure, and skills is justified.
- Drastic politicisation dressed as reform is not. The steel frame was meant to bend to the Constitution, not to break with every election.

Flow diagram

Design UPSC neutrality -> Strain transfers politics
 Strain transfers politics -> Tenure Civil Services Board
 Strain transfers politics -> Skills lateral entry training
 Tenure Civil Services Board -> Restore neutrality
 Skills lateral entry training -> Restore effectiveness

Conclusion

The civil services were designed for neutrality and effectiveness; politicised transfers and skill lags have damaged both. The view that drastic reforms are required is right for tenure, postings, accountability and specialist capacity, as courts and ARC reports have said. It is wrong if drastic means a committed, patronage service. Reform the frame; do not melt it.

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Q19 · 15 marks

The question of India's Energy Security constitutes the most important part of India's economic progress. Analyze India's energy policy cooperation with West Asian Countries. (250 words).

GS II · 2017 · India and its Neighbourhood

Revision summary

India's growth is exposed to imported oil; West Asia remains the nearest large hydrocarbon shelf.

Cooperation with Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the UAE, Kuwait and Qatar covers crude, LNG, storage and investment.

Iran offers geography and barrels but is constrained by sanctions and stalled pipelines.

Look West diplomacy, SPR, and Gulf capital in Indian energy widen the relationship beyond tankers.

Domestic efficiency and fuel diversification must accompany Gulf diplomacy.

Introduction

Energy security for India means enough oil, gas, and later cleaner fuels, at a bearable price, through routes that cannot be easily cut. West Asia - the Gulf, Iraq, Iran, and their neighbours - still supplies a large share of India's crude and a rising share of LNG. Economic progress that needs factories, farms, and cities therefore runs through Hormuz and through political relationships in that region. Cooperation is commercial, diplomatic, and increasingly strategic.

Body

Why West Asia sits inside India's growth story

- India imports most of its oil. A shock in the Gulf raises the import bill, the current-account gap, and inflation, which can stall investment.
- The same region hosts millions of Indian workers whose remittances support households and foreign exchange. Energy policy and diaspora policy share a map.
- **Diversification to the Atlantic, Russia, or the United States does not erase geography:** tanker days from the Gulf remain short, and refining configurations still like Gulf grades.

Cooperation on oil and gas

- Long-term crude relationships with Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and others give volume and, at times, deferred payment or storage deals. Iraq and Saudi Arabia have been among the top suppliers in many recent years.
- The UAE and India have moved beyond spot cargoes to strategic petroleum storage on Indian soil and investment in each other's energy firms, which is policy cooperation, not only a purchase order.
- Qatar has been central to LNG; other Gulf producers are adding gas and petrochemicals to the basket as India switches some power and industry from oil and coal.
- Iran was a nearby, often cheaper, barrel and a gas-pipeline hope (IPI). Sanctions, the stalled pipeline, and delayed fields such as Farzad-B show that cooperation with Tehran is real on paper and fragile in the banking and insurance world.

- **Downstream:** Indian firms have sought stakes in producing fields and in Gulf refining and chemicals, while Gulf sovereign capital has looked at Indian fuel retail and infrastructure.

Beyond barrels: the policy frame

- Look West / Think West diplomacy treats the Gulf as a strategic neighbourhood, not only an oil well: counter-terror, sea lanes, and food-for-energy packages.
- **Chabahar in Iran is connectivity as energy-adjacent policy:** a port that can move goods and, in a wider design, support access to Afghan and Central Asian energy spaces, if sanctions allow.
- The International North-South Transport Corridor and talks on a Gulf-India corridor (rail and shipping via the UAE and then west) aim to shorten supply chains that include energy equipment and petrochemicals.
- **Renewable cooperation is the new chapter:** Gulf capital in Indian solar, and Indian firms in Gulf clean-energy zones, so that energy security is not only hydrocarbons.
- Strategic petroleum reserves, joint naval awareness in the Arabian Sea, and evacuation planning (as in past Gulf crises) are security tools of energy policy.

Constraints and analysis

- **Hormuz risk, intra-Gulf rivalries, and US-Iran tension mean Indian policy must multi-home:** Saudi and Iran, UAE and Qatar, Iraq despite its politics.
- Price is set in a world market. Bilateral friendship does not abolish OPEC+ maths; it can only win cargo priority, investment, and storage.
- Domestic reform - efficiency, biofuels, electric mobility, coal-to-clean transition - is the other half of energy security. West Asia cooperation cannot substitute demand restraint.
- **The analysis is therefore:** West Asia is necessary to Indian growth; cooperation is deepest with the GCC plus Iraq, cautious with Iran, and increasingly mixed with renewables and investment, not only crude.

Flow diagram

Indian energy security -> GCC Iraq crude LNG
 Indian energy security -> Iran barrels Chabahar
 Indian energy security -> SPR investment renewables
 GCC Iraq crude LNG -> Hormuz sea lanes
 Iran barrels Chabahar -> Hormuz sea lanes
 SPR investment renewables -> Growth with less shock

Conclusion

India's economic progress still depends on secure Gulf oil and gas at a manageable price, so energy policy cooperation with West Asia is a core external economic policy. It now includes long-term crude and LNG, storage and equity stakes, Iran's difficult but logical geography, and a growing clean-energy investment track. The cooperation works when India diversifies suppliers and fuels at home while keeping every Gulf door open.

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Q20 · 15 marks

Indian Diaspora has an important role to play in South-East Asian countries' economy and society. Appraise the role of Indian Diaspora in South- East Asia in this context (250 words).

GS II · 2017 · Diaspora and Developed Countries

Revision summary

South-East Asia's Indian communities are old (Malaya, Burma) and also professional and expatriate.

Economic roles include professions, SME trade, historical Chettiar credit, and a bridge for Indian firms.

Socially, Tamil in Singapore, festivals and religious institutions mark multicultural public life.

Myanmar shows how nationalism can shrink an Indian economic role.

India should appraise them as Act East partners, not as a controllable lobby.

Introduction

- **South-East Asia holds some of the oldest Indian overseas communities:** Tamils and other Indians in Malaysia and Singapore, a long trading presence in Indonesia and Thailand, and a complicated Indian-origin story in Myanmar. Appraisal means weighing economic weight, social-cultural presence, and political limits. The diaspora is important to those countries' markets and plural societies, and it is an asset for India's Act East policy, but it is not a replica of the American Indian professional lobby.

Body**Who the South-East Asian Indian diaspora is**

- Colonial-era labour and clerical migration produced large Tamil and other Indian communities in Malaya (now Malaysia and Singapore) and in Burma/Myanmar. Chettiar and other merchant groups financed trade and agriculture.
- Post-independence professionals, teachers, and later IT and service workers added a skilled layer in Singapore, Malaysia, and, in smaller numbers, in Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines.
- **The community is internally diverse:** plantation descendants, urban merchants, professionals, and newer expatriates on work passes. Appraisal must not flatten them into one "PIO success" story.

Economic role in host countries

- In Malaysia and Singapore, Indian-origin citizens are visible in professions, public services, retail, and increasingly in tech and finance. Singapore's Indian community punches above its population share in law, medicine, and the civil service.
- Historical Chettiar credit and Indian trading networks linked South-East Asian rice, rubber and textiles to the Bay of Bengal. That older role shaped ports and bazaars even where later nationalism squeezed Indian capital (notably Myanmar after the 1960s).
- Remittances, tourism, and Indian restaurants, cinema and festivals are small as a share of ASEAN GDP but dense in urban social markets.
- Newer Indian firms in ASEAN - IT, pharma, energy, and infrastructure - use diaspora managers and trust networks as a market-entry layer. That is economy as bridge, not only as shopkeeping.

- In Myanmar, expropriation, citizenship fights, and later political crisis reduced the old Indian business role; the appraisal must record decline as well as glory.

Social and cultural role

- Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian Indian institutions, temples, gurdwaras and Tamil schools are part of Malaysia's and Singapore's multicultural public square.
- **Language:** Tamil is an official language in Singapore, which is a rare constitutional honour for a diaspora tongue and a social fact of the city-state.
- Indian cinema, food, yoga and festivals (Deepavali as a public holiday in some States of Malaysia and in Singapore) shape everyday pluralism. Soft power here is lived locally, not only beamed from India.
- **Social tension is also real:** race politics in Malaysia, occasional anti-Indian rhetoric, and the Rohingya and citizenship crises in Myanmar that have trapped or expelled people of Indian origin. A diaspora can be a scapegoat as well as a bridge.

Appraisal for India and for ASEAN

- For host economies, the diaspora supplies skills, small and medium enterprise, and a link to India's demand. It is important, not dominant, beside Chinese business networks and indigenous majorities.
- For Indian foreign policy, PIOs and NRIs in ASEAN support trade, student flows, and a friendly public, which is why PBD-style outreach and consular work matter.
- **Limits:** most Indian-origin citizens owe political loyalty to Kuala Lumpur or Singapore, not to New Delhi. India cannot "use" them as a vote bank abroad without harming them.
- Compared with the Gulf, this diaspora is more settled and citizen; compared with North America, it is less of a high-technology lobby and more of a historical minority. Appraisal should stay in that middle.

Balanced judgment

- The role is historically deep, economically useful, and socially visible in Malaysia and Singapore; thinner but growing in mainland ASEAN; wounded in Myanmar.
- Importance is real and should be cultivated as people-to-people Act East, not as a claim that South-East Asia's economy runs on the Indian diaspora.

Flow diagram

Indian diaspora in SEA -> Skills trade SME
 Indian diaspora in SEA -> Tamil culture temples festivals
 Indian diaspora in SEA -> Act East people bridge
 Malaysia Singapore -> Skills trade SME
 Malaysia Singapore -> Tamil culture temples festivals
 Myanmar limits -> Citizenship expropriation

Conclusion

The Indian diaspora in South-East Asia matters to host economies as skills, trade networks and small enterprise, and to host societies as a long-standing plural community, especially in Singapore and Malaysia. Its role is uneven, politically bounded, and in Myanmar historically damaged. Appraisal for India is to treat this settled presence as an Act East people-bridge, not as an overseas electorate or a substitute for State-to-State economic policy.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2017/indian-diaspora-has-an-important-role-to-play-in-south-east-asian-countries-economy-and-society-appraise-the-role-of-indian-diaspora-in-south-east-asia-in-this-context-250-words/>

Compiled answer key

Last pages of this pack. Each question links to the WRAP model answer on wrapexams.com.

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Q1 10 marks	Q2 10 marks	Q3 10 marks	Q4 10 marks
Q5 10 marks	Q6 10 marks	Q7 10 marks	Q8 10 marks
Q9 10 marks	Q10 10 marks	Q11 15 marks	Q12 15 marks
Q13 15 marks	Q14 15 marks	Q15 15 marks	Q16 15 marks
Q17 15 marks	Q18 15 marks	Q19 15 marks	Q20 15 marks

Question-wise key

Q1 · 10 marks Solution

Q2 · 10 marks Solution

Q3 · 10 marks Solution

Q4 · 10 marks Solution

Q5 · 10 marks Solution

Q6 · 10 marks Solution

Q7 · 10 marks Solution

Q8 · 10 marks Solution

Q9 · 10 marks Solution

Q10 · 10 marks Solution

Q11 · 15 marks Solution

Q12 · 15 marks Solution

Q13 · 15 marks Solution

Q14 · 15 marks Solution

Q15 · 15 marks Solution

Q16 · 15 marks Solution

Q17 · 15 marks Solution

Q18 · 15 marks Solution

Q19 · 15 marks Solution

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