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UPSC Mains 2020 GS II

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

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<https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains/gs-2/2020/>

Q1 · 10 marks

"There is a need for simplification of procedure for disqualification of persons found guilty of corrupt practices under the Representation of peoples Act" Comment.

GS II · 2020 · Governance and Policy

Revision summary

Corrupt practices are listed in **Section 123** of the **Representation of the People Act, 1951**.

Election petitions in the High Court and **Section 8A** disqualification by the President after the **Election Commission's** opinion are separate, slow tracks.

A member can sit through much of a term while the petition and the 8A file move.

Lily Thomas made conviction-based disqualification immediate; the corrupt-practice route was not similarly tightened.

Time-bound petitions and a single visible disqualification consequence would match the Act's purpose.

Introduction

Corrupt practice under the **Representation of the People Act, 1951**, is meant to keep a tainted candidate out of the House. The procedure that converts a High Court finding into actual disqualification is slow, split across forums, and easy to game with appeals. Simplification is therefore a democratic need, not a drafting nicety.

Body

What the law already does

- **Section 123 of the RPA lists corrupt practices:** bribery, undue influence, appeal to religion or caste, booth capture, and expenditure beyond the prescribed limit.
- An election petition under **Sections 80-100** lies in the High Court; if the returned candidate is found guilty, the election can be declared void.
- Separate from the petition, **Section 8A** lets the President disqualify a person found guilty of a corrupt practice, after the opinion of the **Election Commission**, for a period that the Commission recommends.
- **Section 8**, by contrast, is the criminal-conviction route that **Lily Thomas v. Union of India (2013)** made immediate upon a two-year-plus sentence, which is why the corrupt-practice track

looks even slower beside it.

Why the procedure needs simplification

- An election petition can run past a large part of the five-year term; a member who sits while the case crawls enjoys the fruits of the very practice the Act condemns.
- The High Court finding, the President's order, and the Commission's opinion are three clocks; stay orders and adjournments multiply them.
- Voters, rival candidates, and the Commission cannot read a single timeline; complexity itself becomes a shield.
- Model Code and expenditure cases often die as technical disputes rather than as clean findings of corrupt practice.

What simplification should look like

- A statutory outer limit for election petitions, with day-to-day hearing as the Supreme Court has already urged in principle.
- One disqualification consequence that follows a confirmed finding of corrupt practice, without a long second round unless a constitutional court stays it for recorded reasons.
- Publish the **Section 8A** calendar so the President-Commission step is not an invisible file.
- **Recommendation:** treat corrupt practice as seriously as the Lily Thomas conviction rule, or the RPA's moral claim remains a paper threat.

Flow diagram

s.123 corrupt practice -> High Court election petition
 High Court election petition -> Election void
 High Court election petition -> EC opinion s.8A opinion s.8A
 EC opinion s.8A -> President disqualifies
 Delay and stays -> President disqualifies

Conclusion

The RPA already names corrupt practices and gives High Courts and the President tools to disqualify. The procedure is too fragmented and slow for those tools to bite inside one Lok Sabha term. Simplification - time-bound petitions and a single, visible disqualification follow-through - is needed if the Act is to protect the purity of elections rather than the sitting member.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2020/there-is-a-need-for-simplification-of-procedure-for-disqualification-of-persons-found-guilty-of-corrupt-practices-under-the-representation-of-people-s-act-comment/>

Q2 · 10 marks

"Recent amendments to the Right to information Act will have profound impact on the autonomy and independence of the Information Commission". Discuss.

GS II · 2020 · Indian Constitution

Revision summary

The 2005 Act gave CIC and ICs a five-year term and CEC-equivalent salary as a tenure-and-status guarantee.

The RTI (Amendment) Act, 2019, left term and pay to Central Government rules and dropped the no-disadvantage clause.

State Commissioners' conditions also sit with the Centre, which federalises control over a State appellate.

Appointment collegium was not the main target; security of tenure after appointment was.

Autonomy suffers when the executive that is a frequent respondent also writes the Commissioner's service rules.

Introduction

The Right to Information Act, 2005, made the Central and State Information Commissions the appellate spine of a statutory right. The RTI (Amendment) Act, 2019, shifted tenure, salary, and status of Commissioners from the parent Act to Central rules. That is a profound design change for autonomy, even if the Commission still exists on paper.

Body

What the 2005 Act had locked

- The Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners held office for five years or until sixty-five, with salary aligned to the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners.
- Status parity with a constitutional election body was the political signal that the Commission was not a departmental tribunal.
- Conditions of service could not be varied to the incumbent's disadvantage after appointment, which is a classic independence clause.

What the 2019 amendment did

- Term of office is now such as the Central Government may prescribe; five years is no longer in the Act.
- Salaries, allowances, and other conditions of CIC, ICs, and State Commissioners are likewise as prescribed by the Centre.
- The disadvantage-variation shield and CEC-equivalent rank were removed from the statute, so the Union can rewrite the package by rule.

Impact on autonomy and independence

- A Commissioner whose term and pay sit in executive rules has a weaker incentive to pass orders that embarrass the same executive that writes those rules.
- State Information Commissions, already uneven in vacancies and pendency, now look to Delhi for service conditions, which cuts a federal nerve in a State-level transparency body.

- Anjali Bhardwaj and other transparency campaigns argued that the amendment subordinates the Commission to the Department of Personnel; the Union argued flexibility and that **RTI Commissions** are statutory, not constitutional, bodies.
- Independence is not only appointment (the Prime Minister-Leader of Opposition-Cabinet Minister collegium remains). It is also security of tenure after appointment; 2019 hit the second pillar.
- **Recommendation:** restore statutory tenure and a salary peg in the Act, and fill vacancies, or the 2005 right will be enforced by a timid appellate.

Flow diagram

RTI Act 2005 -> Five-year term CEC rank
Five-year term CEC rank -> Independent Commission
2019 amendment -> Central rules on term and pay
Central rules on term and pay -> Weaker autonomy

Conclusion

The 2019 amendments leave the RTI right intact as text but move the Commission's term and pay into Central rules. That is a profound impact on autonomy because independence after appointment is what lets a Commissioner order disclosure against the government of the day. A statutory commission that lives on executive patronage is an appellate in name.

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Q3 · 10 marks

How far do you think cooperation, competition and confrontation have shaped the nature of federation in India? Cite some recent examples to validate your answer.

GS II · 2020 · Governance and Policy

Revision summary

Cooperation runs through the GST Council, All-India Services and disaster law.

Competition appears in investment races and NITI-style indices after higher tax devolution.

Confrontation shows in CBI consent withdrawals, GST compensation fights and 2020 farm-law resistance.

Delhi's LG-government dispute is executive confrontation inside a Union Territory with a legislature.

Indian federalism is all three at once; no single word captures 2014-20 practice.

Introduction

Indian federalism is not a frozen list of **Articles 245-263**. It is a daily mix of cooperation in shared subjects, competition for investment and rankings, and confrontation when party and fiscal interests collide. All three have shaped the Union of States, especially after coalition decline and GST.

Body

Cooperation

- **The GST Council under Article 279A is cooperative federalism in a fiscal form:** Union and States vote on rates and the compensation bargain.
- All-India Services, the Inter-State Council, and disaster response under the **Disaster Management Act, 2005**, force joint working even when governments differ.
- **NITI Aayog** replaced the **Planning Commission's** one-way plan with a think-tank and index culture; the cooperative claim is consultation, though States still contest the Union's agenda-setting.
- **COVID-19 in 2020 showed both:** States ran hospitals and lockdowns; the Union used the **Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897**, and the DM Act as national frames.

Competition

- Competitive federalism is visible in ease-of-doing-business tables, health and education indices, and States bidding for electronics and automobile plants.
- The **Fourteenth Finance Commission's** 42 per cent devolution widened untied space in which States could compete on their own priorities.
- Competition is healthy when it raises service delivery; it is hollow when rankings hide the Union's hold on cesses and CSS design.

Confrontation

- GST compensation delay, CBI general-consent withdrawals by Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal, and the 2020 farm-law protests (States such as Punjab legislating against the Union package) are confrontation inside the same Constitution.

- **Article 356** is rarer than in the 1970s-80s, but Lieutenant Governor versus elected government in Delhi, and Governor-government friction in several States, keep a confrontational executive federalism alive.
- The Supreme Court's NCT Delhi line on collaborative federalism is itself a judicial attempt to civilise confrontation.

How far they have shaped the federation

- Cooperation built the working machinery; competition changed the language of reform; confrontation decides the political limits of the Centre. India's federation is cooperative in design, competitive in growth politics, and confrontational whenever a strong Union meets Opposition States.

Flow diagram

Cooperation GST disaster AIS -> Indian federation

Competition indices investment -> Indian federation

Confrontation CBI farm GST dues -> Indian federation

Conclusion

- **Cooperation, competition and confrontation have jointly shaped Indian federalism:** GST and disaster law as joint work, indices and investment as State rivalry, and consent, compensation and farm laws as conflict. The nature of the federation is therefore a moving bargain, not a single adjective.

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Q4 · 10 marks

The judicial systems in India and UK seem to be converging as well as diverging in the recent times. Highlight the key points of convergence and divergence between the two nations in terms of their judicial practices.

GS II · 2020 · Governance and Policy

Revision summary

Both systems are common-law, precedent-based, and now fronted by a public Supreme Court.

The UK's 2009 **Supreme Court and Human Rights Act** moved it toward India's rights-review look.

India can strike down statutes and even test amendments against basic structure; the UK cannot.

- **Appointments diverge:** JAC in Britain, collegium in India after NJAC fell in 2015.

PIL and a written Constitution keep Indian judicial practice more managerial of the executive.

Introduction

India inherited the common-law court, the adversarial trial, and a professional Bar from Britain. In recent decades the two systems have moved closer on a Supreme Court as a public institution and on rights review, and further apart on who appoints judges and whether Parliament is supreme. Convergence and divergence are both real.

Body

Convergence

- The **UK Constitutional Reform Act, 2005**, and the **UK Supreme Court (2009)** separated the highest appeal from the House of Lords, which looks more like India's distinct Supreme Court under **Articles 124-147**.
- An independent **Judicial Appointments Commission** in the UK and India's declared commitment to judicial independence are the same family of concern, even if the machinery differs.
- **Human Rights Act, 1998**, in the UK and India's long **Article 21** expansion both made rights a daily judicial practice, not only a political gift.
- Both systems use common-law reasoning, precedent, and a strong culture of judicial review of executive action.
- Open judgments, live streaming experiments, and a public-facing apex court are a shared twenty-first-century style.

Divergence

- **Parliamentary sovereignty remains the UK's first principle:** courts may issue a declaration of incompatibility under the HRA; they do not strike down a primary Act as India does under **Articles 13 and 32**.
- India has a written Constitution, basic structure (Kesavananda Bharati, 1973), and PIL; the UK has no equivalent constituent document or social-action docket of the Bandhua Mukti / MC Mehta type.
- **Appointments:** UK JAC and Lord Chancellor process versus India's collegium after the Three Judges Cases and the striking down of NJAC in Supreme Court Advocates-on-**Record Association (2015)**.

- India combines a Union Supreme Court with High Courts as constitutional courts; the UK's devolution jurisdictions (Scotland, Northern Ireland) are a different map.
- Contempt, court-pack size, and the political heat of the collegium have no full UK twin.

Key point

- They converge as professional common-law apex courts that check the executive. They diverge because India is a constitutional state with judicial supremacy over amendments' basic structure, while the UK remains a parliamentary state with a new but still bounded Supreme Court.

Flow diagram

Common law Bar review -> Convergence
UK SC 2009 HRA SC 2009 HRA -> Convergence
Art 13 PIL basic structure -> Divergence
Collegium versus JAC -> Divergence

Conclusion

Recent times pulled India and the UK together in having a visible Supreme Court and a rights-based review of government. They pulled apart on appointments, PIL, and the power to invalidate primary legislation. The shared common-law skin now covers two different constitutional bodies.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2020/the-judicial-systems-in-india-and-uk-seem-to-be-converging-as-well-as-diverging-in-the-recent-times-highlight-the-key-points-of-convergence-and-divergence-between-the-two-nations-in-terms-of-their-judicial-practices/>

Q5 · 10 marks

"Once a speaker, Always a speaker"! Do you think the practice should be adopted to impart objectivity to the office of the Speaker of Lok Sabha? What could be its implications for the robust functioning of parliamentary business in India.

GS II · 2020 · Parliament and State Legislatures

Revision summary

The UK Speaker leaves party combat; India elects a majority Speaker who remains in the party stream.

Tenth Schedule adjudication and Money Bill certification are where a partisan Chair most hurts the House.

A neutrality convention plus no post-Chair ministry would aid objectivity.

Defection petitions should leave the Speaker if the office is to be believed.

Robust parliamentary business needs a trusted referee, not only a new slogan.

Introduction

The British convention that a Speaker, once elected, leaves party combat and is often returned unopposed is a device for chair neutrality. India's Lok Sabha Speaker is elected under **Article 93** from the ruling majority and returns to party life after the Chair. Adopting 'once a Speaker, always a Speaker' would help objectivity, but it would not by itself fix anti-defection and House-management problems.

Body

Why the UK practice looks attractive

- A Speaker who will not seek a ministerial future from the same party has less incentive to tilt Question Hour, gag debates, or rush money bills.
- Unopposed return in the constituency, where it holds, reduces the need to please the party machine at the next election.
- **Objectivity of the Chair is a condition of robust parliamentary business:** opposition time, adjournment motions, and committee referrals only work if the referee is believed.

Indian constraints

- The **Tenth Schedule** makes the Speaker the first tribunal on defection; **Kihoto Hollohan (1992)** left that with judicial review only at the end. A party Speaker judging party splits is the structural wound, as Karnataka 2019 and earlier Assembly crises showed.
- Money Bill certification (Aadhaar in Lok Sabha, later scrutinised in K.S. Puttaswamy / Roger Mathew debates) showed how a partisan Chair can shrink Rajya Sabha.
- Coalition arithmetic and a hung House make a permanently non-party Speaker harder to elect without a cross-party deal that India has rarely institutionalised.

Should India adopt it - and implications

- **Yes, as a parliamentary convention plus a statute or rules amendment:** Speaker resigns party membership; no ministerial office afterwards; defection petitions go to an independent tribunal.

- **Implications for robust business:** more credible Question Hour, fewer walkouts over 'bias', and a cleaner separation of the Chair from the whip.
- **Risks:** a lifetime-style Speaker in a young democracy could freeze a House culture; constituency unopposed returns need all-party honour, not a one-sided diktat.
- **Recommendation:** import the neutrality ethic and remove defection adjudication from the Speaker; do not expect British social convention to transplant without rules.

Flow diagram

UK Speaker convention Speaker convention -> Party-neutral Chair
Art 93 plus Tenth Schedule -> Party Speaker
Party Speaker -> Defection and Money Bill tilt
Party-neutral Chair -> Robust House business

Conclusion

'Once a Speaker, always a Speaker' should be adopted in spirit because objectivity of the Lok Sabha Chair is a public good. Its implication for robust business is a trusted referee. Without taking defection cases off the Speaker's table, the slogan alone will not de-party the office.

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Q6 · 10 marks

In order to enhance the prospects of social development, sound and adequate health care policies are needed particularly in the fields of geriatric and maternal health care. Discuss.

GS II · 2020 · Health, Education and Human Resources

Revision summary

Maternal and geriatric care are social-development policies because they protect households at birth and in old age.

JSY, JSSK, PMSMA and LaQshya improved institutional delivery; anaemia and quality gaps remain.

NPHCE and the 2007 senior-citizens Act are the geriatric frame; home and palliative care are still thin.

Ayushman Bharat can help only if Health and Wellness Centres actually deliver continuum care.

Adequacy is staff, blood, referral and long-term care, not logos alone.

Introduction

Social development is longer, healthier, and more equal lives, not only a rising GDP. Maternal survival decides whether a household stays out of medical poverty; geriatric care decides whether an ageing society remains dignified. Sound policy in both fields is therefore a development instrument.

Body

Why these two fields

- **Maternal health is the inter-generational hinge:** anaemia, unsafe delivery, and missing postnatal care transmit poverty and lost schooling.
- **Geriatric health is the new demographic fact:** longevity without pensions, joint families thinning, and non-communicable disease make old age a social-development risk, not a private family matter.
- **Article 47** and the National Health Policy, 2017, already treat health as a public commitment; adequacy means money, staff, and protocols, not a scheme logo.

Maternal health - what exists and what sound policy adds

- RMNCH+A, Janani Suraksha Yojana, Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram, Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan, and LaQshya target institutional delivery, free drugs, and labour-room quality.
- NFHS and SRS still show high anaemia, high C-section in private care, and wide State gaps; adequacy means midwives, blood, referral transport, and respectful maternity care, not only a delivery count.
- Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres can hold antenatal and postnatal work if they are staffed; PM-JAY covers hospitalisation but not the whole maternal continuum.

Geriatric health

- National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly, dedicated OPD and some regional geriatric centres, and the **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007**, are

the thin legal-policy frame.

- NCD screening, palliative care, dementia, and home-based care are still urban-scarce; social development fails if the elderly only meet casualty wards.

- **Recommendation:** link NPHCE to Health and Wellness Centres, geriatrics in MBBS and nursing, and a public long-term-care conversation that India has postponed.

Together

- A society that loses mothers in labour and warehouses the old has not socially developed. Health policy is the bridge.

Flow diagram

Maternal RMNCH+A JSY -> Social development

Geriatric NPHCE NCD -> Social development

HWC and PM-JAY -> Maternal RMNCH+A JSY

HWC and PM-JAY -> Geriatric NPHCE NCD

Conclusion

Sound and adequate maternal and geriatric policies raise social development by protecting two ends of the life course. India has NHM schemes and a named elderly programme; adequacy still means staff, continuum of care, and State-level closing of NFHS gaps, not only insurance cards.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2020/in-order-to-enhance-the-prospects-of-social-development-sound-and-adequate-health-care-policies-are-needed-particularly-in-the-fields-of-geriatric-and-maternal-health-care-discuss/>

Q7 · 10 marks

"Institutional quality is a crucial driver of economic performance". In this context suggest reforms in Civil Service for strengthening democracy.

GS II · 2020 · Civil Services in a Democracy

Revision summary

Institutional quality - predictable rules and capable implementation - is a growth driver.

The civil service is that institution in daily Indian life.

- **Reforms:** Mission Karmayogi skills, stable tenure, modest lateral entry, outcome appraisal, RTI-compatible files.

A spoils system would destroy both growth and democratic neutrality.

State and municipal cadres matter as much as the All-India Services.

Introduction

Economies grow when rules are predictable, contracts are enforced, and the State can deliver without predation. That is institutional quality. The civil service is India's standing institution between the Constitution and the citizen; reforming it is therefore both an economic and a democratic task.

Body

Why institutional quality runs through the civil service

- Poor countries with similar capital differ by whether the bureaucracy collects tax fairly, issues permits without a bribe, and implements a statute as written.
- Democracy needs the same cadre to be politically neutral, professionally competent, and answerable - otherwise elections change ministers, not outcomes.
- **Article 311** protection and All-India Services under **Article 312** were meant as a steel frame; over time they also became a rigid, generalist, transfer-vulnerable frame.

Reforms that raise quality and democracy together

- Mission Karmayogi (National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building, 2020) should be a real competency grid, not a portal; domain skills in health, tax, climate and digital public goods must count as much as the entry examination.
- Stable tenures and a transparent transfer code (**Second ARC**) reduce the political market in postings, which is the daily corruption of institutional quality.
- Lateral entry at a modest scale, with conflict-of-interest rules, fills specialist gaps without destroying a permanent, non-partisan core.
- Performance appraisal linked to citizen outcomes, not only ACR narratives; publish ministry delivery dashboards that Parliament can use.
- Recast the Official Secrets reflex toward RTI-compatible record-keeping so democracy can see the file.

What not to do

- Do not confuse reform with a spoils system. A politicised service would worsen both growth and democracy.

- Do not treat the IAS as the only civil service; State services and municipal cadres are where most citizens meet the State.

Flow diagram

Institutional quality -> Economic performance
Civil service reform -> Institutional quality
Civil service reform -> Democratic accountability
Karmayogi tenure lateral -> Civil service reform

Conclusion

Institutional quality drives economic performance because investors and citizens need a capable, rule-bound State. Civil-service reform - tenure, competence, lateral skill, and public appraisal - strengthens democracy by making that State answerable without making it a party instrument.

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Q8 · 10 marks

"The emergence of Fourth Industrial Revolution (Digital Revolution) has initiated e-Governance as an integral part of government". Discuss.

GS II · 2020 · Transparency and e-Governance

Revision summary

4IR is data, platforms and connectivity applied to the State.

Aadhaar, DBT, UPI, GSTN and Digital India made e-governance the default pipe for many Union services.

COVID-19 accelerated apps and remote government.

Integral government still needs offline fallback, language access and a data-protection law.

E-governance without process reform is a scanned file, not a revolution.

Introduction

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is the fusion of digital, physical and biological systems - data, platforms, AI, and connectivity. In government it has made e-governance not a side portal but the way the State now identifies, pays, licenses, and speaks to the citizen. Initiation is real; integral and equal is still a claim to be tested.

Body

How 4IR made e-governance integral

- Aadhaar, India Stack, DigiLocker, UMANG, and GSTN turned identity, document, and tax into digital public infrastructure rather than office-window favours.
- Direct Benefit Transfer and UPI made welfare and payments a platform function; leakages fell where the pipe actually reached the account.
- COVID-19 in 2020 pushed Aarogya Setu, CoWIN's later architecture, online courts and education, showing that shutdowns force the State onto the network.
- NeGP and Digital India supplied the political brand; 4IR supplied cloud, mobile, and analytics that made the brand operational.

What 'integral' should mean

- Integral means the default citizen-State transaction is electronic and auditable, with a human fallback - not a parallel website that the poor never see.
- It means process re-engineering (Second ARC's e-governance chapter), not scanning the same file.
- Data protection, the pending personal-data law debate of 2019-20, and algorithmic accountability must sit inside the same government, or 4IR becomes surveillance capacity.

Limits

- Digital divides of language, disability, gender, and last-mile connectivity keep e-governance from being integral for everyone.
- Platform failures, exclusion from Aadhaar authentication, and poorly designed apps show that digital is not automatically just.
- **Recommendation:** treat Digital India as public infrastructure plus a right to offline redress, which is how a constitutional State uses a revolution.

Flow diagram

Fourth Industrial Revolution -> Digital public infrastructure
Digital public infrastructure -> e-Governance identity pay tax
e-Governance identity pay tax -> Citizen services
Divide and data risk -> Citizen services

Conclusion

The digital revolution has initiated e-governance as a core operating system of Indian government - identity, payments, tax, and crisis apps. It is integral in the Union's design and still uneven in the citizen's life. Completing the initiation requires inclusion, data rights, and redesigned processes, not only more portals.

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Q9 · 10 marks

Critically examine the role of WHO in providing global health security during the COVID-19 pandemic.

GS II · 2020 · Health, Education and Human Resources

Revision summary

- **WHO's COVID-19 role sits on IHR 2005:** alert, PHEIC, and technical guidance.

PHEIC on 30 January and pandemic on 11 March were late relative to spread.

Solidarity trials, ACT-A and COVAX were the operational plus.

Budget politics, China-related caution and Taiwan's exclusion hurt independence.

IHR cannot compel States; global health security is only as strong as members allow.

Introduction

The World Health Organization is the UN system's health-security hub under the International Health Regulations, 2005. COVID-19 in 2020 was the hardest test of that mandate. WHO informed, convened, and later helped COVAX, but it was slow to name a public-health emergency, cautious on human-to-human spread, and structurally weak against great-power politics.

Body

Mandate and what WHO did

- IHR 2005 binds States to report public-health emergencies of international concern; WHO's Director-General declares a PHEIC and issues temporary recommendations.
- WHO issued technical guidance on testing, clinical care, and later mask advice; it ran Solidarity trials and the Access to COVID-19 Tools accelerator with partners.
- COVAX was the equity vehicle for vaccines; WHO's moral case for global health security is that a virus ignores borders.
- For developing States, WHO protocols were often the only public standard when bilateral science was noisy.

Critical failures in 2020

- The PHEIC came on 30 January 2020, after weeks of evidence; a pandemic was named only on 11 March. Delay cost preparedness.
- Early messaging tracked an information bottleneck around Wuhan and China; Taiwan's exclusion from the WHO room became a political scandal of the year.
- The US notice of withdrawal (2020) showed that WHO's budget dependence on assessed and voluntary funds lets a major donor punish the organisation mid-crisis.
- **IHR has weak enforcement:** WHO cannot compel a State to share samples, accept investigation, or keep trade measures proportionate.

Balanced examination

- WHO is a member-driven secretariat, not a world health police; blaming only Geneva hides State failure on PPE, lockdown timing, and vaccine nationalism.
- Global health security needed a faster alert, an independent origins probe, and a financed WHO that is not a hostage of one capital.

- **Recommendation:** strengthen IHR compliance, sustainable assessed contributions, and a pandemic treaty debate - the 2020 lesson, not the abandonment of WHO.

Flow diagram

IHR 2005 -> PHEIC January 2020
PHEIC January 2020 -> Guidance Solidarity COVAX
Delay and donor politics -> Weak enforcement
Guidance Solidarity COVAX -> Global health security
Weak enforcement -> Global health security

Conclusion

WHO provided the only global operating system for COVID-19 guidance, trials, and vaccine equity talk, which is real health-security work. It failed on speed, independence from a major host State, and enforcement under IHR. A critical examination therefore reforms WHO; it does not pretend 2020 proved the organisation useless.

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Q10 · 10 marks

'Indian diaspora has a decisive role to play in the politics and economy of America and European Countries'. Comment with examples.

GS II · 2020 · Diaspora and Developed Countries

Revision summary

Indian-Americans have outsized income and presence in US tech, medicine and universities.

2020 US politics showed mainstreaming, including Kamala Harris on the Democratic ticket.

The UK combines business communities with Indian-origin cabinet rank such as Rishi Sunak as Chancellor.

Continental European political clout is still limited compared with the Anglosphere.

'Decisive' fits sectors and lobbies; it does not mean the diaspora runs host States.

Introduction

The Indian diaspora in the United States and in several European countries is large, skilled, and increasingly visible in parties, parliaments, and firms. 'Decisive' is true in specific sectors and constituencies; it is not true as a claim that host politics now run from New Delhi's overseas vote. The comment needs examples and a sense of proportion.

Body

United States - economy and politics

- Indian-Americans are among the highest-earning ethnic groups; they are dense in information technology, medicine, academia, and start-ups, which is economic weight in the knowledge economy.
- Google, Microsoft, and other platform leadership with Indian-origin CEOs (a 2020-visible fact) is a corporate-economy signal, not a State-to-State lever by itself.
- Politically, the caucus around India in Congress, donors in both parties, and candidates at state and federal level (for example Kamala Harris's 2020 ticket as Vice-Presidential candidate of Indian and Jamaican descent) show entry into the mainstream.
- **H-1B, visa, and US-India strategic talk are where the diaspora lobby is most 'decisive':** it can move a hearing or a narrative, not a whole American election.

Europe

- **The United Kingdom:** Rishi Sunak as Chancellor in 2020, Indian-origin MPs in several parties, and a long Gujarati and Punjabi business presence in retail, pharma, and IT services.
- **Continental Europe is thinner:** students, IT contractors, and a growing professional class in Germany, Ireland, and the Nordics; political office is rarer than in the Anglosphere.
- Remittances, IIT/IIM alumni networks, and intra-firm trade matter more for India's economy than for, say, France's party system.

Comment on 'decisive'

- Decisive in Silicon Valley labour, UK Conservative fiscal politics, and niche US foreign-policy lobbying - yes.
- Decisive as a bloc that swings America or 'Europe' as a whole - no; the diaspora is internally diverse by language, class, and party.

- For India, the asset is influence and image; the risk is that host-country polarisation also splits the diaspora.

Flow diagram

Indian diaspora -> US tech medicine lobbying tech medicine lobbying
Indian diaspora -> UK business and cabinet business and cabinet
Indian diaspora -> Professional and student Europe
US tech medicine lobbying -> Bounded influence
UK business and cabinet -> Bounded influence

Conclusion

The Indian diaspora plays a decisive role where it is concentrated - US tech and selected ballots, UK business and cabinet politics - and a smaller role in most of continental Europe. Examples support a strong but bounded comment: influence is real; omnipotence is a myth.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2020/indian-diaspora-has-a-decisive-role-to-play-in-the-politics-and-economy-of-america-and-european-countries-comment-with-examples/>

Q11 · 15 marks

Indian constitution exhibits centralising tendencies to maintain unity and integrity of the nation. Elucidate in the perspective of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897; The Disaster Management Act, 2005 and recently passed Farm Acts.

GS II · 2020 · Indian Constitution

Revision summary

India's Constitution is a strong-Centre federation built for unity and integrity.

The **Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897**, gave executive epidemic powers reused in COVID-19.

The **Disaster Management Act, 2005**, nationalised lockdown command through NDMA and the Union Home Ministry.

The 2020 Farm Acts used Union trade and commodities entries to recast State-regulated farm markets.

Those farm laws were repealed in 2021; as a 2020 case they still show centralisation meeting federal resistance.

Introduction

- **The Constitution is a Union of States with a strong Centre:** a long Union List, All-India Services, **Articles 352-360**, and residuary power. Unity and integrity are the stated reasons. The **Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897**, the **Disaster Management Act, 2005**, and the Farm Acts of 2020 show how that centralising habit works in a health emergency and in the farm market - and where States push back.

Body

Centralising design in the Constitution

- **Federal in a dual-polity sense, India is not a league of sovereign States:** single citizenship, unified judiciary, and **Article 3** on State boundaries already tilt to the Union.
- Emergency provisions, the GST Council's Union vote-weight, and Centrally Sponsored Schemes continue that tilt in ordinary times.
- **The 2020 examples are statutes, not amendments, which is how centralisation often arrives:** Union legislation on a crisis or on a claimed national market.

Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897

- A colonial public-health statute, it lets a government take special measures and prescribe regulations to prevent the spread of a dangerous epidemic disease.
- In COVID-19 the Union and States used it, with the 2020 ordinance against violence on healthcare workers, as a quick legal peg beside the newer disaster law.
- **Centralising tendency:** a thin, executive-heavy Act, born to protect imperial ports and troops, still lets a distant government regulate bodies and movement with limited legislative debate.
- **Unity rationale:** a virus does not stop at a State border; a national frame reduces beggar-thy-neighbour lockdowns.
- **Limit:** public health is largely a State subject; 1897 does not by itself create a modern rights-based health federalism.

Disaster Management Act, 2005

- The Act builds NDMA, SDMAs, and a chain of plans; **Section 6** and the Union Home Ministry's COVID-19 guidelines turned a disaster statute into a national lockdown instrument from 24 March 2020.
- Migrant-worker distress showed that a Centre-written lockdown without matching State fiscal and shelter capacity is centralisation without capacity.
- **Unity rationale:** one definition of disaster, one national executive for earthquakes, cyclones, and a pandemic classified as a disaster.
- **Federal tension:** States ran hospitals and police; they often received instructions more than a co-authored plan, which is the DM Act's Union-nodal design under stress.

Farm Acts, 2020

- **Three Union laws:** Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act; Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on **Price Assurance and Farm Services Act**; Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act.
- The Union placed them on trade, commerce, and essential commodities - Union and Concurrent entries - while agriculture and markets are the States' daily field; Punjab and others answered with their own Acts and protests.
- **Centralising tendency:** a national 'one nation, one market' claim over APMC-era State regulation, justified as farmer freedom and integrity of the internal market.
- These Acts were repealed in November 2021 after sustained protest. For a 2020 paper they still illustrate the tendency: the Union legislated first; politics forced a retreat later.
- **Unity rationale in 2020 Union speech:** fragmented mandi law blocked a national agricultural market. Integrity cost: deep agrarian regions read the package as an attack on MSP and federal compact.

Reading the three together

- Crisis statutes (1897, 2005) centralise in the name of life and order; farm statutes centralised in the name of a national market.
- Both uses fit the Constitution's Union-heavy map; both need State machines to work.
- **Elucidation is not endorsement:** unity is a constitutional value (Preamble, **Article 19** restrictions, duties), but so is a federal distribution that keeps agriculture and public health politically close to the citizen.

Flow diagram

Constitutional Union tilt -> Epidemic Diseases Act 1897
 Constitutional Union tilt -> DM Act 2005 COVID lockdown
 Constitutional Union tilt -> Farm Acts 2020
 Epidemic Diseases Act 1897 -> Unity and integrity claim
 DM Act 2005 COVID lockdown -> Unity and integrity claim
 Farm Acts 2020 -> State protest and 2021 repeal

Conclusion

The Constitution's centralising tendencies - Union lists, crisis executives, and national-market legislation - were on display in the **Epidemic Diseases Act**, the DM Act's COVID-19 use, and the 2020 Farm Acts. Those tools can serve unity in a pandemic; the farm package showed that the same habit can strain integrity when States and farmers withhold consent. The Acts of 2020 were repealed in 2021; the constitutional tilt they revealed remains.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2020/indian-constitution-exhibits-centralising-tendencies-to-maintain-unity-and-integrity-of-the-nation-elucidate-in-the-perspective-of-the-epidemic-diseases-act-1897-the-disaster-management-act-2005-and-recently-passed-farm/>

Q12 · 15 marks

Judicial Legislation is antithetical to the doctrine of separation of powers as envisaged in the Indian Constitution. In this context justify the filing of large number of public interest petitions praying for issuing guidelines to executive authorities.

GS II · 2020 · Separation of Powers

Revision summary

Indian separation of powers is checks and balances with a justiciable Part III, not a sealed legislative monopoly.

Guidelines that mimic a statute sit uneasily with **Article 245** if they become permanent.

Vishaka and D.K. Basu justified PIL guidelines as interim rights protection until Parliament or the executive acted.

Volume of PILs tracks executive failure on police, environment and welfare as much as judicial overreach.

Justification holds only if courts retreat when a competent law occupies the field and throw out frivolous petitions.

Introduction

- **Separation of powers in India is not a rigid Montesquieu wall:** Parliament legislates, the executive administers, the judiciary interprets and reviews. When courts issue detailed guidelines that look like statutes, critics call it judicial legislation and say it is antithetical to that scheme. A large PIL docket asking for guidelines to the executive is still justifiable where rights would otherwise die in a vacuum.

Body

The charge: judicial legislation versus separation

- **Articles 50, 122, 212** and the basic structure all assume distinct organs; Kesavananda and later cases treat separation as a constitutional principle, not a slogan.
- When a Bench writes a code on sexual harassment, arrests, or undertrials, it occupies a field that **Article 245** gave to legislatures.
- The executive, not the Court, has personnel, budget, and democratic mandate to run prisons, police, and welfare. Guidelines can become a continuing mandamus that looks like a third government.

Why the Indian scheme still allows a judicial role

- Unlike a pure Westminster myth, India has a written Constitution with justiciable fundamental rights; **Article 13** makes law void if it offends Part III, and **Article 32** is itself a right.
- **Separation here is checks and balances:** judicial review is the Court's assigned power, not a theft of Parliament's.
- When the legislature is silent and the executive is the violator - custodial torture, workplace sexual harassment, bonded labour - a rights court that waits for a Bill abandons **Article 21**.

Justifying PILs that seek guidelines

- **Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan (1997)** laid down workplace sexual-harassment guidelines until a statute arrived; the POSH Act, 2013, later occupied the field. That is gap-filling, not a permanent

parallel parliament.

- **D.K. Basu v. State of West Bengal** set arrest-and-detention safeguards because police practice was eating **Article 21**; those directions operationalised rights the executive would not write against itself.
- Environmental and food-right PILs (Mehta line, PUCL) used guidelines because diffuse harm has no single plaintiff and the executive was the reluctant duty-bearer.
- **Articles 32 and 226**, plus epistolary jurisdiction, were designed for the poor and the unorganised; volume of PILs is a symptom of executive gap, not proof of judicial appetite alone.
- Guidelines typically bind the executive as **Article 141** law until Parliament speaks; they are expressly interim in the better-reasoned cases.

Discipline so justification does not become a blank cheque

- Courts should prefer directing the executive to frame a policy within a time, or reading a statute purposively, over writing a full code.
- Frivolous and donor-driven PILs deserve early dismissal; the justification is for genuine rights vacuums, not for governance by amicus.
- Once a competent legislature enacts - POSH after Vishaka - the Court should retreat to review, not run the ministry.

Synthesis

- Judicial legislation, if it means a court pretending to be Parliament forever, is antithetical to separation.
- PILs praying for executive guidelines are justifiable when they are a temporary rights prosthesis in an executive or legislative vacuum, under **Articles 32 and 226**, with a door left open for statute.

Flow diagram

Rights vacuum -> PIL Arts 32 and 226 Arts 32 and 226
 PIL Arts 32 and 226 -> Guidelines to executive
 Guidelines to executive -> Statute later occupies field
 Statute later occupies field -> Court returns to review
 Permanent judicial code -> True antithesis

Conclusion

Separation of powers in India includes a rights-enforcing judiciary. Mass PILs for guidelines are justified where the executive will not bind itself and the legislature has not yet spoken, as Vishaka and D.K. Basu showed. The same doctrine requires the Court to step back when a statute arrives. Antithesis is the permanent judicial statute, not the interim guideline that keeps **Article 21** alive.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2020/judicial-legislation-is-antithetical-to-the-doctrine-of-separation-of-powers-as-envisaged-in-the-indian-constitution-in-this-context-justify-the-filing-of-large-number-of-public-interest-petitions-praying-for-issuing/>

Q13 · 15 marks

The strength sustenance of local institutions in India has shifted from their formative phase of 'Functions, Functionaries and Funs' to the contemporary stage of 'Functionality'. Highlight the critical challenges faced by local institutions in terms of their functionality in recent times.

GS II · 2020 · Governance and Policy

Revision summary

3Fs - funds, functions, functionaries - were the devolution bundle after the 73rd and 74th Amendments.

Eleventh and Twelfth Schedule lists are not self-executing; States still hold the real map.

Grants and Centrally Sponsored Schemes often outrun own tax and SFC awards.

Staff remain with line departments, so elected chairs lack a team.

Functionality fails where elections, audits, and basic services do not follow the paper devolution.

Introduction

The 73rd and 74th Amendments constitutionalised panchayats and municipalities so that local government would not depend on a State's mood. The reform slogan was the 3Fs: funds, functions, functionaries. Functionality - whether a gram sabha or a ward actually delivers water, streets, and accountability - is still the weaker third of that promise.

Body

From 3Fs as design to functionality as test

- **Functions:** the Eleventh and Twelfth Schedules list 29 and 18 subjects; devolution is a State-legislature choice, so maps differ from Kerala to a reluctant State.
- **Funds:** State Finance Commissions, Union Finance Commission local grants, and own taxes (property tax, profession tax) were meant to replace begging for scheme crumbs.
- **Functionaries:** a local cadre or control over teachers, engineers, and sanitary staff was meant to match the function list.
- Functionality is none of these on paper. It is regular elections, sitting gram sabhas, audited accounts, and a citizen who can get a birth certificate without a party worker.

Critical challenges on each F

- **Functions stay truncated:** departments keep parallel schemes; District Rural Development Agencies and Union missions often bypass the elected panchayat.
- **Funds remain grant-heavy and tied:** own-source revenue is weak; SFC recommendations are delayed or ignored; XV Finance Commission grants help but do not create a local tax State.
- **Functionaries:** staff are State employees on devolution in theory; transfers, unions, and line-department control leave the sarpanch without a team.
- The shift to government-grant dependence, which critics of 'self-help' noted, is the fiscal face of failed 3Fs: activity follows the CSS more than the Schedule.

Functionality-specific challenges

- **Capacity:** many elected representatives, including those in reserved seats, get little training; Mission Antyodaya and RGSA try, coverage is uneven.
- **Accountability:** social audit and disclosure exist in MGNREGA more than in municipal contracts; proximity does not automatically mean transparency.
- **Elite and patriarchal capture:** reservation opened the chair; husbands, contractors, and party bosses still often run the file.
- **Metropolitan complexity:** 74th Amendment mayors without powers, parastatal development authorities, and State-appointed municipal commissioners split the city.
- Delimitation, prolonged administrator rule, and delayed elections in some municipalities make 'local institution' an intermittent fact.

What would make functionality real

- Activity mapping that actually moves the Twelfth/**Eleventh Schedule** off the State secretariat, with one employee accountable to the elected body for that function.
- Enforce SFC awards as seriously as Union FC awards; raise property-tax coverage and user charges with hardship shields.
- A local cadre with tenure, plus the right of the panchayat or council to write a confidential report on deputed staff.
- **Recommendation:** treat functionality metrics - water hours, O&M of assets, audit disposal - as the score, not the number of schemes named after the local body.

Flow diagram

73rd and 74th Amendments -> Funds
 73rd and 74th Amendments -> Functions
 73rd and 74th Amendments -> Functionaries
 Funds -> Functionality services and voice
 Functions -> Functionality services and voice
 Functionaries -> Functionality services and voice
 Parallel schemes and grant dependence -> Functionality services and voice

Conclusion

The 3Fs were the constitutional toolkit for local government; functionality is the political outcome those tools have only partly produced. Parallel departments, tied grants, and missing staff keep institutions busy as last-mile agencies of the Union and the State. Critical examination therefore keeps the 73rd and 74th Amendments, but scores them on service and accountability, not on the Schedule printed in the Constitution.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2020/the-strength-sustenance-of-local-institutions-in-india-has-shifted-from-their-formative-phase-of-functions-functionaries-and-funs-to-the-contemporary-stage-of-functionality-highlight-the-critical-challenges-faced-by/>

Q14 · 15 marks

Rajya Sabha has been transformed from a 'useless stepney tyre' to the most useful supporting organ in past few decades. Highlight the factors as well as the areas in which this transformation could be visible.

GS II · 2020 · Governance and Policy

Revision summary

The stepney taunt came from Money Bills, whips, and long one-party dominance.

- **Recent years made Rajya Sabha useful when the government lacked a majority there:** delay, committees, federal bargain.

Article 80 and regional parties give it a State-map role the Lok Sabha does not copy.

Article 110 certification and ordinances can still empty that role.

- **Agree in part:** supporting organ in political time, not a finished transformation.

Introduction

- **The Rajya Sabha was mocked as a stepney:** a spare wheel that never turned the car. Federal second chambers often face that taunt. In recent years it has been a real revising and delaying House on some statutes, a federal voice on others, and still a weak organ on Money Bills and party discipline. The transformation is partial, not complete.

Body

Why the 'useless stepney' image stuck

- Permanent House, staggered six-year terms, and no confidence vote over the Council of Ministers made it look ornamental beside a dominant Lok Sabha.
- **Article 110** Money Bills shut it out of the purse; a partisan Speaker certificate can shrink its role, as the Aadhaar controversy showed.
- Whip and anti-defection in a House meant to be federal and deliberative turned many sittings into a count of party numbers, not of States.
- Early decades of Congress dominance made the second chamber an echo.

Factors that made it a more useful organ

- Hung or thin Lok Sabha majorities in some recent parliaments, and a Rajya Sabha the government did not own, forced negotiation, select committees, and delay - the classic second-chamber job.
- **Federalisation of politics:** regional parties use Rajya Sabha seats as a national platform (GST debate, land-acquisition amendments, and later farm-law politics in and around the House).
- **Article 249** and All-India Services still give the Council of States a formal federal function; GST Council did not abolish the House's say on ordinary finance and commercial Bills that are not certified as Money Bills.
- Quality of some members - domain specialists, former civil servants, and federal leaders - improved committee reports even when floor debates were raucous.
- Joint sittings (**Article 108**) remain rare; the threat and the delay power are how a second chamber becomes useful without being a rival executive.

Areas where usefulness is visible

- **Revising ordinary legislation:** amendments, return of Bills, and committee scrutiny have stopped or softened several government drafts in years when numbers were adverse.
- **Representation of States:** not equal like the US Senate, but still a map of Assemblies via [Article 80](#), which matters when a national party is weak in a region.
- **Continuity:** a permanent House can debate long-cycle issues (federalism, external affairs) when the Lok Sabha is in campaign mode.

Areas where the stepney is still showing

- Money Bill route and ordinance-plus-replacement can still bypass serious Rajya Sabha consent.
- Nominated members and celebrity seats sometimes revive the ornamental charge.
- Disruptions and guillotine-style passing in chaotic sessions waste the revising function.
- **It cannot claim to be a 'Council of States' in the German Bundesrat sense:** votes are not State-government instructions.

How far to agree

- **Agree that it is no longer a decorative spare in every session:** when the Union lacks a Rajya Sabha majority, Indian parliamentary democracy actually bicameralises.
- **Disagree that the transformation is finished:** fiscal exclusion, whips, and certification games can still reduce it to a waiting room.
- **The fair statement:** Rajya Sabha is a useful supporting organ in political time; the Constitution still leaves a stepney option in the Union's hands.

Flow diagram

Stepney image -> Money Bill and whip
 Useful organ -> Revision delay committees
 Useful organ -> Regional parties Art 80
 Numbers in the House -> Useful organ
 Numbers in the House -> Stepney image

Conclusion

Rajya Sabha has moved from a lazy stepney image toward a supporting organ whenever numbers and regional parties force real revision. It remains easy to sideline on Money Bills and by whip. The statement is therefore half right: usefulness is contingent, not a completed constitutional conversion.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2020/rajya-sabha-has-been-transformed-from-a-useless-stepney-tyre-to-the-most-useful-supporting-organ-in-past-few-decades-highlight-the-factors-as-well-as-the-areas-in-which-this-transformation-could-be-visible/>

Q15 · 15 marks

Which steps are required for constitutionalization of a commission? Do you think imparting constitutionality to the National Commission for Women would ensure greater gender justice and empowerment in India? Give reasons.

GS II · 2020 · Indian Constitution

Revision summary

Constitutionalization needs an **Article 368** amendment, tenure, charge on the Fund, mandate, and transition from the statute.

Models are EC, UPSC, NCSC, NCST and NCBC, not a renamed ministry cell.

NCW is statutory (1990); raising it to constitutional rank improves permanence and signalling.

Constitutional SC/ST commissions show that status does not ensure justice on the ground.

Gender justice still needs FIRs, economic rights and political reservation; NCW can aid, not ensure.

Introduction

Constitutionalization means writing a commission into the Constitution so that its existence, core functions, and insulation do not depend on an ordinary statute the government of the day can dilute. The **National Commission** for Women is a statutory body under the NCW Act, 1990. A constitutional NCW would raise status; it would not by itself guarantee gender justice.

Body

Steps required to constitutionalize a commission

- A constitutional amendment under **Article 368**, with the ratification map that the subject requires if it touches federal or Chapter-I Fourth-Schedule-type balances - in practice, a new Part or Articles on the model of the **Election Commission (Article 324)**, UPSC (315-323), or the **National Commissions** for SCs, STs and BCs (338, 338A, 338B).
- Entrench composition, qualifications, term, removal (as nearly as possible to a Supreme Court judge or as specified), and a charge on the Consolidated Fund so salary is not a ministry file.
- **Write the mandate:** inquire, summon, recommend, and, if intended, give limited civil-court powers; name the reports to the President and Parliament so they must be tabled.
- Clarify relation to State commissions and to the Union executive, or the new body will fight turf with ministries and with NCSC/NCST on overlapping atrocities.
- **Transitional clause:** repeal or save the parent statute, transfer pending inquiries, and protect incumbents for a defined period.
- **Political step before legal step:** all-party support, or a 'constitutional' commission born of a thin majority will be as contested as a statute.

What constitutionality actually buys

- Harder abolition and a public signal of permanence, which matters for a women's commission that every budget can starve.
- Stronger convention of consulting it on Bills that touch the family, labour, and criminal law.
- Better chance of comparable rank with NHRC and the national 'caste' commissions in inter-institutional fights.

Would a constitutional NCW ensure greater gender justice?

- No, not by the text alone. Gender justice needs police filing of FIR, courts, property and labour rights, and budgets for childcare and health - none of which appear by inserting NCW into the Constitution.
- NCSC and NCST are constitutional, yet atrocities and under-representation persist; the lesson is status without street-level enforcement.
- NCW's present limits are more about recommendatory teeth, vacancies, political appointments, and a tiny investigative arm than about missing Article numbers.
- Empowerment of women also runs through the 73rd Amendment's reserved chairs, the still-pending national women's reservation in legislatures (as of 2020), SHGs, and labour codes - parallel tracks a commission does not own.
- A constitutional NCW could still be captured by patronage; removal safeguards help, they do not choose feminists for the chair.

Reasons a constitutional NCW is still worth doing - with humility

- **Symbol and shield:** women's equality is a Preamble and **Article 15** project; matching institutional rank to that claim is coherent.
- Reports with a duty to table create a parliamentary hook that a quiet statutory annual report lacks.
- Combined with binding timelines for government ATR, a specialised bench practice on violence, and State women's commissions of similar strength, constitutionality becomes one brick.
- **Recommendation:** constitutionalize, give limited inquiry powers on violence and workplace complaints in aid of police and POSH, and keep the body from becoming a substitute for elected gender politics.

Flow diagram

Art 368 amendment -> Entrenched tenure fund mandate
 Entrenched tenure fund mandate -> Constitutional commission
 Constitutional commission -> Status and tabling
 Police courts budgets representation -> Gender justice
 Status and tabling -> Gender justice

Conclusion

Constitutionalizing a commission takes an amendment, entrenched tenure and money, a written mandate, and a clean join to existing bodies. A constitutional NCW would help status and reporting; it would not ensure gender justice or empowerment by itself. Those still depend on criminal process, economic rights, and political representation that no commission, however titled, can deliver alone.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2020/which-steps-are-required-for-constitutionalization-of-a-commission-do-you-think-imparting-constitutionality-to-the-national-commission-for-women-would-ensure-greater-gender-justice-and-empowerment-in-india-give-reasons/>

Q16 · 15 marks

"The incidence and intensity of poverty are more important in determining poverty based on income alone". In this context analyze the latest United Nations Multidimensional Poverty Index Report.

GS II · 2020 · International Institutions

Revision summary

Income poverty ignores overlapping deprivations; MPI multiplies incidence by intensity.

Global MPI 2020 (UNDP/OPHI) used health, education and living-standard indicators with a one-third cut-off.

About 1.3 billion people were MPI-poor globally, many of them children, concentrated in South Asia and Africa.

India had large MPI reductions but a still-large rural and high-intensity residual.

COVID-19 was flagged as a shock that could reverse gains even if 2019 income looked better.

Introduction

Income poverty counts people below a money line. It misses a child who is out of school in a household that just crossed that line, and it treats a rupee of deficit the same whether the family lacks nutrition, electricity, or both. The UN Global Multidimensional Poverty Index, jointly from UNDP and OPHI, makes incidence (how many) and intensity (how deprived the poor are) the measure. The 2020 report is the 'latest' the stem pointed to.

Body

Why incidence and intensity beat income alone

- Incidence (headcount, H) is the share of people who are multidimensionally poor.
- Intensity (A) is the average share of weighted deprivations those poor people suffer.
- **MPI = H × A:** a society can cut the count while the remaining poor stay deeply deprived, or thin intensity while many still miss one extra indicator.
- Income lines (World Bank \$1.90 or a national Tendulkar/Rangarajan line) cannot see intra-household nutrition, years of schooling, or housing; growth can raise median income while MPI stalls.

What the Global MPI 2020 reported

- The 2020 Global MPI covered about 107 countries and 5.9 billion people; it found on the order of 1.3 billion people multidimensionally poor, a large share of them children.
- **Indicators sit in three dimensions:** health (nutrition, child mortality), education (years of schooling, school attendance), living standards (cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing, assets).
- A person is MPI-poor if deprived in at least one-third of the weighted indicators; intensity records how far above that cut-off the poor lie.
- South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa together held the bulk of the MPI-poor; the report stressed rural concentration and the overlap of deprivations.

India in that 2020 lens

- India had shown large absolute reductions in MPI over a decade in the data then used (NFHS-era comparisons in OPHI/UNDP analysis): tens of millions leaving multidimensional poverty, among the biggest national exits in the global set.
- Remaining poverty was still huge in count, and poorer States and scheduled-community districts showed higher intensity - which is why 'income alone' mis-ranks policy urgency.
- Nutrition and housing/cooking-fuel deprivations often dominated intensity; a wage bump that does not change LPG, stunting, or attendance will not move MPI as fast as a money metric might suggest.
- The 2020 report was prepared as COVID-19 struck; it warned that pandemic shocks to school, jobs, and health could reverse MPI gains even where 2019 income looked stable.

Analysis for policy

- **If incidence falls but intensity is sticky, the leftover poor are harder:** they need bundled health-education-habitat action, not only a cash line.
- If intensity falls while incidence stays high, many households sit just over the one-third threshold; a small shock (COVID lockdown, drought) pushes them back - the case for resilience, PDS, and school continuity.
- India's NFSA, **Swachh Bharat**, Ujjwala, Saubhagya, and housing missions map onto MPI living-standard indicators more than onto a pure income line; that is the practical meaning of the stem.
- **Caveat:** MPI is only as good as surveys; lags, missing conflict zones, and urban informal housing can understate intensity.

Conclusion of the analysis

- **The 2020 Global MPI supports the statement:** counting the poor and measuring how poor they are, across functionings, is a better poverty diagnostic than income alone, especially for a country that had been cutting MPI fast but still carried a large, intense rural residual, with COVID as a reverse risk.

Flow diagram

Income line -> Missed deprivations
 Incidence headcount -> Global MPI 2020
 Intensity of deprivation -> Global MPI 2020
 Global MPI 2020 -> Health education living standards

Conclusion

Incidence and intensity in the UN Global MPI 2020 explain poverty as overlapping deprivations, not as a missing rupee. India looked like a high-reduction, still-high-burden case, with nutrition and living standards driving intensity. Income growth is necessary; without tracking H and A, policy will congratulate a line-crosser who still cooks on wood and misses school.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2020/the-incidence-and-intensity-of-poverty-are-more-important-in-determining-poverty-based-on-income-alone-in-this-context-analyze-the-latest-united-nations-multidimensional-poverty-index-report/>

Q17 · 15 marks

"Micro-Finance as an anti-poverty vaccine, is aimed at asset creation and income security of the rural poor in India". Evaluate the role of Self-Help Groups in achieving the twin objectives along with empowering women in rural India.

GS II · 2020 · Development Processes and NGOs

Revision summary

Micro-finance in India runs largely through women's SHGs linked to banks (NABARD) and NRLM federations.

Assets appear when loans fund earning livestock or tools with support services, not when they fund distress consumption.

Income security comes from savings, cheaper emergency credit and diversification, not from a mythical micro-enterprise alone.

Women gain voice and mobility; patriarchal capture and extra labour limit empowerment.

The vaccine metaphor fails if SHGs are only a recovery channel without MGNREGA, markets and insurance.

Introduction

- **Micro-finance is sold as a small-dose vaccine:** a little credit, regularly, to stop the infection of moneylender poverty. In India the Self-Help Group, especially of women, is the main vessel. The dual official aim is asset creation and income security. Evaluation has to ask whether SHGs actually build assets and stable income, and whether they empower women or only enrol them.

Body

The model

- An SHG is a small affinity group that saves, lends internally, then links to a bank under NABARD's SHG-Bank Linkage Programme from the 1990s.
- DAY-NRLM federates groups, adds livelihoods support, and uses the group as a pipe for bank credit and some government schemes.
- Micro-finance institutions and Bank-BC models sit beside SHGs; the stem's vaccine image is really the SHG-led, women-centred stream.

Asset creation - how far

- Group loans fund milch animals, sewing machines, small trade stock, and housing repairs - real assets when the asset earns and is not distress-sold.
- NRLM's focus on livelihoods, producer groups, and some value-chain work is the asset logic beyond a pure consumption loan.
- **Failure mode:** credit without veterinary care, market access, or land rights produces a debt-financed goat that dies, not an asset. Vaccine without a cold chain.

Income security - how far

- Regular saving, emergency internal loans, and bank linkage reduce the moneylender's peak interest, which is income protection even before a new enterprise exists.
- Diversified household activity (farm plus petty trade) is more security than a single micro-enterprise myth.

- **Failure mode:** multiple borrowing from SHG, MFI, and gold loan, as Andhra Pradesh 2010 warned, can destroy security; COVID-19 repayment stress in 2020 repeated the lesson.
- Income is still seasonal and informal; SHG credit is not a substitute for MGNREGA, PDS, or a living agricultural price.

Women empowerment - the third, necessary test

- Voice in the group, mobility to the bank, and a passbook in a woman's name are political assets inside the household.
- Elected panchayat seats and SHG leadership often overlap; that is empowerment as public identity.
- **Limits:** male capture of the loan, added unpaid labour, and violence around repayment; empowerment is not automatic in a patriarchal property regime.
- Financial inclusion without property rights and without time-saving infrastructure (water, fuel) can be 'empowerment' as extra work.

Evaluation against the vaccine metaphor

- Vaccines prevent; they do not replace food and sanitation. SHGs prevent some exclusion and some usury; they do not vaccinate against agrarian crisis or missing public health.
- Where NRLM quality is high, the dual objective plus women's voice is a documented success in many blocks.
- Where groups exist only to absorb a target, micro-finance is a revolving debt, not a vaccine.
- **Recommendation:** pair SHG credit with livelihood support, insurance, and men's accountability for joint assets; cap coercive recovery.

Flow diagram

SHG savings and bank link savings and bank link -> Asset creation
 SHG savings and bank link -> Income security
 SHG savings and bank link -> Women voice and mobility
 Over-debt and male capture -> Asset creation
 Over-debt and male capture -> Income security
 Over-debt and male capture -> Women voice and mobility

Conclusion

- **SHGs have been India's most scalable micro-finance vessel for rural women:** they can create small assets, buffer income shocks, and shift household voice. They achieve the dual objective only when credit meets livelihoods and public goods. As an anti-poverty vaccine they are a dose, not the immune system of the rural economy.

Open WRAP page — <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/gs-2/2020/micro-finance-as-an-anti-poverty-vaccine-is-aimed-at-asset-creation-and-income-security-of-the-rural-poor-in-india-evaluate-the-role-of-self-help-groups-in-achieving-the-twin-objectives-along-with-empowering-women-in/>

Q18 · 15 marks

National Education Policy 2020 is in conformity with the Sustainable Development Goal-4 (2030). It intends to restructure and reorient education system in India. Critically examine the statement.

GS II · 2020 · Health, Education and Human Resources

Revision summary

SDG-4 is inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning by 2030.

NEP 2020 maps onto ECCE, universal schooling, vocational and higher-education flexibility, and a 6 per cent GDP spend goal.

Restructuring is 5+3+3+4, board-exam reform, multidisciplinary colleges and a proposed HECI.

Equity, language, digital divide and unmet public finance are the critical gaps.

Conformity of intent is high; conformity of 2030 outcome was unproven in 2020.

Introduction

SDG-4 asks States to ensure inclusive, equitable, quality education and lifelong learning by 2030. NEP 2020 is India's first full education policy of the twenty-first century and it writes that SDG language into its opening. Conformity is real on paper - 5+3+3+4, ECCE, foundational literacy, multiple pathways. Restructuring will succeed only if States, teachers, and budgets follow, which is the critical part of the examination.

Body**SDG-4 and what conformity means**

- **Target 4.1:** free, equitable, quality primary and secondary completion. NEP's universalisation to Grade 12 and the Right to Education spirit (with a proposed extension of age) speak to that.
- **Target 4.2:** quality early childhood. NEP's 3-6 years in the 5+3+3+4 design and Anganwadi-school linkage is the ECCE match.
- **Targets 4.3-4.4:** affordable technical, vocational, tertiary, and relevant skills. NEP's credit banks, academic bank of credits, multidisciplinary colleges, and vocational integration from middle school are the map.
- **Target 4.5:** gender and vulnerable-group equality; 4.6 adult literacy; 4.7 sustainable development and global citizenship. NEP chapters on equity, adult education, and a 'light but tight' regulation claim those spaces.
- **Target 4.a-4.c:** safe facilities, scholarships, qualified teachers. NEP's 6 per cent of GDP public spend ambition and teacher professional standards are the resource clause.

How NEP intends to restructure and reorient

- **School:** foundational literacy and numeracy mission, board-exam reform toward core competencies, mother-tongue where possible in the early years, and exit options that are not a single fail-point.
- **Higher education:** large multidisciplinary universities, four-year undergraduate with multiple exits, National Research Foundation, and a single-regulator idea (HECI) replacing fragmented UGC/AICTE-era silos.

- **Reorientation:** from rote and early specialisation toward flexibility, Indian languages, and an 'Indian-ness' of curriculum that the Policy names as cultural rootedness plus global skill.

Critical gaps versus SDG-4

- SDG-4 is inclusion-first; NEP's three-language formula and early English anxiety can, if poorly implemented, worsen equity for first-generation learners even while the text praises multilingualism.
- Digital-intensive delivery, accelerated by COVID-19 in 2020, collides with SDG-4's equity if connectivity and devices stay uneven - NEP's technology chapter needs a public device-and-connectivity floor.
- Six per cent of GDP is an old promise (Kothari) still unmet; without it, 5+3+3+4 is a diagram.
- Education is concurrent; States must rewrite curriculum and teacher training. A Union policy is not a 2030 outcome.
- Examination and coaching markets may absorb 'competency' language without changing what a Class-12 student actually faces.
- Privatisation and philanthropy windows can help capacity; they can also threaten SDG-4's free-equitable core if the public school is left as a residual.

Balanced finding

- **The statement is largely true as a design claim:** NEP 2020 is written to SDG-4's architecture of lifelong, flexible, quality learning.
- **It is not yet true as an outcome claim in 2020:** restructuring is a decade of State action, teacher supply, and finance.
- Critical examination therefore accepts conformity of intent and flags the implementation and equity tests that decide 2030.

Flow diagram

SDG-4 inclusive quality lifelong-4 inclusive quality lifelong -> NEP 2020 2020
 NEP 2020 -> 5+3+3+4 ECCE FLN
 NEP 2020 -> Multidisciplinary HE skills
 Budget teachers States equity -> 2030 outcome

Conclusion

- **NEP 2020 is in textual conformity with SDG-4:** ECCE, universal secondary, skills, equity language, and lifelong learning. It does intend to restructure stages, regulation, and pedagogy. Whether India meets SDG-4 by 2030 depends on money, teachers, federal uptake, and a digital divide that 2020 already exposed. Policy conformity is the start of reorientation, not the finish.

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Q19 · 15 marks

'Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)' is the transforming itself into a trade bloc from a military alliance, in present times - Discuss.

GS II · 2020 · Bilateral and Regional Groupings

Revision summary

Quad is India, Japan, Australia and the US in an Indo-Pacific diplomatic quadrilateral revived after 2017.

- **It was not a NATO-like military alliance in 2020:** no mutual-defence treaty, India's autonomy intact.
- **It was not becoming a trade bloc:** no common tariff or Quad FTA.

2020 did widen the agenda to vaccines, health supply chains and infrastructure quality.

The accurate description is a security minilateral taking on economic-security public goods.

Introduction

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue joins India, Japan, Australia, and the United States. In 2020 it had been revived as a leaders-and-ministers conversation on a free and open Indo-Pacific. The statement that it is transforming from a military alliance into a trade bloc overstates both ends. Quad was not a NATO in 2020, and it was not becoming an EU-style trade bloc either.

Body

What Quad was in 2020

- Born in the 2004 tsunami core-group memory, proposed in the 2007 Abe-Bush-Howard-Singh moment, quieted after Australia's then caution, revived from 2017 as a diplomatic quadrilateral.
- 2020 added a pandemic layer: talks on vaccines, resilient medical and technology supply chains, and quality infrastructure as alternatives to coercive connectivity.
- Malabar naval exercises expanded in participation over the period, which is military cooperation among partners, not a treaty alliance with Article-5 mutual defence.

Why 'military alliance' is the wrong starting label

- Alliances (NATO, ANZUS) have standing commands, nuclear umbrellas, and legal war obligations. Quad has joint statements and overlapping bilateral logistics (LEMOA, ACSA, Japan-Australia recips) without a single Quad treaty.
- **India keeps strategic autonomy:** no US base on Indian soil as alliance glue, and a simultaneous Russia defence-and-energy relationship.
- China calls Quad an Asian NATO; that is a polemic. 2020 practice was a flexible coalition on maritime rules, not a containment pact with assigned sectors.

Why 'trade bloc' is the wrong arrival label

- A trade bloc is a PTA, customs union, or common market with internal preference and a CET. Quad has no common external tariff, no Quad FTA, and no secretariat that sets duties.
- RCEP without India, CPTPP without India and the US (as of 2020), and bilateral FTAs are the real trade architecture; Quad does not replace them.

- Supply-chain resilience (pharma APIs, rare earths, 5G vendors) is economic security, which sits between trade and strategy; it is not a bloc.

What was actually transforming in 'present times' (2020)

- **Agenda widening:** from a narrow maritime-security chat toward vaccines, climate, and critical technologies - a minilateral with a development face.
- **Regularity:** more frequent foreign-minister and later leaders' formats, which is institutionalisation of a dialogue, not of an alliance or a customs union.
- **Signalling:** a political counterweight to a China-centric Asia, using both naval presence and public-goods language.

Discussion finding

- Reject the binary in the stem as a completed transformation.
- **Accept a narrower truth:** Quad in 2020 was adding economic-public-goods work onto a security dialogue among four militarily capable democracies.
- **India's interest is exactly that middle:** cooperate on Indo-Pacific public goods without signing a NATO or dissolving trade policy into a four-country bloc.

Flow diagram

Quad 2020 -> Security dialogue Malabar

Quad 2020 -> Vaccines supply chains

Not NATO alliance -> Quad 2020

Not customs union -> Quad 2020

Conclusion

Quad in 2020 was not a military alliance turning into a trade bloc. It was a security-centred minilateral that had begun to wear vaccine and supply-chain clothes. Discussing the statement means correcting both metaphors: no **Article 5**, no customs union, but a real, widening Indo-Pacific coalition.

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Q20 · 15 marks

What is the significance of Indo-US defence deals over Indo-Russian defence deals? Discuss with reference to stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

GS II · 2020 · India and its Neighbourhood

Revision summary

Russia still underwrites much of India's existing fighters, submarines and armour.

US deals since the 2010s emphasise logistics, secure comms, geospatial data and Indo-Pacific-range ASW and lift.

BECA (2020), LEMOA and COMCASA are the interoperability spine, not a NATO accession.

Indo-Pacific stability needs Indian maritime awareness with partners and a usable legacy force.

Significance 'over' Russia is theatre-and-network, not a completed inventory swap.

Introduction

- **India's arsenal was built on Soviet and then Russian platforms:** fighters, submarines, tanks, and nuclear-submarine know-how. Indo-US defence deals of the 2010s-2020 are smaller in inventory share but large in the kind of interoperability they buy. For Indo-Pacific stability the significance is not that Washington has replaced Moscow in the hangar; it is that India can operate with Quad partners at sea while still hedging with Russian spares and S-400-era air defence.

Body

Indo-Russian deals - what they still mean

- **Legacy dependence:** Sukhoi, MiG, Kilo/Sindhughosh, T-90, and the nuclear-submarine lease lineage make Russia the maintenance and upgrade partner for the existing force.
- **Strategic autonomy memory:** Russia transferred sensitive tech (BrahMos joint, reactor assistance) when Western regimes were tight.
- **Limits for the Indo-Pacific:** Russian gear is not built to plug into US-Japan-Australia networks; CAATSA risk after S-400 showed that the old partner now collides with the new theatre.
- A purely Russian inventory would leave India a strong continental power with a weaker ability to share the maritime picture with Indo-Pacific partners.

Indo-US deals - what is significant

- **Foundational agreements:** LEMOA (logistics), COMCASA (secure communications), and BECA (geospatial) - the 2020 BECA signing is the intelligence-map piece. These are not 'a squadron of aircraft'; they are the wiring for coalition maritime domain awareness.
- **Hardware:** C-17, C-130, P-8I Poseidon, Apache, Chinook, and MH-60R - lift, anti-submarine warfare, and helicopters that match Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific distances.
- **Industrial and staff talks:** DTTI, 2+2, and Major Defence Partner status aim at co-production over time, still thinner than the old Soviet licensed-production depth.
- **Significance over Russian deals is qualitative:** ISR, logistics on the move, and political signalling to a revisionist China, not yet quantitative replacement of the Russian share.

Indo-Pacific stability as the test

- **Stability here means deterrence without a great-power war:** a capable India that can see and stay at sea, plus crisis communication, plus no forced choice that splits India's force into unusable halves.
- US deals raise the cost of Chinese maritime coercion in the Indian Ocean and the approaches to the Malacca-South China Sea arc by knitting India into a common operating picture with Japan and Australia.
- Russian deals still keep India from being a US treaty client, which itself can stabilise: a non-allied India is acceptable to more of Asia than a NATO-East.
- Over-weighting US deals to the point of CAATSA-broken Russian maintenance would destabilise by grounding a large part of the IAF and Navy - the opposite of stability.
- Over-weighting Russia alone would isolate India from the maritime coalition that actually polices Indo-Pacific commons in 2020.

Balanced significance

- 'Over' in the stem is best read as strategic incremental significance for the Indo-Pacific theatre, not as a ledger where every new US contract cancels a Russian invoice.
- **The stable mix:** Russian (and domestic) muscle for the force in being; US deals for C4ISR, ASW, and logistics that make India a net security provider in the Indian Ocean.
- Atmanirbhar defence is the third term the stem omits; without it, both relationships are dependencies.

Flow diagram

Indo-Russian platforms -> Force in being

Indo-Indo-US LEMOA COMCASA BECA P8I LEMOA COMCASA BECA P8I -> Maritime MDA with partners

Force in being -> Indo-Pacific stability

Maritime MDA with partners -> Indo-Pacific stability

China maritime coercion -> Indo-Pacific stability

Conclusion

Indo-US defence deals matter more than additional Russian platform sales for Indo-Pacific stability because they buy logistics, secure comms, geospatial intelligence, and ASW lift that work with Quad partners. Indo-Russian deals still matter for the fleet and air force India already has. Stability needs both: American-era maritime awareness without a messy divorce from Russian sustainment.

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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

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