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## Polity

1. **“Despite constitutional and legal safeguards, custodial violence continues to undermine the rule of law in India.” Discuss the causes and suggest measures.** (10 Marks)

### Introduction:

Custodial violence, including torture, assault, and deaths in police or judicial custody, remains a serious challenge to the rule of law in India despite strong constitutional guarantees under Articles 20, 21, and 22 and various judicial safeguards. It reflects a gap between legal provisions and their effective implementation, thereby eroding public trust in the justice system.

### Causes of Custodial Violence:

- Weak enforcement of laws and guidelines such as D.K. Basu guidelines and provisions under Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 leads to impunity.
- Lack of police accountability due to political interference and absence of independent oversight mechanisms.
- Institutional pressure on police to secure quick confessions and maintain high conviction rates encourages coercive methods.
- Poor training and colonial policing mindset focusing on force rather than rights-based investigation.
- Inadequate infrastructure such as overcrowded prisons and lack of surveillance systems like CCTV cameras.
- Socio-economic vulnerability of victims (poor, marginalized communities) who lack access to legal remedies.

### Measures to Address Custodial Violence:

- Strict implementation of Supreme Court guidelines (D.K. Basu case) and mandatory installation of CCTV cameras in police stations and prisons.
- Enactment of a comprehensive anti-torture law and ratification of the UN Convention Against Torture (UNCAT).
- Police reforms including separation of investigation from law-and-order functions and establishment of independent Police Complaints Authorities.
- Capacity building through human rights training and use of scientific investigation techniques instead of third-degree methods.

### Conclusion:

Custodial violence persists not due to lack of laws but due to systemic weaknesses in enforcement and accountability. A combination of legal reforms, institutional restructuring, and attitudinal change is essential to uphold human dignity and strengthen the rule of law in India.

2. **“Constitutional morality and societal morality are often seen in conflict. However, this binary is oversimplified.” Examine in the context of judicial decision-making in India.**

### Introduction:

The distinction between constitutional morality and societal morality has emerged as a key theme in Indian constitutional jurisprudence. While many often portray them as being in conflict, this binary is overly simplistic and does not capture their dynamic and evolving relationship.

**Understanding the Concepts:**

- **Constitutional morality** refers to adherence to core constitutional values such as justice, liberty, equality, dignity, and rule of law.
- **Societal morality** reflects prevailing social norms, traditions, and cultural practices, which may vary across time and communities.

**Why They Are Seen in Conflict:**

- Courts often intervene when societal practices violate fundamental rights (e.g., caste discrimination, gender injustice).
- In such cases, constitutional morality is invoked as a **transformative tool** to reform regressive social norms.
- Example: In *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India* (2018), the Supreme Court prioritized constitutional morality over majoritarian social disapproval.

**Limitations of the Binary View:**

- **Oversimplification of Society:** Society is not homogeneous; multiple moralities coexist across regions, classes, and groups.
- **Dynamic Nature of Morality:** Societal morality evolves over time, often influenced by constitutional values themselves.
- **Mutual Reinforcement:** Constitutional morality can shape and reform societal morality (e.g., abolition of untouchability), while societal acceptance ensures effective implementation of constitutional principles.
- **Judicial Selectivity:** Courts may inconsistently invoke constitutional morality, leading to accusations of subjectivity or overreach.

**Judicial Approach in India:**

- The judiciary has adopted a **transformative constitutionalism approach**, using constitutional morality to expand rights.
- However, it also shows restraint in culturally sensitive issues, acknowledging societal complexities.
- Example: In *Sabarimala Temple Entry Case* (2018), the Court upheld gender equality, but subsequent review and public response reflected tension between legal ideals and social acceptance.

**Need for a Balanced Approach:**

- Courts should avoid a rigid binary and adopt a **harmonization approach**:
  - Uphold fundamental rights as non-negotiable.
  - Recognize gradual social transformation rather than abrupt imposition.
  - Encourage democratic dialogue alongside judicial intervention.

**Conclusion:**

The relationship between constitutional morality and societal morality is not inherently antagonistic but interactive and evolving. Judicial decision-making must move beyond the binary framework and strive to balance transformative constitutional values with social realities to ensure both legitimacy and effectiveness.

### 3. **Expanding Parliament may solve representation issues but risks making governance inefficient and less accountable. Comment.**

**Introduction:**

Expanding the size of Parliament has been proposed in the context of post-2026 delimitation to better reflect India's changing demographic realities. While it can improve representational equity, it also raises concerns regarding legislative efficiency and institutional effectiveness.

**Expanding Parliament: Addressing Representation Issues:**

- India's population has grown significantly since the last seat allocation based on the 1971 Census, leading to under-representation of populous states.
- Increasing the number of seats can:
  - Ensure more equitable representation based on current population
  - Strengthen the principle of "one person, one vote"
  - Reduce the average population per constituency, improving accessibility of representatives
- It can also facilitate:
  - Implementation of women's reservation by creating additional seats
  - Better inclusion of diverse social and regional interests

**Risks to Governance Efficiency:**

- A very large legislature may:
  - Reduce the quality of debates due to time constraints
  - Limit meaningful participation by individual members
- Legislative functioning may be affected:
  - Shorter speaking time for members
  - Difficulty in managing proceedings and maintaining order
- Parliamentary committees, which ensure detailed scrutiny, may become:
  - Overburdened or diluted in effectiveness

**Concerns Regarding Accountability:**

- With more members:
  - Individual accountability may weaken as responsibility becomes diffused
  - Monitoring performance of representatives becomes harder
- Larger constituencies may still persist in some regions, while:
  - Quality of engagement between citizens and representatives may decline
- Political centralisation may increase:
  - Larger states gaining more seats may dominate decision-making

**Balancing Representation and Efficiency:**

- Expansion must be accompanied by institutional reforms such as:
  - Strengthening committee systems
    - Increasing the number of parliamentary sitting days
    - Use of technology for efficient proceedings
- Alternative approaches may include:
  - Rational delimitation without excessive expansion
  - Ensuring fair representation through balanced criteria beyond population

**Conclusion:**

While expanding Parliament can correct representational imbalances in a growing democracy, unchecked expansion risks weakening legislative efficiency and accountability. Therefore, reforms must strike a careful balance between democratic representation and effective governance to preserve both the spirit and functionality of parliamentary democracy.

**4. “Short-term electoral incentives often distort long-term development priorities.” Analyse this statement with reference to welfare policies. (10 Marks)**

**Introduction:**

In democratic systems, electoral competition often encourages governments to prioritise policies that yield immediate political gains. While welfare policies are essential for social protection, their design is frequently influenced by short-term electoral incentives, which can distort long-term development priorities.

**Nature of Distortion in Welfare Policies:**

- Governments tend to design welfare measures that provide quick, visible benefits to voters, especially before elections, such as free electricity, loan waivers, or unconditional transfers.
- Such measures are often consumption-oriented and lack a capability-building dimension, thereby limiting their contribution to sustainable development.
- Excessive focus on short-term welfare leads to fiscal stress, as resources are diverted away from capital expenditure on infrastructure, education, and health.
- Poorly targeted welfare schemes may also create dependency and weaken work incentives, adversely affecting productivity in the long run.
- Furthermore, welfare is often conflated with development, with governments projecting distributive measures as indicators of structural progress, thereby neglecting deeper reforms.

**Role of Welfare in Development:**

- However, welfare policies are not inherently distortionary when they are targeted, need-based, and capability-enhancing.
- Schemes related to food security, employment, and health can act as social stabilisers and support long-term development by strengthening human capital.

**Conclusion:**

Thus, while electoral incentives can distort welfare policies, the challenge lies in ensuring that welfare measures are aligned with long-term developmental goals, balancing immediate relief with sustainable capacity building.

**5. “Civil services in India are evolving from policy-makers to outcome-oriented implementers in the era of Digital India.” Examine this statement in the light of recent administrative transformations. (15 marks 250 words)**

**Introduction:**

Civil services in India have traditionally played a dominant role in policy formulation. However, with the advent of the Digital India initiative and e-governance reforms, their role is increasingly shifting towards efficient implementation and measurable outcomes.

**Shift towards Outcome-Oriented Implementation:**

**1. Digital Governance and Service Delivery:**

- E-governance uses ICT to deliver services efficiently, enhancing transparency and accessibility.
- Platforms like UMANG, DigiLocker, and online portals ensure direct benefit delivery and reduce discretion.

**2. Data-Driven Decision Making:**

- Initiatives like PM GatiShakti integrate data and geospatial tools for better planning and execution.
- Real-time dashboards enable monitoring of schemes, shifting focus to outcomes rather than processes.

**3. Citizen-Centric Administration:**

- Digital grievance redressal systems and apps have enhanced responsiveness and accountability.
- Civil servants now act as service providers ensuring timely delivery.

**4. Process Re-engineering and Efficiency:**

- E-office systems reduce delays and increase transparency in file processing.
- Paperless governance minimizes bureaucratic inertia.

**5. Capacity Building and Skill Transformation:**

- Mission Karmayogi promotes continuous learning and competency-based training for officials.
- Focus is on managerial, technological, and implementation skills.

**Continuing Role in Policy Making:**

- Civil servants still provide expert advice and institutional memory.
- Increasing reliance on evidence-based policy inputs.

**Challenges:**

- Digital divide and capacity gaps
- Data privacy and cybersecurity concerns
- Risk of technocratic governance ignoring local realities

**Conclusion:**

While policy formulation remains important, the digital era has transformed civil services into result-oriented implementers, emphasizing efficiency, accountability, and citizen-centric governance - marking a significant administrative evolution in India.

**6. Discuss the scientific basis, public health significance, and implementation challenges of the Human Papillomavirus vaccination drive in India. (15 Marks, 250 words)****Introduction:**

The Human Papillomavirus vaccination drive in India represents a major preventive health intervention aimed at reducing the burden of cervical cancer, which remains a leading cause of cancer-related mortality among women.

**Scientific Basis:**

- Cervical cancer is primarily caused by persistent infection with high-risk types of Human Papillomavirus, especially types 16 and 18.
- The vaccine is prophylactic, meaning it prevents infection before exposure, rather than treating existing disease.
- It is a non-live vaccine, ensuring safety and eliminating risk of infection.
- High efficacy (over 85–90%) when administered in the pre-adolescent age group (9–14 years), before onset of sexual activity.
- The vaccine targets specific virus strains responsible for the majority of cervical cancer cases.

**Public Health Significance:**

- India accounts for a significant share of global cervical cancer cases, with high mortality due to late diagnosis.
- Vaccination reduces disease burden, healthcare costs, and improves women's health outcomes and life expectancy.
- Aligns with World Health Organization targets (90-70-90) for elimination of cervical cancer.
- Promotes preventive healthcare approach, shifting focus from treatment to early prevention.
- Enhances gender equity by addressing a disease affecting women disproportionately.

**Implementation Challenges:**

- Low awareness and social stigma related to a sexually transmitted infection.
- Vaccine hesitancy and misinformation regarding safety and side effects.
- Limited screening infrastructure, especially in rural areas.
- Logistical challenges in reaching adolescent girls outside formal school systems.
- Dependence on imported vaccines and cost constraints in scaling up coverage.

**Conclusion:**

The Human Papillomavirus vaccination drive has strong scientific backing and immense public health potential. However, its success depends on overcoming socio-cultural barriers, strengthening healthcare systems, and ensuring universal access alongside screening programmes.

## Economy

- 7. The rapid expansion of the gig and platform economy has raised concerns regarding workers' rights and social security. Discuss the need for regulatory frameworks for gig workers in India. What challenges are associated with their implementation? (150 words)**

The gig and platform economy in India is expanding rapidly, driven by digital platforms. However, the absence of formal employer-employee relationships has raised concerns about workers' rights, income security, and social protection, necessitating regulatory frameworks.

**Need for Regulation:**

- **Social Security:** Gig workers lack EPF, ESI, and insurance; the Code on Social Security, 2020 needs effective implementation.
- **Fair Wages & Stability:** Income is volatile due to demand fluctuations and algorithmic control.
- **Protection from Exploitation:** Opaque algorithms, arbitrary deactivation, and lack of grievance redressal.
- **Occupational Safety:** High-risk work without employer liability.
- **Formalisation:** Helps data collection, productivity, and inclusive growth.

**Challenges:**

- **Definitional Ambiguity:** Gig workers fall between employee and contractor.
- **Platform Resistance:** Fear of higher costs and reduced flexibility.

- **Fiscal Burden:** Funding and contribution-sharing issues.
- **Heterogeneity:** Diverse nature of gig work complicates uniform regulation.
- **Weak Enforcement:** Limited institutional capacity and worker organisation.
- **Data Opacity:** Lack of algorithmic transparency.

A balanced framework ensuring social security, fairness, and flexibility is essential to make the gig economy inclusive and sustainable.

**8. “India’s Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for Mobile Manufacturing offers important lessons for industrial policy design.” Discuss the key factors behind its success and examine whether these lessons can be replicated in other sectors. (15 Marks)**

**Introduction:**

The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for mobile manufacturing has emerged as one of India’s most successful industrial policy interventions, significantly boosting exports, production, and employment while integrating India into global value chains.

**Key Factors Behind the Success:**

- 1. Export-Oriented Design:**
  - Focus on global markets rather than import substitution.
  - Differentiation between high-value export phones and domestic segment.
  - Enabled rapid export growth and scale expansion.
- 2. Focus on Downstream Assembly**
  - Targeted global firms such as Foxconn, Pegatron, and Wistron.
  - Assembly acted as a driver for the entire ecosystem by creating demand for components and MSMEs.
- 3. Leveraging Labour Advantage**
  - Labour-intensive nature of assembly suited India’s demographic strength.
  - Generated large-scale employment, including women workforce.
- 4. Ease of Inputs and Trade Policy Support**
  - Reduction in tariffs on key components.
  - Ensured smooth integration into global supply chains.
- 5. Administrative Efficiency and Industry Collaboration**
  - Quick resolution of logistical and labour issues.
  - Continuous consultation with industry ensured practical policy design.

**Replicability in Other Sectors:**

**Opportunities:**

- Can be applied to sectors like textiles, electronics, telecom, and footwear.
- Labour-intensive industries can benefit from similar assembly-first strategies.
- Export-led growth model can enhance global competitiveness.

**Challenges:**

- Other sectors suffer from protectionist tendencies and input constraints.
- Lack of ecosystem depth and supply chain readiness.
- Policy design often lacks sector-specific tailoring and coordination.
- Administrative bottlenecks and inconsistent ease of doing business.

**Way Forward:**

- Shift from import substitution to export-led industrialisation
- Adopt sector-specific PLI design based on comparative advantage
- Build scale in downstream sectors before deepening upstream capabilities
- Ensure free flow of inputs through rational tariff structures
- Strengthen logistics, infrastructure, and ease of doing business
- Institutionalise continuous industry–government collaboration
- Provide sustained and predictable policy support over the long term

**Conclusion:**

The smartphone PLI demonstrates that export orientation, scale through assembly, and supportive governance are crucial for industrial success. Replicating this model across sectors requires careful adaptation, ecosystem development, and sustained policy commitment to achieve broad-based industrial growth.

**9. “The SHANTI Act marks a paradigm shift in India’s nuclear energy policy.” Discuss its key provisions and expected impact. (10 Marks)**

The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act, 2025 marks a paradigm shift in India’s nuclear energy policy by transitioning from a **state-controlled model** to a **mixed model involving private and foreign participation**. It seeks to accelerate nuclear capacity expansion to achieve energy security and climate goals.

**KEY PROVISIONS OF THE SHANTI ACT:**

- The Act permits private sector participation, allowing private firms and joint ventures to build, own, operate, and decommission nuclear power plants, thereby ending the government monopoly.
- It introduces a unified legal framework by replacing earlier legislations such as the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, and revising provisions of the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, to streamline regulatory processes.
- The Act establishes a revised liability structure, wherein liability is primarily channelled to the operator, with caps on financial liability and removal of the supplier’s “right of recourse,” improving investor confidence.
- It grants statutory status to the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB), thereby strengthening the regulatory and safety oversight mechanism.
- While liberalising the sector, the government retains strategic control over nuclear materials, fuel cycle activities, and radioactive waste management, ensuring national security.

**EXPECTED IMPACT:**

- The Act is expected to enhance energy security by enabling large-scale generation of reliable, low-carbon baseload power to complement renewable energy.
- It is likely to attract significant domestic and foreign investment, addressing the high capital requirements needed to achieve the target of 100 GW nuclear capacity by 2047.
- The reforms will promote technological advancement, particularly in emerging areas such as Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and advanced nuclear systems.

- It facilitates greater global collaboration, aligning India's liability framework with international norms and enabling partnerships with countries such as the United States, France, and Japan.
- The Act aims to improve efficiency in project execution by reducing bureaucratic delays associated with a government-only model.

#### CONCLUSION:

The SHANTI Act represents a structural transformation of India's nuclear energy policy, balancing liberalisation with strategic control. However, its long-term success will depend on ensuring robust safety standards, regulatory independence, and equitable liability mechanisms while scaling up capacity.

### 10. Amid rising global uncertainties, India's fertiliser subsidy regime requires urgent reform." Examine the structural issues in the current fertiliser policy and suggest measures for making it efficient and sustainable. (15 Marks)

#### Introduction:

India's fertiliser policy has played a crucial role in ensuring food security since the Green Revolution. However, recent global disruptions such as the **Russia-Ukraine War** have exposed structural inefficiencies, making reform imperative.

#### Structural Issues in Fertiliser Policy:

- **Price Distortion and Nutrient Imbalance:**
  - Heavy subsidy on urea leads to its overuse, while phosphatic and potassic fertilisers are underutilised.
  - This distorts the ideal N:P:K ratio, degrading soil health.
- **Low Nutrient Use Efficiency (NUE):**
  - NUE remains around 30–40%, indicating inefficient absorption and wastage of fertilisers.
- **High Fiscal Burden:**
  - Fertiliser subsidies impose a significant burden on government finances, especially during global price spikes.
- **Environmental Degradation:**
  - Excess nitrogen leads to groundwater contamination and emissions of nitrous oxide, a potent greenhouse gas.
- **Import Dependence:**
  - India relies on imports for key fertilisers, making it vulnerable to geopolitical disruptions and price volatility.
- **Leakages and Diversion:**
  - Subsidised fertilisers are often diverted for non-agricultural uses due to price differentials.

#### Reform Measures for Efficiency and Sustainability:

- **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to Farmers:**
  - Shifting subsidy delivery directly to farmers can reduce leakages and promote rational usage.
- **Rationalisation of Fertiliser Pricing:**
  - Align prices with nutrient content to encourage balanced fertilisation practices.
- **Promotion of Alternative Inputs:**
  - Encourage use of biofertilisers, organic manure, and integrated nutrient management.

- **Technological Interventions:**
  - Adoption of neem-coated urea, precision farming, and fertigation can improve efficiency.
- **Enhancing Domestic Production:**
  - Increase indigenous fertiliser production and diversify import sources to reduce vulnerability.
- **Awareness and Extension Services:**
  - Educate farmers on balanced fertiliser use and sustainable practices.

**Conclusion:**

Reforming fertiliser policy is essential to transition from a **subsidy-driven model to an efficiency-driven framework**, ensuring long-term agricultural sustainability, environmental protection, and fiscal prudence.

**11. How can a below-normal monsoon impact India's agriculture and economy? Suggest measures to mitigate these challenges. (10 Marks)**

**Introduction:**

The Indian monsoon is crucial for agriculture and rural livelihoods. A below-normal monsoon can disrupt production, incomes, and overall economic stability.

**Impacts of below-normal monsoon:**

**On Agriculture:**

- Reduced rainfall lowers soil moisture, leading to decline in crop yields, especially kharif crops.
- Delay or failure of sowing disrupts cropping cycles.
- Increased dependence on irrigation raises costs and depletes groundwater.

**On Economy:**

- Lower output leads to food inflation and price rise.
- Decline in rural incomes reduces demand in the economy.
- Low reservoir levels affect irrigation and hydropower, slowing GDP growth.

**Mitigation Measures:**

- Expand irrigation and promote micro-irrigation for efficient water use.
- Encourage drought-resistant crops and diversification (e.g., millets).
- Improve weather forecasting and farmer advisories.
- Strengthen crop insurance like Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana and provide credit support.
- Promote rainwater harvesting and better water management.
- Maintain buffer stocks to control inflation.

**Conclusion:**

A below-normal monsoon affects both agriculture and economic stability, making resilience-building through irrigation, diversification, and institutional support essential.

**12. India's National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) is increasingly being seen as a model of development diplomacy in the Global South. Examine how community-based institutional models like Self-Help Groups (SHGs) contribute to both domestic transformation and international cooperation. (15 Marks, 250 Words)**

**Introduction:**

India's National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), launched in 2011, represents a shift from welfare-based approaches to institution-based poverty alleviation. By organizing rural poor, especially women, into Self-Help Groups (SHGs), it has not only transformed rural livelihoods domestically but is also emerging as a tool of India's development diplomacy in the Global South.

**Role of SHG-based Models in Domestic Transformation:**

- NRLM has enabled large-scale social mobilization, covered over 100 million households and formed more than nine million SHGs across India.
- It has enhanced financial inclusion by linking SHGs with formal banking systems, leading to credit access worth lakhs of crores.
- Women's economic empowerment has improved significantly, with increased income generation and higher female labour force participation.
- The model has built federated community institutions at village, cluster, and block levels, ensuring decentralized governance.
- It has strengthened last-mile service delivery through trained community cadres, improving access to welfare schemes and financial services.
- The focus on savings, peer learning, and collective action has created sustainable and resilient livelihood systems.

**Contribution to Development Diplomacy:**

- NRLM has emerged as a scalable and adaptable model for other developing countries, particularly in Africa.
- Countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda are studying India's SHG framework for replication.
- It reflects a shift in India's development cooperation from financial aid to knowledge and institution-sharing.
- The model promotes South-South cooperation through peer learning and context-specific solutions.
- It strengthens long-term partnerships by building institutional linkages between governments, communities, and development agencies.

**Challenges and Limitations:**

- Variations in socio-political contexts may limit direct replication in other countries.
- Capacity constraints and institutional weaknesses in partner countries can affect implementation.
- Sustaining financial discipline and accountability at scale remains a challenge.

**Way Forward:**

- India should institutionalize knowledge-sharing through platforms like a Rural Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange mechanism.
- Expanding training, fellowships, and pilot projects can help adapt the model to local contexts globally.

**Conclusion:**

NRLM demonstrates how grassroots institutional innovation can drive both inclusive development and global influence. By exporting its community-based models, India is shaping a new paradigm of development diplomacy rooted in shared learning and sustainable institution-building.

**13. "Global economic rankings are relative, not absolute." Explain this statement in the context of India's changing position in the world economy. (10 Marks 150 words)**

**Introduction:**

Global economic rankings based on nominal GDP compare countries in relative terms rather than measuring absolute economic strength. India's recent shift from fourth to sixth position reflects this comparative nature.

**Global Economic Rankings: A Relative Concept:**

- Economic rankings depend on **comparative performance among countries**, not isolated national growth.
- A country may grow rapidly yet fall in rankings if **other economies perform better**.
- Rankings are affected by **exchange rate movements**, as GDP is measured in US dollar terms.
- Hence, rankings represent a **dynamic global comparison**, not an absolute indicator of economic capacity.

**India's Changing Position in Global Rankings:****1. Exchange Rate Depreciation:**

- The Indian rupee has weakened against the US dollar, reducing India's GDP in dollar terms.
- Even with higher domestic output, depreciation leads to a **lower global ranking**.

**2. Relative Performance of Other Economies:**

- Economies such as Japan and the United Kingdom have maintained stronger nominal GDP positions.
- Since rankings are relative, India's position declines when others perform comparatively better.

**3. Statistical Revisions in GDP:**

- Changes in GDP estimation methodology led to **downward adjustments in India's GDP size**.
- Improved data accuracy can temporarily affect international comparisons.

**4. Influence of Global Factors:**

- Currency fluctuations, inflation trends, and global economic conditions influence rankings.
- These factors may alter positions without indicating a structural change in the economy.

**Critical Analysis:**

- Nominal GDP does not reflect **living standards, inequality, or real purchasing power**.
- Measures like **Purchasing Power Parity (PPP)** provide a better assessment of economic strength.
- India continues to be among the **fastest-growing major economies**, indicating strong fundamentals.
- Therefore, ranking changes reflect **relative global shifts rather than domestic weakness**.

**Conclusion:**

India's movement in global rankings highlights their relative nature, shaped by exchange rates and comparative performance. Sustained growth and structural strength remain more important than temporary ranking shifts.

## International Relations

- 14. "In the context of evolving global power dynamics, the recalibration of US-China relations is reshaping India's strategic space." Examine the implications of this shift for India and discuss the measures India should adopt to safeguard its national interests. (10 Marks)**

**Introduction:**

The evolving US-China relationship, shifting from overt confrontation to calibrated competition, is altering the global strategic balance. This has direct implications for India's security, economy, and foreign policy choices.

**Implications for India:**

1. **Shrinking Strategic Space:**
  - Reduced US focus on the Indo-Pacific may limit India's role as a counterweight to China.
  - Possibility of US-China tactical adjustments affecting India's core interests.
2. **Increased Chinese Advantage:**
  - China's dominance in manufacturing, green technology, and supply chains enhances its global leverage.
  - Continued strategic pressure along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).
3. **Strategic Uncertainty:**
  - US foreign policy is becoming more transactional and less predictable.
  - Sudden policy shifts may affect India's long-term strategic planning.
4. **Technological Vulnerabilities:**
  - Dependence on China for hardware and the US for advanced technologies like AI creates dual dependency risks.

**Measures India Should Adopt:**

1. **Balanced Foreign Policy:**
  - Maintain strategic autonomy while deepening selective partnerships with the US.
  - Avoid over-dependence on any single power.
2. **Firm and Realistic China Policy:**
  - Continue diplomatic engagement but insist on peace at the LAC as a precondition for normalisation.
  - Strengthen deterrence through military preparedness and border infrastructure.
3. **Build Domestic Capabilities:**
  - Invest in indigenous development of AI, semiconductors, and green energy.
  - Reduce dependence on critical imports through policy support and innovation.
4. **Strengthen Regional Leadership:**
  - Revitalise Neighbourhood First and Act East policies.
  - Expand India's economic and strategic footprint in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific.

**Conclusion:**

India must adopt a pragmatic, balanced, and self-reliant strategy, carefully navigating great power competition while strengthening its internal capabilities to secure long-term national interests.

## Environment, Ecology and Disaster Management

15. **"Climate change is no longer just an environmental issue but a major public health emergency." Discuss with suitable examples from the Indian context.**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Climate change has emerged as a major public health emergency because it directly and indirectly affects human health through heat stress, disease spread, food insecurity, and environmental degradation. In a country like India, with high population density and socio-economic vulnerabilities, these impacts are more severe and widespread.

**CLIMATE CHANGE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY:**

- Climate change increases the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as heatwaves, floods, and cyclones, which directly cause injuries, deaths, and displacement.
- Rising temperatures worsen air pollution and increase the burden of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.
- Changing climate conditions alter ecosystems, enabling disease vectors like mosquitoes to expand into new regions.
- Climate change affects food and water security, leading to malnutrition and water-borne diseases.
- Vulnerable groups such as children, elderly, and the poor are disproportionately affected, making it a major equity issue.

**KEY HEALTH IMPACTS WITH INDIAN EXAMPLES:**

- Heatwaves: Severe heatwaves in states like Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh have caused thousands of deaths and increased cases of heatstroke.
- Air Pollution: Cities like Delhi experience hazardous PM2.5 levels, leading to increased cases of asthma, lung diseases, and heart ailments.
- Vector-borne Diseases: Diseases like dengue and malaria are spreading to new regions such as Himachal Pradesh due to changing temperature and rainfall patterns.
- Water-borne Diseases: Floods in cities like Mumbai and Chennai contaminate water sources, leading to outbreaks of cholera, leptospirosis, and hepatitis.
- Malnutrition: Climate-induced crop failures in regions like Vidarbha and parts of Bihar reduce food availability, worsening child malnutrition.
- Mental Health: Displacement due to cyclones like Amphan and floods in Assam leads to stress, anxiety, and long-term psychological trauma.

**INDIA'S SPECIFIC VULNERABILITIES:**

- High population density increases exposure to climate risks.
- Large informal workforce depends on climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture.
- Urban heat island effect intensifies health risks in rapidly growing cities.
- Limited healthcare infrastructure in rural areas reduces adaptive capacity.
- Socio-economic inequalities worsen the impact on marginalized communities.

**GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND RESPONSE:**

- National Action Plan on Climate Change includes missions on health, water, and sustainable agriculture.
- Heat Action Plans implemented in cities like Ahmedabad have reduced heat-related deaths.
- National Clean Air Programme aims to reduce air pollution levels across cities.
- Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme monitors climate-sensitive diseases.
- Jal Jeevan Mission improves access to safe drinking water, reducing water-borne diseases.

**WAY FORWARD:**

- Strengthen climate-resilient healthcare infrastructure and early warning systems.
- Integrate climate change into public health policy and planning.
- Promote sustainable urban planning to reduce heat island effects.

- Enhance awareness and community-level adaptation strategies.
- Increase investment in clean energy and pollution control measures.
- Focus on nutrition security through climate-resilient agriculture.

**CONCLUSION:**

Climate change is no longer a distant environmental concern but an immediate public health crisis, especially for India. Addressing it requires a holistic approach that integrates environmental policy with public health systems to ensure sustainable and equitable human development.

**16. Groundwater depletion has emerged as one of the most critical environmental and developmental challenges in India. Discuss the causes and consequences of groundwater over-extraction. Suggest sustainable measures for its management.**

**Introduction:**

Groundwater constitutes nearly half of India's irrigation needs and is a crucial source of drinking water. However, excessive extraction beyond natural recharge has led to alarming depletion levels, making it a major environmental and developmental concern.

**Causes of Groundwater Over-Extraction:**

- Agricultural dependence on groundwater due to inadequate surface irrigation infrastructure has led to indiscriminate extraction.
- Cultivation of water-intensive crops such as paddy and sugarcane in water-scarce regions has increased demand.
- Free or highly subsidized electricity for irrigation encourages excessive pumping without economic restraint.
- Rapid urbanization reduces natural recharge areas due to concretization and encroachment on water bodies.
- Weak regulatory framework and lack of effective groundwater governance allow unregulated borewell expansion.
- Climate variability and erratic monsoons reduce natural recharge while increasing dependency on groundwater.

**Consequences of Groundwater Depletion:**

- Declining water tables lead to drying of wells and increased cost of extraction, affecting farmers' incomes.
- Land subsidence occurs due to excessive withdrawal, damaging infrastructure and ecosystems.
- Quality deterioration such as salinization, fluoride, and arsenic contamination poses serious health risks.
- Reduced base flow to rivers affects aquatic ecosystems and disrupts hydrological balance.
- Increased energy consumption for deeper extraction leads to higher carbon emissions.
- Socio-economic inequalities deepen as small and marginal farmers are unable to afford deeper borewells.

**Sustainable Measures for Groundwater Management:**

- Promotion of micro-irrigation techniques such as drip and sprinkler systems to improve water-use efficiency.
- Crop diversification towards less water-intensive crops aligned with agro-climatic conditions.
- Strengthening rainwater harvesting and aquifer recharge through watershed management and check dams.
- Rationalization of power subsidies and introduction of metered electricity supply to discourage overuse.
- Implementation of community-based groundwater management models like participatory aquifer management.
- Strict regulation and monitoring of groundwater extraction through digital mapping and water budgeting.
- Urban planning reforms to preserve wetlands, lakes, and recharge zones.

**Conclusion:**

Groundwater depletion is not merely a resource issue but a developmental challenge affecting food security, livelihoods, and sustainability. A combination of technological, institutional, and behavioral interventions is essential to ensure long-term groundwater security in India.

**17. Critically examine the effectiveness of Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) norms in promoting decarbonisation in India's transport sector. (10 Marks, 150 words)**

**Introduction:**

Corporate Average Fuel Efficiency (CAFE) norms mandate automobile manufacturers to meet fleet-average CO<sub>2</sub> emission limits. Introduced in 2017, they aim to improve fuel efficiency and reduce emissions in India's transport sector.

**Effectiveness in Promoting Decarbonisation:**

1. **Incremental reduction in emissions:**
  - By linking fuel use to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, CAFE ensures gradual decline in per-vehicle emissions.
  - Tighter norms (Phase II) indicate progressive ambition.
2. **Technological improvements:**
  - Encourages better engines, lightweighting, and hybridisation.
  - Leads to efficiency gains without major disruption to industry.
3. **Indirect push to EVs:**
  - Electric and hybrid vehicles help meet fleet targets.
  - Supports broader clean mobility transition.

**Limitations:**

1. **Limited real impact:**
  - Firms often comply through minor efficiency tweaks rather than deep decarbonisation.
  - Fossil fuel dependence largely continues.
2. **Dilution due to fleet averaging:**
  - Efficient small cars offset high-emission SUVs, reducing overall impact.

3. **Narrow coverage:**
  - Excludes two-wheelers and heavy vehicles, which form a major share of emissions in India.
4. **Structural and regulatory issues:**
  - Weight-based norms may distort market choices.
  - Weak enforcement and limited penalties reduce effectiveness.

#### Conclusion:

CAFE norms are effective in achieving efficiency-led emission reductions but fall short of enabling transformational decarbonisation. A stronger shift toward electrification, wider coverage, and stricter enforcement is essential for meaningful emission reduction in India's transport sector.

## Science and Technology

18. **“Outer space is increasingly becoming a domain of competition rather than cooperation.” Examine the emerging challenges in space and lunar governance in this context. (15 Marks, 250 words)**

#### INTRODUCTION:

Outer space was historically governed as a global common, guided by cooperation and peaceful use. However, rapid technological advances, commercial interests, and geopolitical rivalries are transforming it into a domain of strategic competition, especially in lunar exploration.

#### SHIFT FROM COOPERATION TO COMPETITION:

- **Geopolitical Rivalry:** Major powers are competing for technological dominance and strategic positioning in space missions.
- **Race for Lunar Resources:** Increasing interest in water ice, rare minerals, and energy resources on the Moon.
- **Commercialisation of Space:** Entry of private players has shifted focus from scientific exploration to economic exploitation.
- **Fragmented Governance:** Rise of selective frameworks instead of universal consensus-based systems.

#### EMERGING CHALLENGES IN SPACE & LUNAR GOVERNANCE:

1. **Legal Ambiguity in Resource Utilisation:** Existing treaties prohibit ownership but are unclear on resource extraction, creating scope for exploitation.
2. **Risk of Resource Monopoly:** Early movers may establish control through operational zones, leading to indirect appropriation.
3. **Weak Multilateral Mechanisms:** Shift towards smaller group agreements undermines inclusive global governance.
4. **Commercial Regulation Gap:** Private companies operate in a space where laws are outdated and insufficient.
5. **Militarisation of Space:** Development of anti-satellite technologies threatens the principle of peaceful use of space.
6. **Space Debris and Sustainability Issues:** Increasing debris poses risks to satellites and long-term space operations.
7. **Inequitable Access:** Developing nations risk exclusion from decision-making and benefits, widening global inequality.

**WAY FORWARD:**

- Strengthen multilateral frameworks for inclusive decision-making.
- Develop clear international rules for resource utilisation and private sector regulation.
- Ensure equitable access and benefit-sharing.
- Promote transparency, cooperation, and sustainability in space activities.

**CONCLUSION:**

The transition of outer space into a competitive domain necessitates a balanced, rule-based, and cooperative governance framework to prevent conflict and ensure that space remains a shared heritage of humanity.

## Society and Social Justice

- 19. “Population ageing is not merely a welfare concern but a structural transformation requiring economic, social, and institutional adaptation.” Discuss this statement in the context of India. Also examine how the concept of a “silver economy” can help address challenges associated with ageing.**

India is witnessing a steady rise in elderly population (60+) will reach 319 million by 2050) due to declining fertility and increasing life expectancy. This shift is not just a welfare issue but a structural transformation affecting labour markets, healthcare systems, and social institutions, requiring comprehensive adaptation

**Ageing as Structural Transformation:****Economic:**

- Rising old-age dependency ratio (16-31 by 2050) shrinks productive workforce and fiscal space.
- Ageing populations shift from net savers to dissavers, affecting capital formation.
- Pension liabilities and healthcare costs will strain public finances; India's public health spending (2.1% of GDP) is already inadequate.

**Social:**

- Urbanisation and nuclear family trends are dismantling traditional old-age support systems.
- Feminisation of ageing: Women outlive men but have lower pension and asset coverage.
- Loneliness, depression, and cognitive decline remain largely unaddressed.

**Institutional:**

- Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act (2007, amended 2019) remain poorly enforced.
- Severe shortage of geriatricians and palliative care infrastructure.
- Age-unfriendly urban planning, housing, and public transport.

**India's Unique Vulnerability:**

- India risks ageing before getting rich with 90% elderly lacking formal pension coverage, a compressed adaptation window, and sharp regional heterogeneity (Kerala ageing far faster than Bihar/UP).

**The Silver Economy: Opportunity Framework:**

The silver economy encompasses goods, services, and employment responding to older persons' needs turning a demographic challenge into economic potential.

- **Healthcare & longevity:** Geriatric care, home-care services, assistive devices high-growth segments. Ayushman Bharat can be deepened for comprehensive geriatric coverage.
- **Technology:** India's IT strength positions it for assistive AI tools and remote monitoring, scalable domestically and exportable to ageing Asian markets.
- **Productive ageing:** Flexible employment, phased retirement, and knowledge-economy roles (mentorship, consultancy) can offset labour force contraction.
- **Financial products:** Expansion of Reverse Mortgage, SCSS, NPS annuities, and long-term care insurance can ensure income security.

#### Policy Recommendations:

- Revise National Ageing Policy (1999) to reflect current realities.
- Dedicated Geriatric Health Mission within NHM.
- Integrate WHO Age-Friendly City framework into Smart Cities Mission.
- Universalise pensions via APY and PM-SYM before informal workers age out.
- Incentivise silver entrepreneurship through credit access and tax relief.

#### Conclusion:

India must reframe ageing from burden to opportunity. A structurally prepared silver economy with reformed institutions and inclusive infrastructure can convert demographic ageing into a driver of consumption, care-sector employment, and innovation. The window to act is narrowing.

## 20. Political Empowerment of Women is a Prerequisite for Achieving Substantive Equality. Examine

#### Introduction:

Political empowerment refers to the ability of women to participate effectively in political processes, decision-making, and governance structures. Substantive equality goes beyond formal legal equality to ensure real, lived equality in outcomes. In a diverse and hierarchical society like India, political empowerment acts as a crucial instrument to translate constitutional ideals into social reality.

#### Body:

##### 1. Link between Political Empowerment and Substantive Equality:

- **Voice in Decision-Making:** Women's presence in legislatures ensures that policies reflect their lived experiences (e.g., issues of health, sanitation, gender-based violence).
- **Policy Prioritization:** Studies show women representatives tend to prioritize welfare, education, and social justice, contributing to inclusive development.
- **Breaking Structural Barriers:** Participation in politics challenges patriarchal norms and redistributes power in society.
- **From Legal to Real Equality:** Constitutional guarantees under Articles 14, 15, and 16 become meaningful only when women influence governance.

##### 2. Indian Experience: Evidence from Local Governance

- The **73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments** mandating 1/3rd reservation for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have:
  - Increased women's participation in grassroots democracy.
  - Improved outcomes in drinking water, sanitation, and education.
  - Created role models, encouraging political awareness among women.
- Several states have expanded reservation to 50%, deepening empowerment.

**3. Limitations and Challenges:**

- **Tokenism and Proxy Representation:** ‘Sarpanch Pati’ phenomenon limits actual agency.
- **Low Representation in Higher Politics:** Women constitute around 15% in Lok Sabha, indicating structural barriers.
- **Socio-Cultural Constraints:** Patriarchy, lack of resources, and violence in politics restrict participation.
- **Intersectionality:** Marginalized women (SC/ST, minorities) face compounded disadvantages.

**4. Is Political Empowerment Sufficient Alone? (Critical View)**

- Political empowerment is **necessary but not sufficient**:
  - Without **economic independence**, women may lack autonomy.
  - **Educational empowerment** is essential for informed participation.
  - **Social norms** may dilute the impact of political representation.
- Hence, a **multi-dimensional approach** is required.

**5. Way Forward:**

- **Women’s Reservation in Parliament and State Assemblies** (e.g., implementation of the Women’s Reservation Act).
- **Capacity Building and Leadership Training** for elected women representatives.
- **Addressing Structural Barriers:** Campaign finance support, safety in politics.
- **Changing Social Norms:** Gender sensitization and education.
- **Ensuring Intersectional Inclusion:** Special focus on marginalized women.

**Conclusion:**

Political empowerment is a foundational step towards achieving substantive equality, as it enables women to shape laws, policies, and institutions. However, it must be complemented by social, economic, and educational empowerment to achieve holistic and enduring gender justice.

**21. Advanced AI systems are increasingly being described as “dual-use technologies.” Explain the concept and analyse the opportunities and risks associated with such systems.****Introduction:**

Advanced AI systems are termed “**dual-use technologies**” as they can be used for both beneficial and harmful purposes. Their ability to autonomously analyse data and execute complex tasks makes them highly impactful across sectors.

**Concept of Dual-Use AI:**

- Dual-use refers to technologies with **civilian as well as military/malicious applications**.
- In AI, the same system can **solve problems or create new vulnerabilities**.
- Example: Claude Mythos AI can detect software vulnerabilities for defence, but also exploit them autonomously (as seen in discussions around Project Glasswing).

**Opportunities:****1. Governance and Public Service Delivery:**

- AI improves targeting and monitoring of welfare schemes.
- Example: Rajasthan using AI-enabled analytics for **beneficiary identification and service delivery optimisation**.

2. **Economic Productivity:**
  - Automation improves efficiency in sectors like logistics, banking, and agriculture.
3. **Healthcare:**
  - AI supports early disease detection and drug discovery.
4. **Cybersecurity & Defence:**
  - AI tools help detect threats proactively and strengthen national security.

**Risks:**

1. **Cybersecurity Threats:**
  - Systems like Claude Mythos AI can autonomously identify and exploit system weaknesses, enabling advanced cyberattacks.
2. **Weaponisation:**
  - Development of autonomous weapons reduces human control in warfare.
3. **Misinformation:**
  - AI-generated deepfakes and targeted propaganda can distort public opinion.
4. **Economic Disruption:**
  - Job losses and inequality due to automation.
5. **Governance & Ethical Issues:**
  - Bias, opacity, and lack of accountability in AI decision-making.

**Way Forward:**

- Establish robust AI regulation and global norms.
- Ensure human oversight and ethical AI principles.
- Promote responsible innovation and safety testing.
- Invest in reskilling and institutional capacity.

**Conclusion:**

Dual-use AI represents both opportunity and risk. A balanced approach combining innovation with regulation is essential to ensure that AI contributes to secure and inclusive development.

**History**

- 22. The victory of Babur in the First Battle of Panipat (1526) was not merely due to superior weapons but also due to effective military strategies. Discuss. (10 Marks)**

**Introduction:**

The First Battle of Panipat marked a turning point in Indian history, leading to the establishment of the Mughal Empire. While the role of gunpowder weapons is often highlighted, Babur's victory was equally shaped by his innovative military strategies.

**Role of Weapons:**

- Babur used gunpowder artillery and matchlocks, which had psychological and tactical impact.
- However, firearms were not entirely new to India, as they were already used in the Deccan and other regions.
- Thus, weapons alone cannot fully explain the decisive victory over a numerically superior army.

**Role of Military Strategies (Decisive Factor):****1. Tulughma Formation:**

- Division of army into left, right, and centre, with further subdivisions.
- Enabled flexible movement and encirclement of Ibrahim Lodi's forces.
- Allowed a smaller army to effectively counter a larger one.

**2. Araba (Cart System):**

- Use of carts tied with rawhide ropes forming a defensive barricade.
- Protected artillery and infantry from cavalry charges.
- Created a controlled battlefield environment.

**3. Integration of Artillery with Tactics:**

- Artillery was used in open-field battle, not just sieges.
- Combined with defensive formations, it maximized damage to advancing troops.

**4. Mobility and Flanking Attacks:**

- Cavalry units used for swift flanking maneuvers.
- Disrupted the enemy formation and created confusion.

**5. Weakness of Ibrahim Lodi's Army:**

- Large army but poor coordination and leadership.
- Troops became crowded and immobile, making them vulnerable to artillery fire.

**Conclusion:**

Babur's success at Panipat was not merely a technological victory but a triumph of superior strategy, organization, and battlefield innovation. His effective use of Tulughma and Araba transformed existing military resources into decisive advantages, enabling the foundation of Mughal rule in India.

**Geography****23. "Heatwaves in India are no longer seasonal events but structural risks." Examine the causes, impacts, and policy gaps in India's response to heatwaves. (15 Marks, 250 words)****Introduction:**

Heatwaves in India are increasing in **frequency, duration, and geographical spread**, extending beyond traditional summer months. Rising temperatures, humidity, and warm nights indicate that heatwaves are no longer episodic events but **systemic climate risks** affecting multiple sectors.

**Causes of Increasing Heatwaves:**

- **Climate Change:** Rising global temperatures have elevated baseline heat, making extreme events more frequent and intense.
- **El Niño & Atmospheric Conditions:** Weak monsoon circulation and high-pressure systems reduce rainfall and trap heat.
- **Soil Moisture Deficit:** Reduced moisture lowers evaporative cooling, increasing surface temperatures.
- **Urban Heat Island Effect:** Concrete surfaces, reduced greenery, and waste heat make cities significantly hotter.
- **Weak Western Disturbances:** Reduced cloud cover and rainfall lead to faster heating of land.
- **Rising Humidity & Night Temperatures:** Limit physiological recovery, increasing heat stress.

**Impacts of Heatwaves:**

- **Human Health:** Increased heat-related illnesses and deaths, especially among vulnerable groups like the elderly, children, and outdoor workers.
- **Economic Losses:** Reduced labour productivity and increased energy demand strain the economy.
- **Agriculture & Food Security:** Heat stress affects crop yields, livestock productivity, and fisheries.
- **Water Stress:** Higher evaporation and demand intensify scarcity.
- **Urban Stress:** Infrastructure damage and power shortages create a “heat–power trap.”
- **Environmental Impact:** Increased forest fires and ecosystem degradation.

**Policy Gaps in India’s Heatwave Response:**

- **Uneven Heat Action Plans (HAPs):** Lack of standardisation and weak implementation across states.
- **Data Deficiency:** Underreporting of heat-related mortality limits effective policy design.
- **Poor Vulnerability Mapping:** Insufficient focus on localised, high-risk populations.
- **Urban Planning Failures:** Limited adoption of cooling strategies like green spaces and cool roofs.
- **Fragmented Governance:** Weak coordination among health, urban, and disaster management agencies.
- **Reactive Approach:** Focus on short-term warnings rather than long-term climate resilience.
- **Low Awareness:** Inadequate public preparedness and behavioural adaptation.

**Conclusion:**

Heatwaves represent a **structural governance and climate challenge** requiring integrated policy action. A shift towards **long-term adaptation, climate-resilient infrastructure, and targeted protection of vulnerable groups** is essential to mitigate their growing impact.

## Internal Security

- 24. “The decline of Left-Wing Extremism marks not an end, but a transition in India’s governance challenge.” Examine the need for a shift from security-centric approaches to governance-led transformation in post-LWE regions. (15 marks, 250 words)**

**Introduction:**

The significant decline of Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) in India marks a major internal security achievement. However, it represents a transition from counter-insurgency to governance-led transformation, where sustaining peace depends on addressing underlying socio-economic and institutional deficits.

**Why Security-Centric Approach Alone is Insufficient?**

- **Temporary suppression, not permanent resolution:** Security operations can dismantle insurgent networks but do not eliminate root causes such as deprivation, alienation, and injustice.
- **Legacy of distrust in State institutions:** Prolonged conflict has created fear and mistrust among tribal communities, who often experienced both insurgent coercion and coercive state responses.
- **Governance vacuum risks relapse:** Withdrawal of focused attention after security gains can create administrative vacuums, potentially leading to resurgence of extremism.

**Need for Governance-Led Transformation:**

- **Building governance credibility:** The State must ensure continuous presence through effective delivery of education, healthcare, infrastructure, and welfare services, thereby restoring legitimacy.
- **Rights-based and inclusive development:** Tribal communities should be treated as rights-bearing citizens, with effective implementation of land, forest, and welfare entitlements.
- **Local economic empowerment:** Promotion of forest-based livelihoods, agroforestry, MSMEs, and eco-tourism can generate sustainable employment and reduce vulnerability.
- **Strengthening justice and institutional trust:** Measures such as humane policing, grievance redress, legal aid, and speedy justice are essential to rebuild confidence in the State.
- **Convergence of schemes and last-mile delivery:** Effective integration of initiatives like Aspirational Districts Programme, PM-JANMAN, and Tribal Sub Plan can ensure targeted and accountable development.
- **Harnessing youth aspirations:** Investments in education, skill development, sports, and women-led enterprises can channel youth energy towards constructive opportunities.

**Conclusion:**

The decline of LWE signals a shift from security control to governance responsibility. Sustainable peace will depend on transforming conflict regions into zones of dignity, opportunity, and trust, where constitutional promises are realised in everyday life.