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GENERAL STUDIES (TEST CODE : 1835)

Name of Candidate	Saloni Vats		
Medium Eng./Hindi		Registration Number	741748
Center		Date	

INDEX TABLE			INSTRUCTIONS
Q. No.	Maximum Marks	Marks Obtained	1. Do furnish the appropriate details in the answer sheet (viz. Name, Registration Number and Test Code). उत्तर पुस्तिका में सूचनाएं भरना आवश्यक है (नाम, प्रश्न-पत्र कोड, विद्यार्थी क्रमांक आदि)। 2. There are TWENTY questions printed in ENGLISH & HINDI इसमें बीस प्रश्न हैं अंग्रेजी और हिन्दी में छपे हैं। 3. All questions are compulsory. सभी प्रश्न अनिवार्य हैं। 4. The number of marks carried by a question/part is indicated against it. प्रत्येक प्रश्न/भाग के अंक उसके सामने दिए गए हैं। 5. Answers must be written in the medium authorized in the Admission Certificate, which must be stated clearly on the cover of this Question-Cum-Answer (QCA) Booklet in the space provided. No marks will be given for answers written in medium other than the authorized one. प्रश्नों के उत्तर उसी माध्यम में लिखे जाने चाहिए जिसका उल्लेख आपके प्रवेश पत्र में किया गया है और उस माध्यम का स्पष्ट उल्लेख प्रश्न-सह-उत्तर (क्यूसीए) पुस्तिका के मुख्य पृष्ठ पर अंकित निर्दिष्ट स्थान पर किया जाना चाहिए। उल्लिखित माध्यम के अतिरिक्त अन्य किसी माध्यम में लिए गए उत्तर पर कोई अंक नहीं मिलेंगे। 6. Word limit in questions, if specified, should be adhered to. प्रश्नों में शब्द सीमा, जहाँ विनिर्दिष्ट है, का अनुसरण किया जाना चाहिए। 7. Any page or portion of the page left blank in the Question-Cum-Answer Booklet must be clearly struck off. उत्तर पुस्तिका में खाली छोड़ा हुआ पृष्ठ या उसके अंश को स्पष्ट रूप से काटा जाना चाहिए।
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Total Marks Obtained:			
Remarks:			

16-B, 2nd Floor, Above National Trust Building, Bada Bazar Marg, Old Rajinder Nagar, Delhi-110060

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EVALUATION INDICATORS

1. Contextual Competence
2. Content Competence
3. Language Competence
4. Introduction Competence
5. Structure - Presentation Competence
6. Conclusion Competence

Overall Macro Comments / feedback / suggestions on Answer Booklet:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

All the Best

1.

The withdrawal of general consent to the CBI by ~~other~~ some state governments in India threatens spirit of cooperative federalism in India. Discuss.

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is in news as few states have withdrawn 'General Consent'.
(ex) Maharashtra, West Bengal, Kerala, etc.
It is not statutorily recognised and derives its powers from Delhi Police (Special) Establishment Act.

Withdrawal of consent threatens Cooperative federalism

(1.) Politicization of federal issue

Police → State Subject [List II, Seventh Schedule]

CBI → Central body

→ Investigation is police's role as part of state jurisdiction.

Thus, opposition by
States

(2.) Resort to Article 131 by few states.

↳ Increases trust deficit between Centre & States.

↳ Supreme Court's irregular judgements (NIA, CBI, NCB)

(3) Hampers police investigation.

↳ CBI is technologically advanced and expert in few crimes.

⇒ Against Cooperative federalism.

(4) Spirit of federalism = Horizontal unity of Centre & States.

Thus, it creates a divergence.

Legalising CBI and promoting

transparency and accountability can help bridge trust deficit with respect to central agencies like

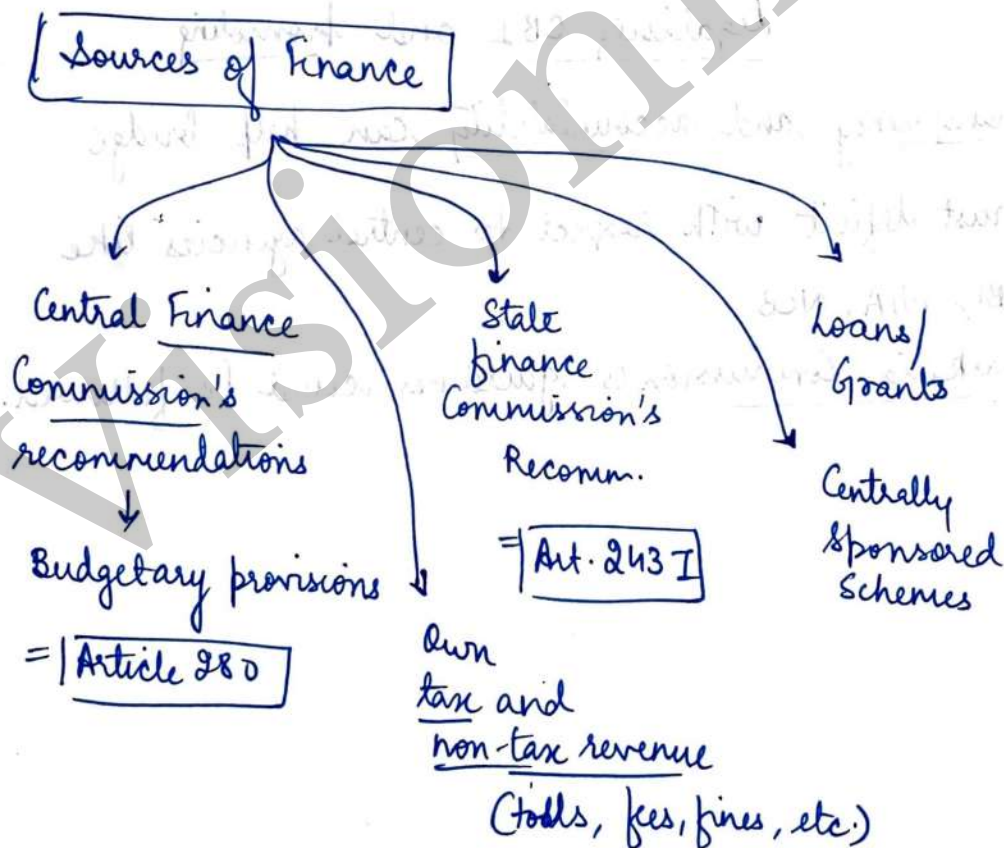
CBI, NIA, NCB.

Sarkaria Commission's guidelines could be followed.

2.

Stating sources of finance for local self-government in India, suggest ways to strengthen their financial position.

Local Self-government is the pillar of participative democracy. Hence, finance, freedom and function (3F's) to local self-government are crucial.



^{source of funds}
Though sounds huge, financial constraints are significant. [Almost 90% = tied funds]

Ways to strengthen financial position

- ① Fiscal devolution : Fixed proportion of budget.
ex Kerala, Karnataka have strengthened finances for PRIs.
- ② Autonomy to taxation : Devolve powers.
↳ States should leave few areas for PRIs or ULBs.
- ③ Give 'Untied' funds → The local govt. should have autonomy of allocation.

Strengthening finance is sine qua non for participative democracy, as envisaged under 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment acts, 1992.

3.

Cabinet committees play an important role in re-instating collective responsibility and principle of homogeneity of Executive in Indian Parliamentary System. Elucidate.

Cabinet Committees are high-powered groups consisting of ministers to guide policymaking. They are extra-constitutional bodies.

Ex. Cabinet Committees of Political Affairs, Economic affairs, Appointment Committee, etc.

Role in re-instating collective responsibility and homogeneity of executive :-

(1) No one minister is responsible for decisions.

⇒ Cabinet committee promotes collective identity. ⇒ Shared responsibility.

(2) The name of members or leaders of committees are not disclosed separately.

⇒ The decisions are in the name of 'Committee'.

- (3) Ministers are members of these committees (executives) in group. One executive could be a part of many committees.

Ex Appointment and Political Affairs

Both ^{cases} have Home

Minister (Appointment) → Head = ^{Union} Home Minister

- (4) High-powered decision-makers

Thus, Cabinet Committees are good platform of dialogue and deliberations that promote principles of Parliamentary democracy.

4. There is a need to overhaul Public procurement and project management (PPPM) framework for faster, efficient and transparent execution of government projects. Comment.

India's PPPM system is marked by inefficiencies and huge cost for exchequer. To address this issue, Department of Expenditure (MoF) released guidelines for PPPM framework.

Need to overhaul PPPM

⇒ For Faster execution

- (1) Easy identification of bidders.
- (2) Standard parameters to establish project contracts. ↓
Help identify bids in objective manner.
- (3) Time-bound payments of services.

For New guidelines → 75% Payment within 10 days of billing.

⇒ For efficient PPPM

(1.) Reduce delays and cost overruns.

[ex] Regular check on project completion.

(2.) Data-driven and demand-driven process.

↳ Select competent contractor.

⇒ For transparent PPPM

(1.) Social auditing and record-maintenance on project execution.

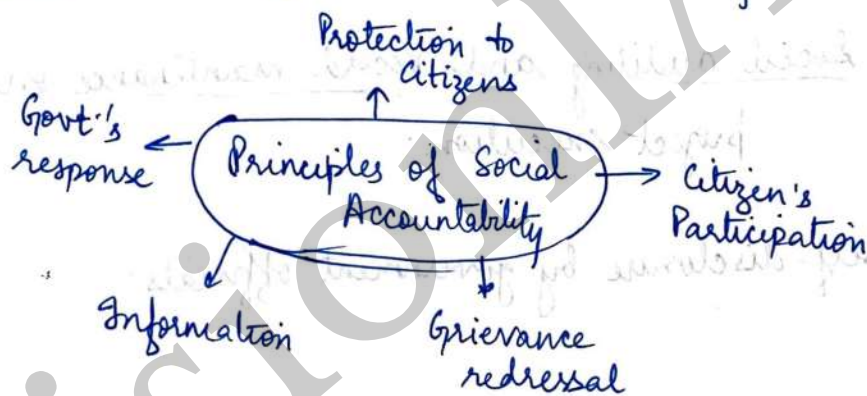
(2.) Self-disclosure by government officials.

Though its a great start to reduce cost of procurement and streamline governance, it needs be sustained. Technology could be leveraged for same. (ex: Govt. e-Market place).

5. Adequate measures are required to overcome the challenges and vulnerabilities associated with undertaking social accountability initiatives and institutionalizing them.

Elaborate.

Social Accountability is an indispensable part of Good governance, where the government is responsive to citizens and civil society.

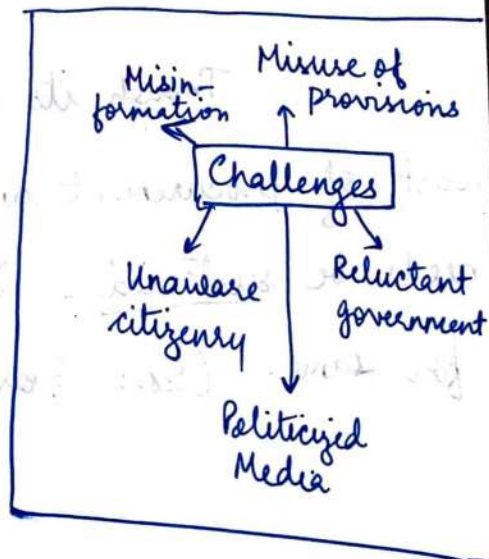


Measures required to overcome challenges

(1.) Responsible Media

→ Follow principles of 'Honesty' and 'Integrity'

[Code of Ethics]



(2.) Independent body to make institutions and laws operable.

Ex Body enforcing RTI.

(3) Model Social Accountability framework



Adoption by States as well.

(4) Use of Technology

Online
Portal

Application
to request information

(5) Inter-ministerial cooperation } To streamline information dissemination.

Social Accountability has to be strengthened to make democracy more people-oriented and have good governance [in line with Sir Nolan Committee].

6.

In view of recent Parliamentary Standing Committee Report, discuss issues faced by NCST and suggest measures to strengthen it.

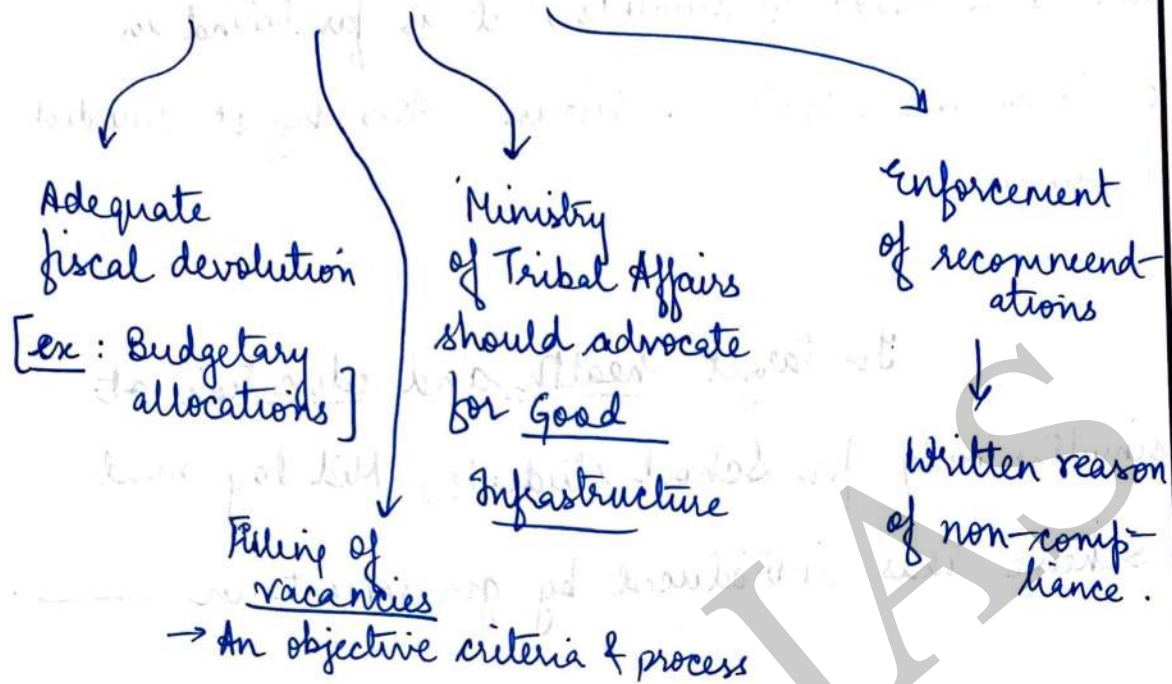
Recent report by Parliament Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment said the NCST has not laid reports in the Parliament since 2018.

Issues faced by NCST

- (1) Manpower shortage : Commission has vacant positions. [Criteria is stringent]
- (2) Poor financial position : Budgetary support is inadequate → Could not function properly.
- (3) Infrastructural constraints.
 - Technological devices for data collection
 - Office spaces, internet, etc.

Due to such issues, it is not able to fulfill its role of Safeguarding rights of STs as laid under Article 338-A

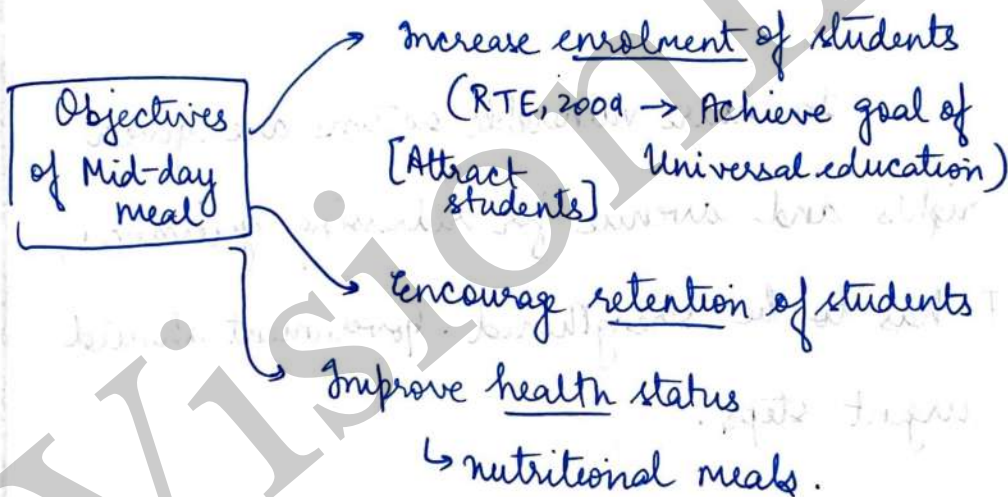
Measures to strengthen it



To ensure vulnerable sections are given due rights and avenue for redressing grievances, NCST has to be strengthened. Government should take urgent steps.

7. While the Mid-Day Meal scheme was aimed at fulfilling nutritional needs of students, it is far behind in achieving this objective. Discuss.. Also suggest remedial measures.

To target health and education simultaneously for school students, Mid-day meal Scheme was introduced by government in _____.



Limitations in achieving goals

→ Enrolment of students in primary schools = 90%.
However, retention = Just 50%.

→ Mid-day meals are not designed properly.

[ex] A study showed less availability of pulses and fibre [Cereals dominate]

→ Quality of food is not very good and it's not according to age-groups.

↳ All students (6-14 years) → same food items.

Remedial measures

- 'Menu' to be decided through proper analysis of region

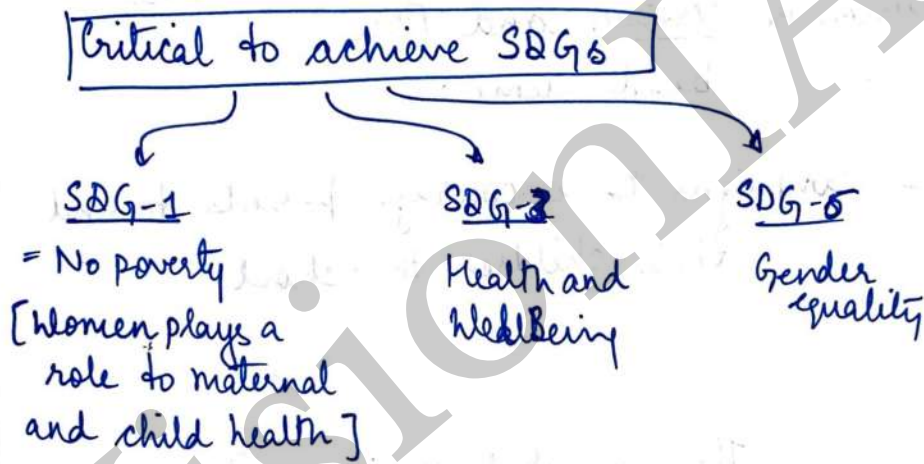
needs / Taste / Quality
- Inclusion of 'Protein' and 'Fibre' based items.
- IEC campaigns to encourage parents to send their children to school.

The revamped version = POSHAN Abhiyan tries to improve few facets of implementation. The goals of Sustainable Development (SDG-1 (no Poverty), 2 (Hunger), 3 (Health), 4 (Gender Equality)) could be achieved only with good health.

8.

Sexual & Repro. health right (SRHR) remain critical for attainment of SDGs. Discuss impediments in fulfillment of SRHR in India. Also, steps that can be taken.

SRHR are access to quality health care and information about sexual health, reproduction practices and abortion.



Impediments

- (1) Social Stigma → No discussion about SRHR.
- (2) Budget allocations are dismally low → Health: 1.3% of GDP
- (3) Infrastructure → Health clinics
→ Contraceptives
- (4) Lack of awareness among women [Freedom is restricted]
- (5) Population control measures
→ Disproportionate impact on women

Steps to be taken

- Cultural attitude and stigma towards SRHR to be changed
↓
{Attitudinal change}
- Sensitizing Men to be responsible for SRHR.
- Budget allocations to be improved.
- IEC to build women's confidence.

SRHR are inevitable to achieve Universal Health Coverage. Right to good health is incomplete without SRHR.

9.

State functions of UN Human Rights Council. Discuss issues faced in promotion and protection of rights across the globe.

UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) came in 2006 replacing UNCHR to protect and promote human rights.

Functions

(1) Universal Periodic Review (UPR) about status of rights

ACHIEVEMENTS

→ More than 100 UPRs.

(2) Safeguard human rights
↳ Monitor global practices for human rights

→ Press and internet rights promoted

(3) Education and awareness campaigns

→ Recognised Right to clean environment

Issues faced by UNHRC

(1) The members of UNHRC are selected without any objective criteria.

ex Countries with violations are made members.

- (2) Secret ballot of voting → Politicization of Human rights issue
- (3) Non-binding nature of resolutions.
- (4) Non-uniform selection of issues of rights violations.

Procedural reforms (open ballots) and Ensuring National enforcement of obligations is the need of the hour. UNHRC's capacity has to be augmented for human-rights are unavoidable.

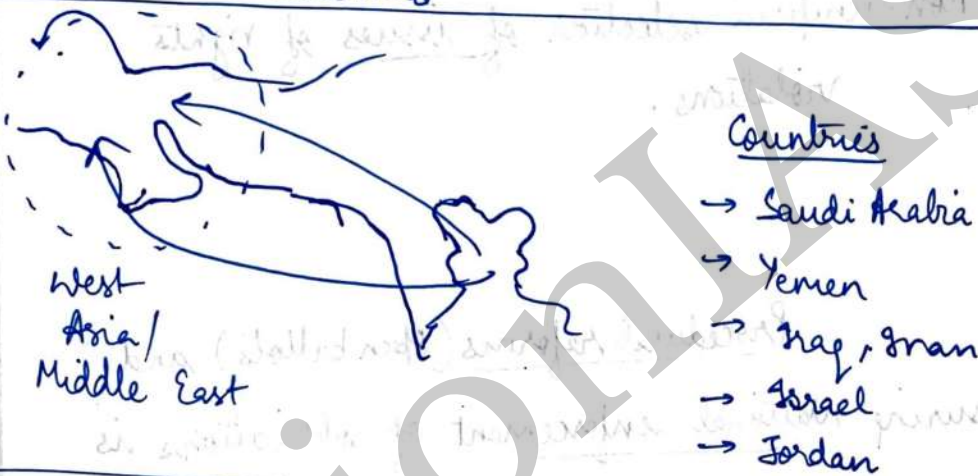
U.P.S.C.

Question No.
प्रश्न संख्या

10.

West Asia is an important strategic region for India with profound geo-political and geo-economic significance. Discuss.

India and West-Asia share long historical and civilisational ties.



Geo-economic significance

- (1) Energy → Source of $\frac{3}{4}$ th of India's oil needs
(Saudi Arabia → ARAMCO)
- (2) Investments
↳ UAE : Investment source
FTA negotiations
- (3) Trade → Valued at USD 3 billion.
→ Potential for more.
- (4) Remittances → Indian diaspora is large

Geo-political

- (1) Defence relations → ~~Israel~~ : Defence imports
→ Joint exercises
- (2) Strategic counter to China's BRI
↳ Political bonhomie can help.
ex PM Modi : Highest civilian award from UAE.

Potential for ties is more, India needs to leverage the same. Trade and Investments should be enhanced.

11. Disenfranchising prisoners desecrates a cherished value in a democracy i.e. 'Right to Vote', which should be guarded earnestly. Discuss in the light of RPA, 1957.

Representation of People's Act, 1957 prohibits prisoners from exercising 'Right to Vote'.

Voting in India is celebrated as a festival with January 25 as Voters' Day. In this light, disenfranchising prisoners is against democratic principles.

Arguments against Disenfranchisement

(1) Prisoners' Statistics



Out of 3.5 lakh prisoners, three-fourths are = Undertrials

Thus, right to vote is denied even before conviction.

(2) The principle of 'Innocent until proven guilty' is not upheld.

↳ Undertrials denied rights.

(3) Right to vote makes prisoners feel that they are part of civil society.

This is in support of 'Reformist Theory of Justice'

It will prevent feeling of entrenchment in minds of prisoners.

- (4) 'Nobody is born criminal'. Denying rights ~~is~~ will discourage prisoners from respecting law.

However, there are arguments in favour of disenfranchising.



The right to vote should be guarded earnestly

- (1) RPA, 1957 could be amended to exempt Undertrials (at least) from Disenfranchisement.
- (2) Gradually, prisoners' should be given this right.
- ↓
- Learning from International practices. Ex Switzerland, Australia
- (3) Awareness among citizens to encourage prisoners' to vote as part of their democratic rights.

Voting in elections is an uncompromised right that should be not denied to anyone. For criminal activities, there are other forms of punitive actions.

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12.

There are similarities and interactions between affirmative action adopted by India and USA owing to similar historical injustices faced by their respective vulnerable groups. Discuss.

Both India and USA emerged from colonial exploitation as democratic and free nations, though with a huge span of time difference.

[American Revolution → 1789]

[India → 1947]

Similarities

→ Faced Colonial exploitation

- Racism
- Communalism

ex: Whites vs Blacks

Hindu vs Muslims

→ Economic impoverishment

[For their vested interests]

Interactions

→ Slave trade &
indentured labour



→ Colonial^{rule} induced class and caste inequalities

→ Rich vs Poor

→ Capitalists vs Labour class.

This led to difference in affirmative action.

India

U.S.A.

→ Criteria
= Caste

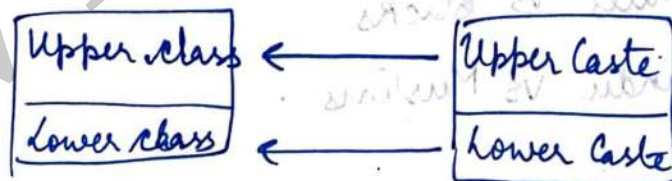
ex: SCs, STs

→ Criteria
= Economic difference

ex: Labour, workers

Caste and class differences are related.

They are mutually re-inforced.



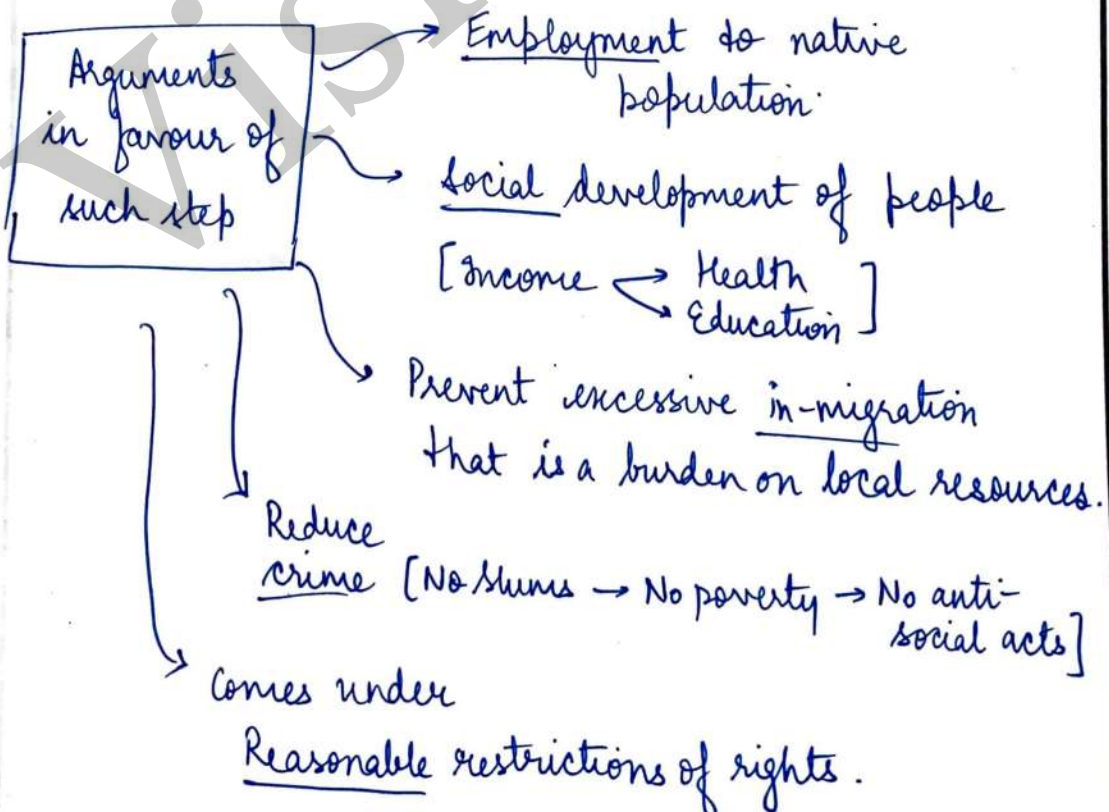
Due to different stage of economic growth, the difference in affirmative action is obvious.

Affirmative action helps achieve
'Substantial equality'. It tries to make an
equitable society where every individual has
opportunities to progress.

13. Objections to domicile-based reservation in private sector jobs on grounds of constitutional equality and freedom are misplaced. Critically discuss.

The State government of Haryana has passed a law recently to give 'domicile-based reservation' in private jobs. [Subject to provisions like less than 30,000 INR salary, 75% jobs, etc].

According to the government, the rationale behind is state development and secure employment for its people.



But, the objections to domicile-based reservation are
NOT misplaced

- On Constitutional grounds

(1) Against Article -15, 16 of Constitution

↳ Domicile is not a reasonable ground of restriction.

(2) Against Freedom of profession of private sector.
(Article 19(1)(g))

→ Private firms might leave to other places.

→ Overall Ease of Doing Business will get impacted

- On ethical grounds

(1) Against principles of 'equality' and 'Non-Discrimination'.

(2) Unity and Integrity of country is compromised
[Spillover effects may occur]

- On Governance grounds

(1) Against idea of 'One Nation-One Economy'

(2) Can lead to counter-measures by others.

This is not a desired measures for unemployment problem. Skilling, Education and creation of jobs is a suitable method to improve economy instead of radical measures.

14.

There have been arguments that sedition law is an attack on the very foundation of India's liberal democratic principles, as enshrined in the Constitution. Do you agree?

The number of sedition cases have increased manifold in last five years. Under IPC, Section 124A, any offence where person brings or tries to bring hatred / contempt ~~is~~ brings disaffection to government is liable for sedition.

It is an attack on India's liberal principles

↳ The draconian provisions like Non-bailable, non-compoundable offence has certain issues :-

(1) Violates Fundamental rights {Against liberty}
Free Speech and Expression [Art. 19(1)]

(2) Ambiguity : 'Hatred', 'Disaffection' and contempt are too vague.

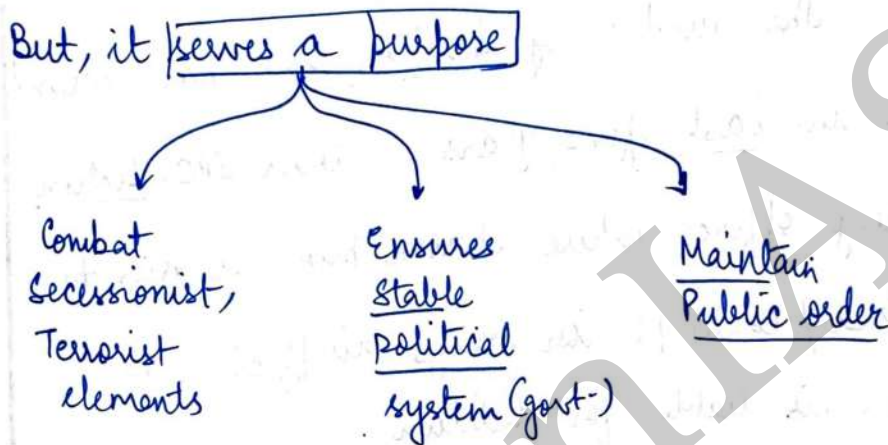
(3) Conviction rate ~ 3.3% > very low
↳ Shows its frivolous use.

U.P.S.C.

Question No.
प्रश्न संख्या

(4.) Misuse → Victimization of accused.

ex Vinod Dua (NDTV) was arrested for criticism against government.



The section per se is not a problem. But its utilisation as a routine affair has become an issue that needs to be addressed.

In Kedar Nath case, S.C narrowed down scope of Section 124A.
(1962)

⇒ The following is the suggestive framework to keep a provision (like Sedition) in sync with democracy.

- (1.) Define terms under the section.
- (2.) Use it sparingly → Executive should show

acceptance of healthy criticism.

(3.) Scrutiny of complaints to prevent infringement of Art. 19(1).

The government should ensure procedural safeguards to make the Section 124A as irrelevant as possible in the democratic setup.

15. Despite government e-Marketplace facing certain challenges, it has brought about a significant improvement in procurement of goods & services by government agencies. Discuss.

Government e-Marketplace (GeM) was introduced by the government to streamline public procurement and reduce cost of procurement. The study by govt. showed lacunae in Procurement policy and thus a measure to improve it.

Challenges in Government e-Marketplace

↳ Lack of Compliance : All ministries do not participate.

[ex] Railways has its own procurement portal. Defence services are out of GeM.

↳ Multiple portals : Inter-ministerial divergence.

But, GeM has significantly improved procurement.

Benefits and Achievements

(1) Transparent mechanism → Objective criteria to procure

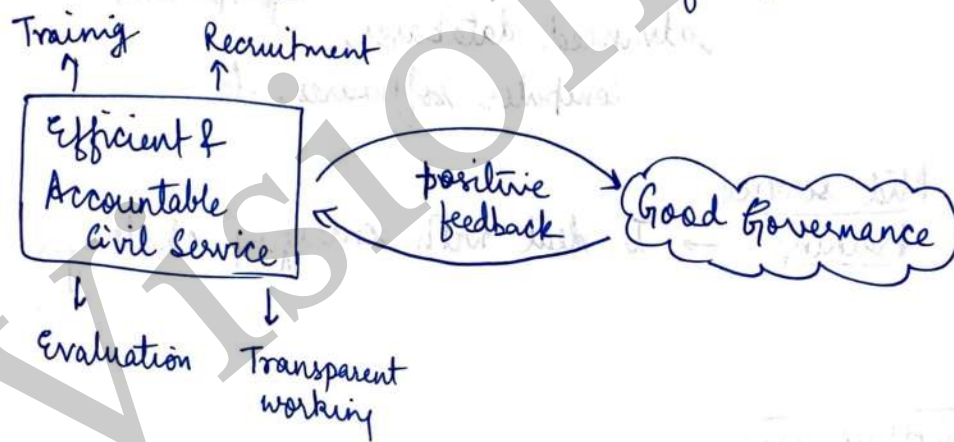
- (2.) Efficient and Quick method → Reduce delays
- (3.) Promote 'Atmanirbhar' → As it boosts small Indian manufacturers.
- (4.) Economies of scale → Multiple products and agencies are available at same time.
It facilitates efficient procurement.
- (5.) Local sellers could integrate themselves with the process.
- (6.) Provides e-bidding and reverse e-auctions.

Gem can become a tool for cost-effective procurement and management of goods and services.
It has saved 10% operational costs for government.
It should be complemented with more such initiatives to ensure a robust public procurement framework.

16.

A reformed system of recruitment, training and evaluation needs to be put in place to take forward the development of a highly efficient and accountable civil service. Discuss in context of India.

Sardar Patel called civil service as 'Steel Frame of India' which has been rightly proved in seven decades since Independence. Civil servants deal with multi-layered challenges. The evolving circumstances require continuous reforms.



Reforms needed

• RECRUITMENT

(1) Rule-based to Role-Based

↳ From a talent pool, based on competencies, officers should be recruited.

(2) Encourage lateral entry → Attract best talent.

- (3) Specialization : From general nature to special capabilities
↓
Enhance efficiency.

- (4) Uniform selection process → States + Centre.

• TRAINING

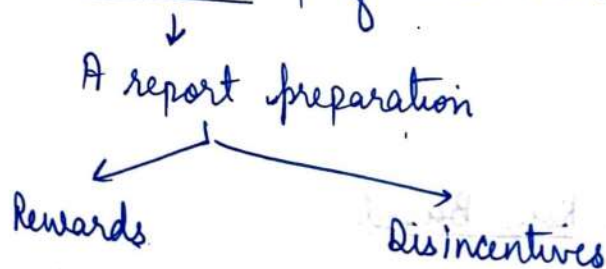
- (1) Incorporate technical training

↓
Digital competencies, use of new-age equipments,
advanced databases,
Computer softwares, etc.

- (2) Mid-service training → To deal with emerging challenges

• EVALUATION

- (1) Objective monitoring of their work during service.



- (2) Outcome-based evaluation.

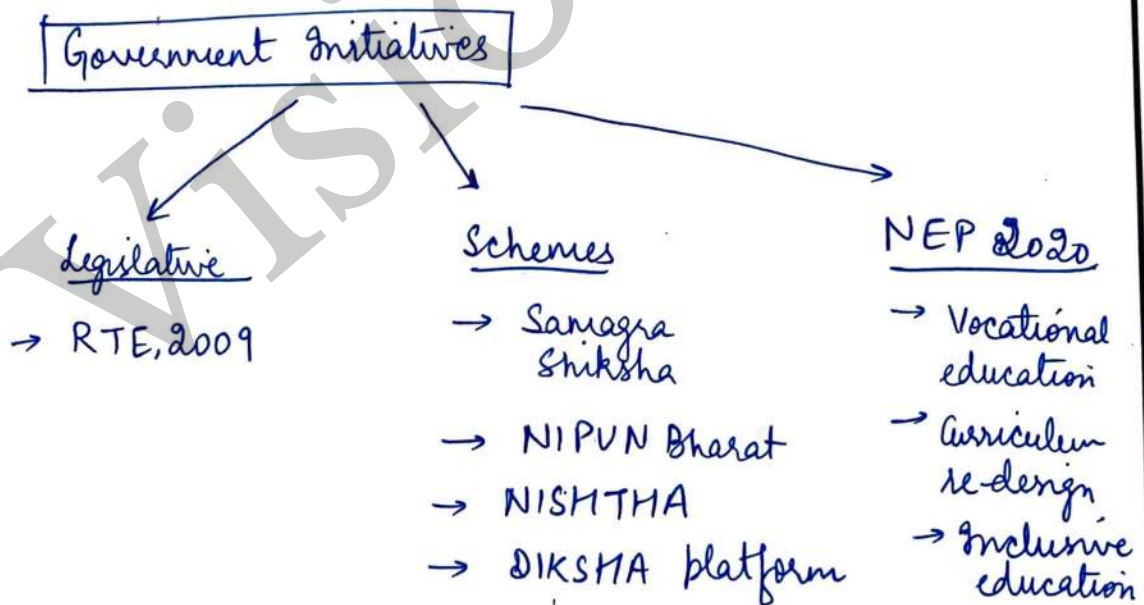
To create a force for 'New India' the government has launched 'MISSION Karmayogi' for Capacity building of Civil servants.

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17.

Despite initiatives by government to achieve critical goals in education sector, major interventions are required to tackle learning poverty as well as persisting inequalities.
Discuss.

According to ASER, 2020 the learning poverty in India is a real concern. The World Bank study has shown that post COVID-19 learning outcomes in India have ~~decreased~~ decreased and inequalities exacerbated. [70% of children unable to read a text at age 10]



Despite these initiatives major interventions are required.

To tackle learning poverty

(1.) Enhance budget for education.

↳ Presently, budgetary allocations are less than 4% of GDP. (About 3%).

(2.) Teachers should be present in schools

↳ Teacher absenteeism = 6% of Schools face it.

(3.) Re-design of curriculum

↳ reduce rote learning

↳ Increase critical thinking, reading and mathematical skills

(4.) Change in Pedagogy → student friendly techniques.

To reduce Inequalities

(1.) Regional infrastructural gaps to be bridged

→ Schools and Colleges in backward regions.

(2.) Reduce Gender divide → Encourage girls through incentives

Safety of girls

Root out Patriarchal norms

Sanitation facilities

(3.) Caste-based segregation to be prevented.

⇒ Promote inclusive education.

With government efforts and awareness,
the goal of Inclusive and Quality education could
be achieved. Sustainable Development is possible
through investments in education.

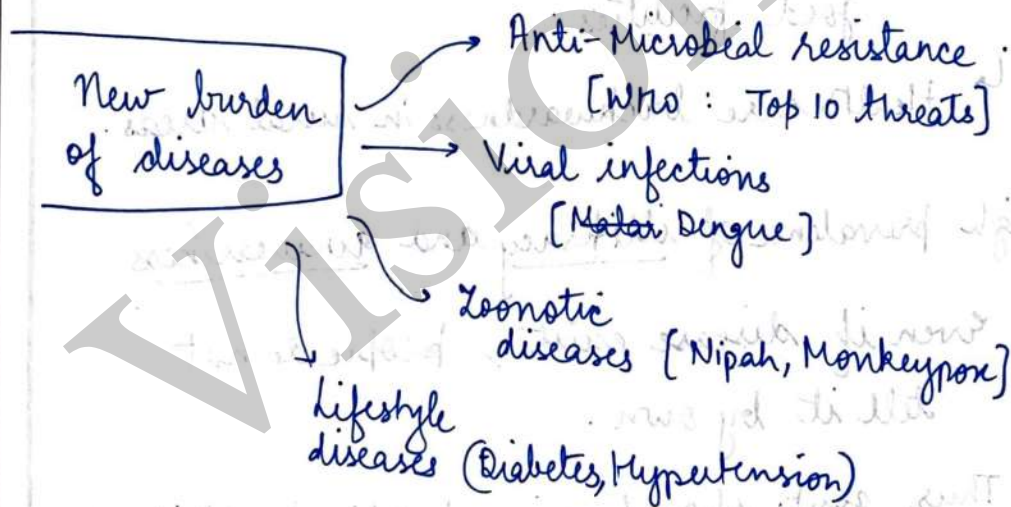
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18.

In light of burgeoning burden of both Communicable & non-communicable diseases, there is a need to revamp public health surveillance system in India. Discuss.

COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the dismal state of India's Healthcare system.

The new challenge of Communicable and Non-Communicable diseases (NCD) require adequate revamp of Health surveillance and Health infrastructure system.



Need to revamp health surveillance system

- (1) Inadequate budgetary allocations to healthcare.
- ↳ neglect of surveillance (less than 2%)
 - ↳ outdated technologies
 - ↳ insufficient manpower

(2.) Huge population → Any disease can cause great damage.

Thus proper surveillance for proper testing.

(3.) Private-sector participation is very low.

↳ Caters only to high-income groups

(4.) Insurance coverage very less.

(= 40%.)

(5.) Regional disparities : Tier-II cities only have good facilities.

↳ Healthcare backwardness in rural areas.

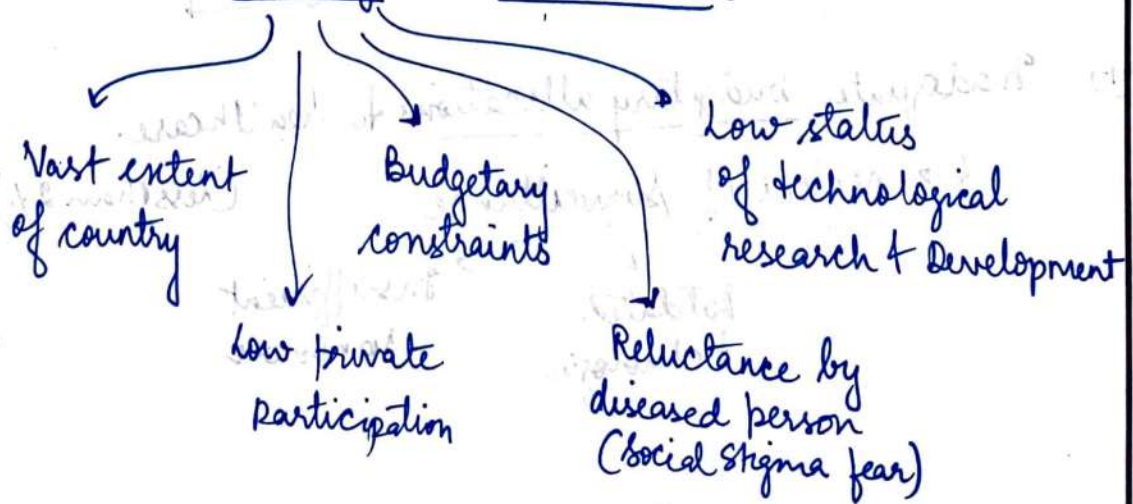
(6.) High prevalence of illiteracy and unawareness

↳ Even if disease exists, people do not tell it by own.

⇒ Thus, govt. should give public the 'Right to Good Health'.

However,

there are challenges in surveillance



Way forward

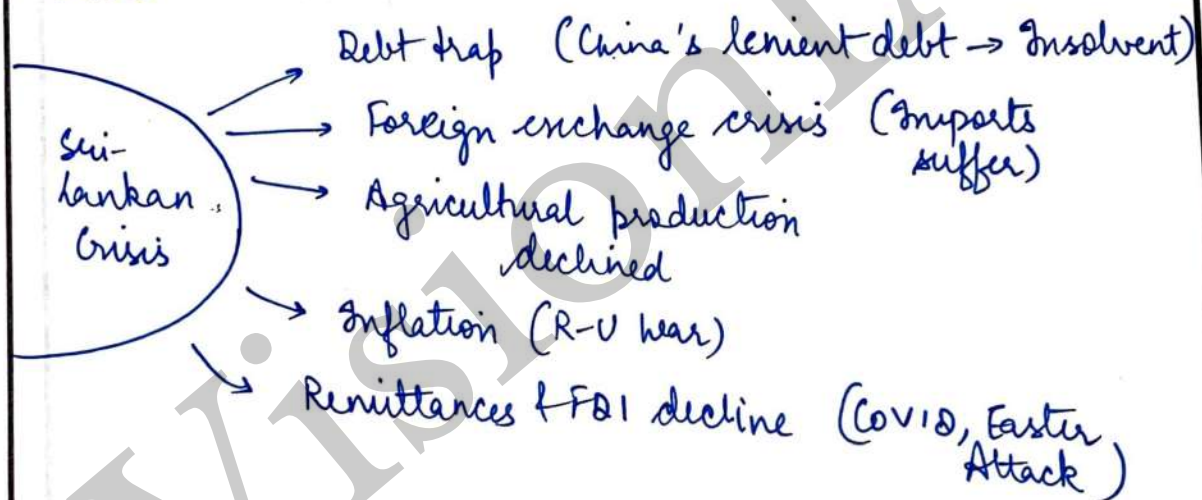
- Building trust within communities.
- Decentralized approach
 - NGOs
 - People
 - local govt.
 - SHGs, startups.
- Use of technology and investment in R&D.

With political will and economic development, the system could improve.

सिद्धांत के अनुसार

19. The repercussions of ongoing economic crisis in Sri Lanka extend beyond its borders. Discuss w.r.t India. Also, mention steps India has taken to assist Sri Lanka tide over crisis.

In the hyperglobal world order, no crisis is confined within a territory. This is witnessed in Russia-Ukraine War and Sri-Lankan Crisis.



Repercussions for India

- (i) Influx of refugees

Ex More than 20 families arrived at Tamilian state (via Shanushkodi) to escape distress

(2.) Involvement of third party

Ex China getting lease of Hambantota Port
for 99 years (non-repayment
of debt)
↓
12 km from
Tamil Nadu
Coast

(3.) Bilateral relations impacted

↓
Defence Security
↳ Military exercises (like Surya Kiran)
↳ extremism
↳ civil riots

(4.) Impact on regional initiatives → BIMSTEC
→ SAARC

(5.) Economic → Trade decline
→ Investments and market
dynamics change

Steps India has taken

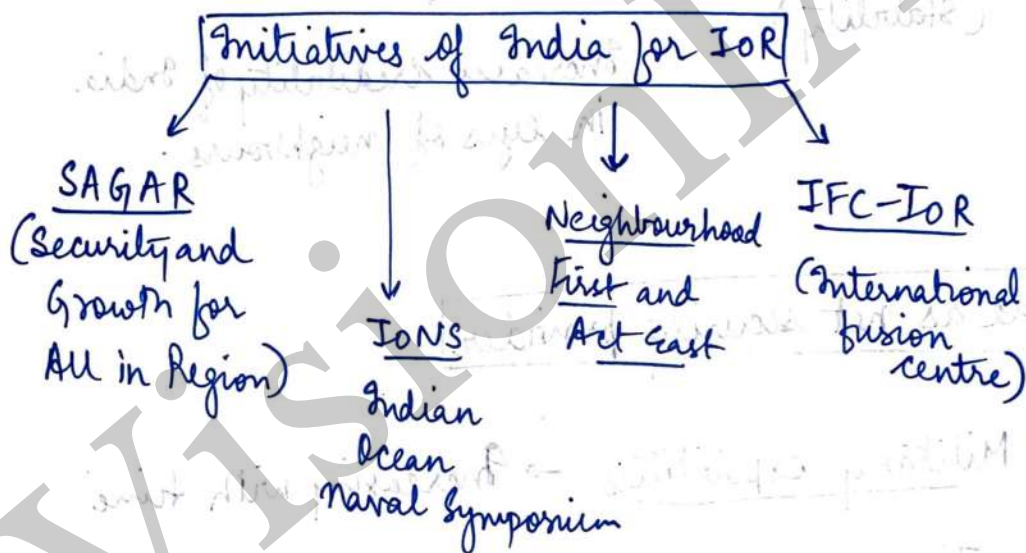
- (1.) Extending line of credit (of about \$3 billion)
- (2.) Vaccine and food supplies.
[Vaccine Maitri]
- (3.) Currency swap arrangement (\$500 million)
- (4.) Loans to Sri Lanka
- (5.) Political support and moral support.

India and Sri Lanka are partners that share long historical and cultural ties. By showing bonhomie, India displayed 'Neighbourhood First' spirit and upheld the idea of 'Friend in need is Friend in Deed'.

20.

India is a reliable partner in IOR and take on role of being net security provider. Discuss.

Indian Ocean Region is a strategic bridge to rest of the world. India thus aims to be a net security provider with promoting security interests of all.



India as a reliable partner

→ Helped in distress

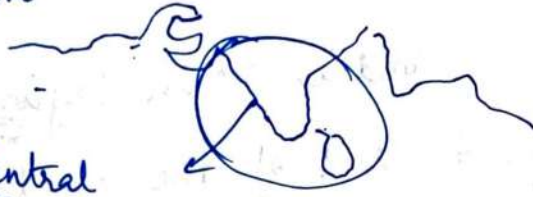
Ex Operation RAHAT (Yemen)
Operation CACTUS (Maldives)

→ No Wolf-warrior diplomacy like China.

Ex Helped Sri Lanka in recent debt crisis

- (3) long coastline and significant presence in the region

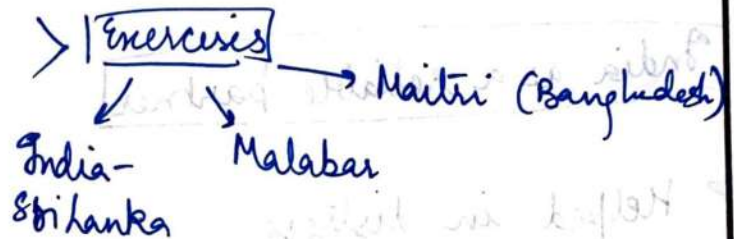
Cannot be neglected ← Central Position



- (4) Democratic and Freedom-based politico-administrative system ↓
(Stability) → Increases credibility of India in eyes of neighbours.

Role as net security provider

- (1) Military capabilities → Increasing with time
+ Joint operation



- (2) Strong economic position
(3rd largest economy)

- (3) International reputation → G20 presidency
→ Responsible power.

India can thus help build IOR as an 'Ocean of Peace'. It can create a free, inclusive, rules-based oceanic trade network, and secure the region with cooperation of littoral states.

Vision IAS