

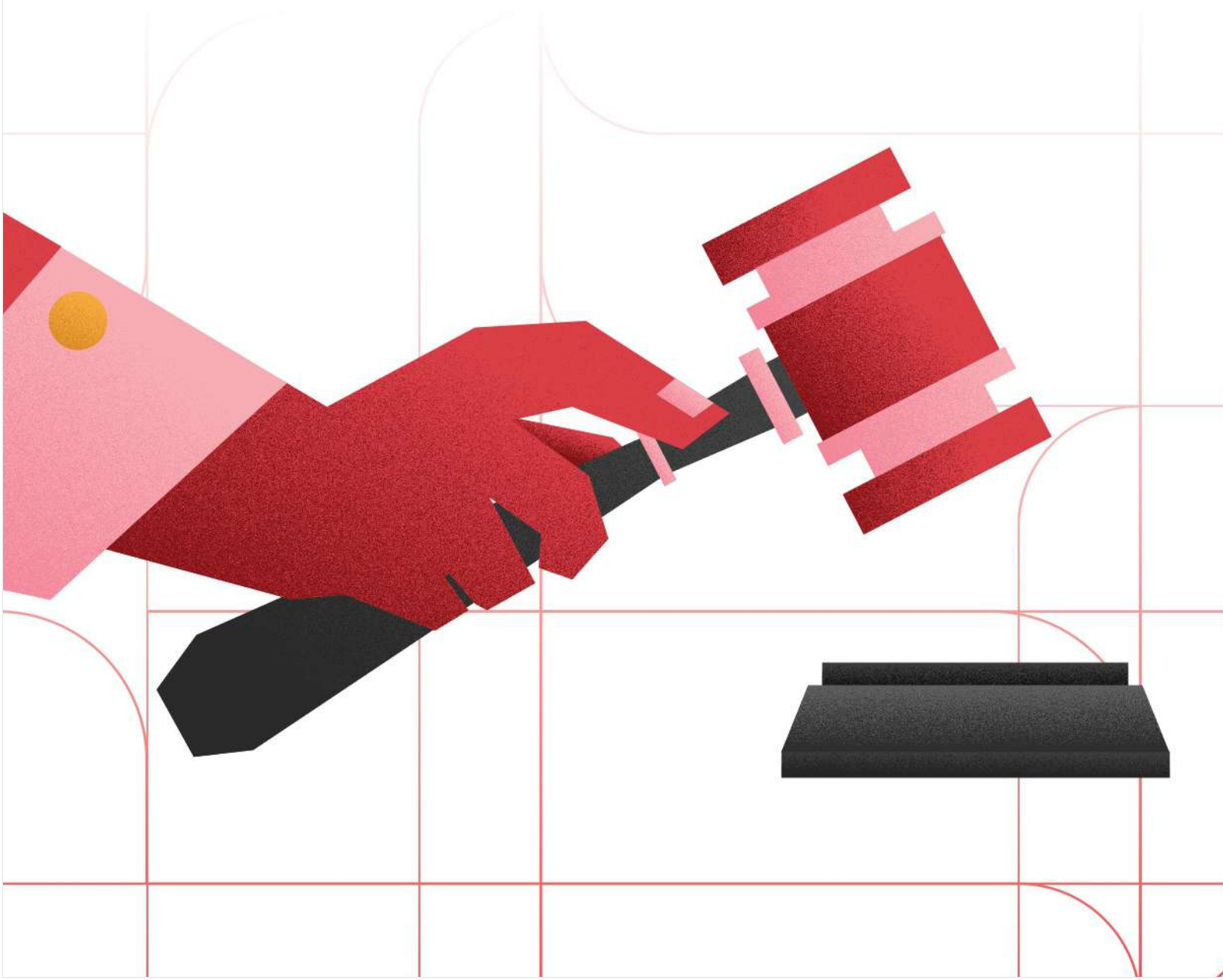


Governance & Social Justice

UPSC Mains

General Studies II

Class Notes





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Published by

PRAYAAS Education

CTS No, 1262/B, Plot No.594B,
Office 301A, 301, Second Floor,
Starling Plaza, J.M. Road, Pune

+91 7378743031 / +91 7767073031

UPSC MAINS

Governance & Social Justice
GENERAL STUDIES - II
(Class Notes)

Year 2025-26

Key Features of Governance & Social Justice UPSC Mains Notes

1. Exam-Oriented Coverage with PYQ Integration

- Comprehensive analysis of Previous Year Questions (PYQs) with model frameworks and answer trends.
- Insight into changing UPSC patterns and how to align preparation with the evolving demand of General Studies Paper II.

2. Concept Clarity with Key Terminologies

- Easy-to-understand definitions and simplified explanation of governance and social justice jargon (e.g. social audit, e-governance, participatory governance).
- Terminology aligned with ARC, Second ARC, NITI Aayog, and other government reports.

3. High-Quality Value Addition

- Rich repository of relevant case studies, best practices, and government initiatives (both central and state-level).
- Examples drawn from current affairs, annual reports, PRS India, and think tank analyses.

4. Real-Life Administrative Examples

- Practical case studies involving IAS officers, flagship schemes, and district-level innovations to enhance ethical and administrative richness of answers.
- Includes replicable models from Aspirational Districts, Mission Karmayogi, Digital India, and more.

5. Structuring Support for Answer Writing

- Answer writing blueprints with intro-body-conclusion templates for governance and social justice themes.
- Ready-to-use data points and quote banks for adding credibility and philosophical depth.

6. Interdisciplinary Linkages

- Integration with Ethics, Economy, Polity, and Disaster Management, useful for writing multi-dimensional answers.
- Helps develop holistic thinking, a key UPSC expectation.

7. Updated with Latest Developments (2024–25 Edition)

- Reflects recent policy developments like Women's Reservation Act, SC ruling on ECI appointments, One Nation One Ration Card, PM Vishwakarma Yojana, urban governance reforms, etc.
- Fact-checked content from PIB, The Hindu, Indian Express, and Yojana.

8. Designed for Smart Revision

- Crisp notes for last-minute revision, charts, mind maps, and one-pager summaries.
- Important for GS Paper 2 consolidation before the Mains.

Ideal For:

- Serious aspirants targeting above-average marks in GS Paper II.
- Those seeking conceptual clarity + current relevance + writing practice material.
- Candidates looking to maximize content retention with structured material.

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Navigating the Syllabus: What You Need to Know

<p>1. Understanding Governance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaning, definitions (UNDP, World Bank) • Difference between Government and Governance • Stakeholders: State, market, civil society, citizens <p>2. Types of Governance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Governance (key principles) • E-Governance • Participatory, Corporate, Global Governance <p>3. Evolution of Governance in India:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From colonial administration to digital and participatory models • Key reforms: RTI Act, 73rd & 74th Amendments, Digital India <p>4. Good Governance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 core principles (transparency, accountability, participation, etc.) • Emphasis on citizen-centric and performance-based administration <p>5. Transparency & Accountability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI Act, Whistleblower Protection Act • Social Audits, Public Disclosure, Grievance Redress • Role of judiciary and constitutional provisions (Preamble, FRs, DPSPs) <p>6. E-Governance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition, evolution, and 4 models (G2G, G2C, G2B, G2E) • Key initiatives: UMANG, DigiLocker, PRAGATI, CPGRAMS • Benefits, challenges, and use of emerging technologies (AI, Blockchain, IoT) <p>7. Citizen-Centric Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen Charters (aims, features, limitations) • Sevottam Model • Performance tracking and grievance monitoring (PRAGATI, CPGRAMS) <p>8. Institutional Framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of Executive, Legislature, Judiciary • Oversight bodies: CVC, Lokpal, CAG, Election Commission • Role of local governance (PRIs, ULBs, PESA)

UPSC Previous year Questions

Question	Nature of Question	Core Demand
The Citizens' charter has been a landmark initiative in ensuring citizen-centric administration. But it is yet to reach its full potential. Identify the factors hindering the realisation of its promise and suggest measures to overcome them. (2024)	Problem-solution based, focused on implementation gaps	Identify obstacles to effective implementation of Citizens' Charter and suggest practical reforms

<p>e-governance is not just about the routine application of digital technology in service delivery process. It is as much about multifarious interactions for ensuring transparency and accountability. In this context evaluate the role of the 'Interactive Service Model' of e-governance. (2024)</p>	<p>Evaluative and conceptual, linking governance models and technology</p>	<p>Explain the broader meaning of e-governance and evaluate the effectiveness of interactive service model in improving transparency and accountability</p>
<p>Discuss the contribution of civil society groups for women's effective and meaningful participation and representation in state legislatures in India. (2023)</p>	<p>Analytical, with focus on role of civil society and political empowerment</p>	<p>Evaluate how civil society enhances women's legislative participation and representation at state level</p>
<p>Has digital literacy, particularly rural areas, coupled with lack of information and Communications Technology (ICT) accessibility hindered socio-economic development? Examine with justification. (2021)</p>	<p>Diagnostic and analytical</p>	<p>Examine link between digital illiteracy, ICT accessibility and their impact on rural socio-economic development</p>
<p>"The emergence of Fourth Industrial Revolution (Digital Revolution) has initiated e-Governance as an integral part of government". Discuss. (2020)</p>	<p>Conceptual explanation and linkage-based</p>	<p>Discuss how Digital Revolution has catalyzed e-governance in India</p>
<p>Implementation of information and Communication Technology (ICT) based Projects /Programmes usually suffers in terms of certain vital factors. Identify these factors, and suggest measures for their effective implementation. (2019)</p>	<p>Practical implementation oriented</p>	<p>Identify challenges in ICT project execution and suggest measures for better outcomes</p>
<p>e-governance is not only about utilization of the power of new technology, but also much about critical importance of the 'use value' of information. Explain. (2018)</p>	<p>Theoretical and conceptual</p>	<p>Explain how meaningful use of information is central to effective e-governance</p>

<p>The Citizen's Charter is an ideal instrument of organisational transparency and accountability, but it has its own limitations. Identify the limitations and suggest measures for greater effectiveness of the Citizen's Charters. (2018)</p>	<p>Critical evaluation</p>	<p>Identify limitations in existing Charters and suggest concrete improvements</p>
<p>Hunger and Poverty are the biggest challenges for good governance in India still today. Evaluate how far successive governments have progressed in dealing with these humongous problems. Suggest measures for improvement. (2017)</p>	<p>Evaluation + Recommendation</p>	<p>Evaluate progress in tackling hunger/poverty and suggest measures for improved governance response</p>
<p>"In the Indian governance system, the role of non-state actors has been only marginal." Critically examine this statement. (2016)</p>	<p>Critical commentary</p>	<p>Examine the actual vs perceived role of NGOs, media, CSOs etc. in governance</p>
<p>"Effectiveness of the government system at various levels and people's participation in the governance system are inter-dependent." Discuss their relationship in the context of India. (2016)</p>	<p>Analytical</p>	<p>Discuss how decentralisation and citizen participation mutually reinforce effective governance</p>
<p>In the light of Satyam Scandal (2009), discuss the changes brought in the corporate governance to ensure transparency and accountability. (2015)</p>	<p>Case study + reform analysis</p>	<p>Discuss corporate governance reforms post-Satyam and their impact on transparency/accountability</p>
<p>Though Citizens' charters have been formulated by many public service delivery organizations, there is no corresponding improvement in the level of citizens' satisfaction and quality of services being provided. Analyse. (2013)</p>	<p>Gap analysis</p>	<p>Analyse gap between Citizens' Charter design and actual service outcomes</p>

Introduction

- **Kautilya** rightly observed, *'In the happiness of his subjects lies the king's happiness.'* This ancient wisdom resonates with the modern concept of governance, which focuses on ensuring public welfare through accountable and participative decision-making.
- In the context of a democratic welfare state like India, governance becomes the cornerstone of effective administration, inclusive development, and citizen empowerment. Understanding governance — its meaning, types, and principles — is essential to evaluate how institutions serve public interest.

Meaning of Governance

- Governance refers to the **processes, systems, and practices** through which public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources, and ensure the realization of human rights.
- It includes the **mechanisms, relationships, and institutions** through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences.
- Governance involves not only the **state** but also **civil society, private sector, media, and citizens**.

Standard Definition

- **UNDP Definition:** *The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its 1997 policy paper, defined governance as "the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels. It comprises the mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences".*
- **World Bank Definition:** *"Governance is defined as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development.."*

Government vs Governance

Feature	Government	Governance
Nature	A formal institution	A broader process or mechanism
Composition	Elected leaders and bureaucracy	State, market, and civil society
Role	Law-making, policy implementation	Decision-making, citizen participation, accountability
Approach	Top-down, authority-driven	Network-based, participatory
Example	Parliament, Judiciary, Ministries	RTI Act, Social Audits, e-Governance initiatives

Types of Governance

- **Good Governance**
 - Defined by **transparency, accountability, responsiveness, equity, rule of law, and participation**.
 - Promoted through various schemes and policies such as Citizen Charters, RTI Act, Sevottam Model.
 - Emphasized in **2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)** reports.
 - **Example:** Implementation of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) for subsidy delivery under JAM Trinity.
- **E-Governance**
 - Refers to **application of ICT** for delivering government services and enabling interaction between government and citizens.
 - Aims at **SMART governance** – Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive, and Transparent.
 - Implemented under the **National e-Governance Plan (NeGP)** and **Digital India**.
 - **Example:** UMANG App, DigiLocker, Aadhaar-enabled services.
- **Participatory Governance**
 - Citizens actively participate in planning, decision-making, and implementation.
 - Institutionalized through **Gram Sabhas, Ward Committees, Social Audits**, etc.

- **Example:** Kerala's People's Planning Campaign.
- **Corporate Governance**
 - Mechanism by which **corporate entities are directed and controlled** in the interest of all stakeholders.
 - Ensures **transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct** in the corporate sector.
 - **Example:** SEBI's mandatory disclosure norms and independent board members.
- **Global Governance**
 - Encompasses **international rules and institutions** for addressing global issues like climate change, security, and trade.
 - Operates through treaties, conventions, global forums, and intergovernmental organizations.
 - **Example:** United Nations, Paris Climate Agreement, WTO framework

<p>C. Crisis & Reforms (1975-90)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emergency (1975-77) exposed authoritarian tendencies and institutional weaknesses ● Rise of civil society movements ● Growing demand for transparency, decentralization, and accountability
<p>D. Liberalization & Good Governance (1990s-2000s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1991 Economic Reforms shifted focus to market-led governance ● Good Governance principles: participation, efficiency, accountability ● Key reforms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RTI Act (2005) ○ Citizen's Charters ○ 73rd & 74th Amendments ○ NeGP (2006) for digital service delivery
<p>E. Contemporary Governance (2014-Present)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vision of "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance" ● Flagship programs: Digital India, JAM Trinity, DBT ● Focus on convergence and outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ - Aspirational Districts Programme ○ - PM Gati Shakti ○ - Mission Karmayogi ● Real-time governance using dashboards and analytics
<p>F. Emerging Trends</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Participatory governance via Janbhagidari, social audits ● Collaborative federalism through GST Council, NITI Aayog ● Outcome-based planning, performance incentives ● Data-driven governance (AI, MIS) ● Emphasis on ethical and transparent administration (e-tendering, Lokpal, citizen charters)

Evolution of Governance in India

Phase	Key Features
<p>A. Pre-Independence Era</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Centralized, bureaucratic governance under British rule ● Creation of Indian Civil Services, Indian Penal Code (1860), police system ● Lord Ripon's Resolution (1882): Local self-government ● Govt. of India Acts (1919 & 1935): Introduced diarchy and partial provincial autonomy
<p>B. Post-Independence (1950-70s)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adoption of sovereign, democratic Constitution ● Focus on planned development, state-led industrialization ● Institutions like Planning Commission, Election Commission, independent judiciary ● Emphasis on social justice, equity, and welfare state ideals

Important Aspects of Governance (Good Governance): Characteristics & Principles

A. What is Good Governance?

- Good governance refers to a system where public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in a **transparent, accountable, responsive, and equitable** manner.
- It is a shift from government **control-based administration** to **citizen-centric governance**, as emphasized by reforms and global benchmarks like UNESCAP and World Bank indicators.

B. Core Characteristics & Principles of Good Governance

- **Accountability**
 - Institutions must be answerable for actions and outcomes.
 - Strengthened through:
 - **RTI Act, 2005**
 - **CAG audits**
 - **Lokpal & Lokayuktas**
 - **Parliamentary oversight**
 - **Rule of Law**
 - Laws must be applied equally, fairly, and consistently.
 - Backed by:
 - **Independent judiciary**
 - **Due process of law (Article 21)**
 - **Judicial review of executive action**
- **Transparency**
 - Ensures access to information, clarity in decision-making, and reduces corruption.
 - Enabled through:
 - **E-governance platforms**
 - **RTI portals, Public disclosure schemes, E-tendering**
- **Responsiveness**
 - Institutions must serve citizens effectively and promptly.
 - Reflected in:
 - **Grievance redressal systems (CPGRAMS, PG Portals)**
 - **Jan Sunwai apps, Sevottam model**
- **Participation**

- All stakeholders, especially the marginalized, should have a voice in decision-making.
- Facilitated through:
 - **Gram Sabhas, Ward Committees**
 - **Social audits (e.g., under MGNREGA)**
 - **Participatory budgeting** in cities like Pune, Bengaluru
- **Consensus Orientation**
 - Mediates different interests to build broad agreement on development priorities.
 - Encourages inclusive policymaking that balances majoritarianism and minority rights.
- **Equity and Inclusiveness**
 - All groups, especially weaker sections, must have opportunities to improve their well-being.
 - Supported by schemes like:
 - **SC/ST sub-plans, Minority welfare programs, Gender budgeting**
- **Effectiveness and Efficiency**
 - Institutions must deliver outcomes using resources optimally.
 - Enabled through:
 - **Outcome budgeting, Performance-linked incentives, MIS dashboards**
- **UNESCAP:** Lists these 8 principles as defining good governance globally

Pillars of Good Governance
(as per UN-ESCAP)



Constitutional Vision of Governance in India

- **Why the Constitution is Central to Governance**
 - The Indian Constitution is not just a legal document — it is the foundation for how India is governed. It defines the relationship between the **State and the citizen**, ensures **accountability**, and promotes the ideals of

justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. Through its provisions, it ensures that governance in India is **people-centric, inclusive, and democratic**

- **Preamble: The Soul of Constitutional Governance**

- The **Preamble** reflects the core vision of governance: to secure **Justice (social, economic, political), Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity** for all.
- It declares India as a **Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic** — setting the direction of governance.
- Acts as the **philosophical compass** that guides every action of the State.
- *For example*, the promise of **social justice** inspires schemes like reservation, MGNREGA, and PDS.

- **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs): Moral Obligations of the State**

- **Part IV (Articles 36–51)** lays out the **social and economic goals** that the State should pursue.
- Though **non-justiciable**, they guide policies and laws to achieve **welfare-oriented governance**.
- **Key Articles:**
 - **Art. 38:** Promote welfare and reduce inequality.
 - **Art. 39:** Ensure right to livelihood, fair wages, and protection for workers.
 - **Art. 40:** Mandates the establishment of **Panchayati Raj institutions**.
 - **Art. 45 & 41:** Guide the State to provide **early childhood care, education, and public assistance**.
- **Example:** The **Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009** is rooted in the DPSP vision of universal education.

- **Fundamental Rights: Legal Guarantees of Good Governance**

- Enshrined in **Part III (Articles 12–35)**, they provide enforceable rights and protect citizens against arbitrary actions by the State.
- Serve as the **bedrock of democratic governance** and uphold **individual dignity and freedom**.
- **Key Rights Relevant to Governance:**

- **Art. 14:** Equality before law – ensures fairness in public service delivery.
- **Art. 19:** Freedom of speech, expression, and association – enables participation and dissent.
- **Art. 21:** Right to life and liberty – interpreted to include **right to livelihood, education, health**.

- **Example:** PILs and judicial activism (like in environmental cases or food security) are based on these rights.

- **Constitutional Amendments and Schedules**

- **73rd & 74th Amendments (1992):**
 - Gave constitutional status to **Panchayats and Municipalities**.
 - Promoted **decentralization, participation, and accountability** in governance.
 - Linked to **11th and 12th Schedules**, which define functional areas of local bodies.
- **5th & 6th Schedules:** Provide for **autonomous governance** in tribal regions.

- **Judicial Interpretation and Constitutional Morality**

- The Supreme Court has played a vital role in **expanding the scope of governance-related provisions**.
- **Key Cases:**
 - **Kesavananda Bharati (1973):** Introduced the **Basic Structure Doctrine** – democracy, rule of law, and welfare state are inviolable.
 - **Unnikrishnan Case (1993):** Made **right to education** a fundamental right under Article 21.
 - **Vineet Narain Case (1998):** Strengthened the role of **vigilance institutions** to uphold integrity in governance.

Relationship Between Governance and Development

- **Governance and Development: Two Sides of the Same Coin**

- **Governance** refers to how authority is exercised — through laws, policies, institutions, and citizen participation.
- **Development** refers to improvements in **economic growth, human well-being, and quality of life**.

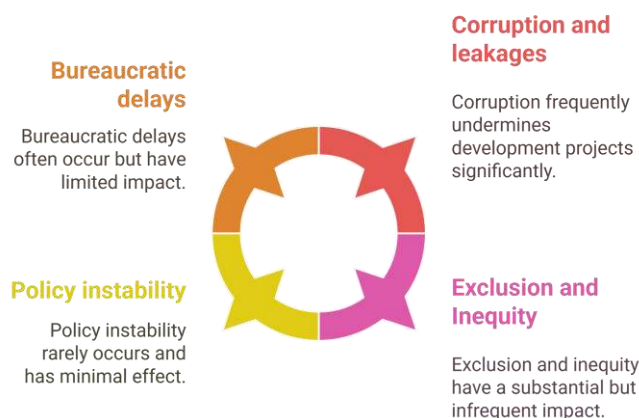
- Good governance is both a **means** and an **end** for development — it creates the right environment for economic progress and ensures that its benefits are **equitably distributed**.

- **Examples of Governance-Led Development in India**

- **JAM Trinity (Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, Mobile):** Enabled targeted welfare delivery and reduced leakages.
- **Aspirational Districts Programme:** Uses data and convergence to improve indicators in backward regions.
- **RTI Act (2005):** Empowered citizens to demand information, improving local administration.
- **MGNREGA:** Combines rights-based governance with employment generation in rural areas.
- **Digital India:** Enhances access to services like banking, certificates, health schemes in remote areas.

- **When Governance Fails: Impact on Development**

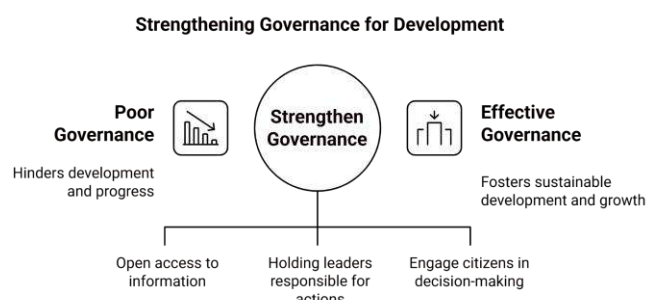
Impact of Governance Failures on Development



- **Global & Scholarly Views**

- **World Bank (1992):** "Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development."
- **Amartya Sen (Development as Freedom):** Development must include **freedom from hunger, poverty, and lack of opportunity**, which depends on **transparent and participative governance**.

- **UNDP Human Development Reports:** Highlight governance as a core component of sustainable development.



The Architecture of Governance in India (All these topic already covered in Prayaas Polity & Constitution Notes)

- **Role of Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary in Governance**

- **Executive:** Implements laws and policies. Key role in **policy formulation, scheme implementation, and administrative oversight**. Example: Ministries executing Digital India, PMAY, etc.
- **Legislature:** Enacts laws, approves budgets, and ensures **executive accountability** through debates, question hour, and committees. Vital for **deliberative governance**.
- **Judiciary:** Upholds **rule of law**, protects **constitutional values**, and acts as a check on arbitrary executive actions through **judicial review**. PILs have become key governance tools.
- **Example:** SC interventions in environmental governance (MC Mehta cases), food security (PUCL case on PDS)

- **Role of Regulatory and Oversight Institutions**

- **CVC (Central Vigilance Commission):** Supervises vigilance in public administration; promotes integrity and anti-corruption practices.
- **CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation):** Investigates high-profile corruption, economic crimes, and inter-state offenses.
- **Lokpal and Lokayuktas:** Statutory anti-corruption bodies aimed at enhancing accountability of public functionaries.

- **NHRC (National Human Rights Commission):** Protects rights and addresses grievances related to abuse by public authorities.
- **Election Commission, CAG, Finance Commission:** Play crucial roles in **ensuring transparency, neutrality, and fiscal discipline** in governance.
- **Role of Civil Services in Governance**
 - Serve as the **permanent, neutral, and merit-based machinery** for policy execution.
 - Ensure **continuity of governance** across political cycles.
 - Recent reforms aim at enhancing **efficiency, accountability, and citizen-centricity** (e.g., **Mission Karmayogi**).
 - **Example:** District Collectors play a central role in implementing schemes like PMGSY, DBT, disaster relief
- **Role of Local Governance**
 - **PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions)** under the **73rd Amendment** empower grassroots democracy and participatory planning in rural India.
 - **ULBs (Urban Local Bodies)** under the **74th Amendment** manage urban development, housing, sanitation, etc.
 - **PESA Act (1996)** strengthens **self-governance in Scheduled Areas**, giving powers to tribal Gram Sabhas in resource use, dispute resolution, and local planning.
 - **Example:** Gram Sabhas under PESA can reject mining proposals; Kerala's decentralised budgeting model.

Introduction

- Transparency and accountability are the **cornerstones of good governance**. In a democratic setup like India, where governance must be both **citizen-centric and ethically sound**, these two principles ensure that public institutions function in a **fair, responsible, and efficient manner**.
- Transparency promotes openness in government actions and policies, while accountability ensures that public officials are **answerable for their conduct and performance**.
- Over the years, India has institutionalized several legal, administrative, and technological mechanisms — such as the **Right to Information Act, Citizen Charters, social audits, and digital grievance redress platforms** — to deepen public trust and improve the quality of governance.

The Significance of Transparency and Accountability

- **Defining the Pillars**
 - **Transparency** in governance means that government decisions, rules, procedures, and performance are **open, accessible, and understandable** to citizens.
 - **Accountability** implies that public officials are **answerable for their actions and decisions**, and there are mechanisms to **enforce responsibility and rectify errors**.
 - These two values are **mutually reinforcing** — transparency provides the information necessary to hold officials accountable, while accountability incentivizes openness and responsiveness.
- **Why Are They Crucial in Governance?**
 - **Prevent Corruption and Misuse of Power**
 - Opacity in government processes leads to rent-seeking and favouritism.
 - Transparency acts as a deterrent by exposing decision-making to public scrutiny.
 - **Promote Efficient Service Delivery**

- Accountability ensures that **schemes and benefits reach intended beneficiaries**, and non-performance has consequences.
- Example: Social audits in MGNREGA identify wage delays or ghost workers.
- **Enhance Citizen Trust in Institutions**
 - Transparent procedures build public confidence in the fairness and impartiality of governance.
 - Accountability mechanisms assure citizens that there are ways to seek redressal.
- **Empower Citizens and Deepen Democracy**
 - Transparency equips people with the **right to know**, while accountability allows them to **question and participate** in governance.
 - Example: RTI applications by citizens have exposed scams and improved public services.
- **Enable Ethical and Rule-Based Governance**
 - These principles uphold **constitutional morality** and ensure that **public power is exercised lawfully**, not arbitrarily.
- **Role in Sustainable and Inclusive Development**
 - Without transparency and accountability, **development becomes exclusionary and inefficient**.
 - In India's context, where governance must balance **scale, diversity, and equity**, these values ensure:
 - Leakage-free welfare delivery
 - Responsive grievance redress
 - Fair allocation of public resources
 - Better fiscal management and outcomes
- **Key Reports & Recommendations**
 - **Second ARC (11th Report)**: Called transparency and accountability the "lifeblood" of good governance.
 - **World Bank**: Identifies "voice and accountability" as one of the six global governance indicators.
 - **UNDP Human Development Report (2002)**: Emphasized that good governance — rooted in accountability and transparency — is essential for development and human freedom.

Mechanisms to Promote Transparency and Accountability

A. Legal and Participatory Instruments



1. Right to Information Act, 2005

Background and Rationale

- The **Right to Information (RTI)** was recognized as essential to **empowering citizens**, enabling **informed participation**, and ensuring **transparency** in governance.
- Emerged from **grassroots movements** like the **Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS)** in Rajasthan, which linked access to information with the **right to livelihood and anti-corruption efforts**.
- Formally enacted in **2005**, replacing the ineffective **Freedom of Information Act, 2002**.

Objectives of the Act

- Promote transparency and accountability in the functioning of public authorities.
- Empower citizens to seek information from the government.
- Contain corruption and ensure better delivery of services.
- Make democracy more participatory and meaningful.

Institutional Mechanism

- **Central Information Commission (CIC)** and **State Information Commissions (SICs)**: Quasi-judicial bodies constituted under the Act.
 - Headed by Chief Information Commissioners.
 - Empowered to ensure compliance, order disclosure, and penalize defaulting officers.

Scope and Applicability

- Applicable to all **public authorities** at the **Union, State, and local levels**, including:
 - Constitutional bodies (e.g., Election Commission, UPSC),
 - Statutory authorities,
 - Government-funded NGOs and bodies.
- **Exemptions**:
 - Intelligence and security organizations listed in **Second Schedule** (e.g., RAW, IB, BSF) are exempt under **Section 24**, except in cases of **alleged human rights violations**.

Salient Features

- **Public Authorities Covered**: All bodies of government (Union, State, local) including NGOs substantially funded by government.
- **Information Access**: Citizens can seek any information held by public authorities unless it is exempted under Sections 8 and 9.
- **Time-bound Response**: Information must be provided within **30 days** (or 48 hours in case of life or liberty issues).
- **Designation of Officers**: Appointment of *Public Information Officers (PIOs)* in each department to receive and process RTI applications.
- **Appeal Mechanism**: Two-tier appeal system: First Appeal (within the same department), Second Appeal (to State or Central Information Commissions).
- **Penalties**: PIOs can be penalized ₹250 per day (up to ₹25,000) for unjustified delay or refusal.

Achievements and Impact of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005

- **Deepening Democracy and Empowering Citizens**
 - Enabled common citizens to question public authorities and demand accountability.
 - Shifted the power dynamic by reducing information asymmetry between the state and citizens.
 - Supported grassroots activism and strengthened participatory democracy, especially among marginalized groups.
- **Curbing Corruption**
 - Exposed corruption and misuse of public funds in schemes like:

- **MNREGA wage delays** in Rajasthan
- **PDS ration diversion** in Bihar
- **Scams in mid-day meals**, pension schemes, and housing allotments
- RTI has often acted as a trigger for CBI investigations or audits by CAG.
- **Improving Public Service Delivery**
 - Citizens used RTI to demand timely services (e.g., pensions, rations, utility connections).
 - Bureaucrats became more cautious in decision-making, knowing their records can be accessed.
 - Enhanced efficiency in record-keeping and transparency protocols.
- **Boosting Transparency in Governance**
 - Ensured availability of information such as:
 - File notings on policy decisions
 - Contract details and tender processes
 - Exam evaluation criteria in public exams (e.g., UPSC, SSC)
 - Promoted proactive disclosures under Section 4, reducing the need for formal RTI applications.
- **Strengthening Accountability of Institutions**
 - Public authorities became more responsive and systematic in handling queries.
 - Politicians, government officers, and public servants were held accountable for delays, inaction, or irregularities.
 - **Example:** Disclosure of MPs' expenditure, assets and liabilities, and Lok Sabha attendance.
- **Legal and Judicial Recognition**
 - **SC in Raj Narain Case (1975) & SP Gupta Case (1981)** laid the foundation for RTI by stating that right to know is a part of freedom of speech.
 - Courts have upheld the primacy of transparency over secrecy in many judgments post-2005.
- **Civil Society and Media Impact**
 - Journalists and activists routinely use RTI as a tool for investigative reporting and public interest litigation.
 - Boosted citizen journalism and advocacy on local governance issues.

Challenges and Limitations of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005

Category	Challenge / Limitation	Explanation / Examples
1. Institutional Weakness	Vacancies and Delays in Information Commissions	CIC and several State Information Commissions face delays in appointments, backlog of appeals, and understaffing. For example, Maharashtra had over 15,000 pending cases (2023).
	Dilution through Amendments	The RTI Amendment Act, 2019 allowed the government to decide the tenure and salaries of CIC/SICs, raising concerns of executive interference and erosion of independence.
2. Administrative Resistance	Bureaucratic Non-cooperation	Many PIOs are reluctant to disclose information, either due to lack of training or fear of repercussions.
	Poor Record Maintenance	Government departments often lack proper digital documentation systems, making it difficult to access or trace files.
3. Legal and Procedural Gaps	Exemptions under Section 8	Vague exemptions for "national security," "commercial confidence," or

		"cabinet papers" are often misused to deny information.
	Absence of Whistleblower Protection	Lack of strong protection for RTI activists has made them vulnerable— over 100 RTI activists have been attacked or killed since 2005.
4.Awareness and Accessibility	Low Public Awareness	Many citizens, especially in rural and tribal areas, are unaware of their RTI rights or how to file applications.
	Digital Divide	Online RTI portals are not uniformly available across all states; lack of vernacular language support limits reach.
5.Misuse of RTI	Vexatious and Frivolous Applications	Some applicants misuse RTI for harassment or personal vendettas, which burdens the system and discredits genuine use.
6.Lack of Penalties and Enforcement	Weak Punitive Measures	Despite provisions under Section 20, many PIOs escape penalties for non-disclosure due to lack of enforcement by commissions.
7.Security Concerns	Intimidation of Activists	RTI activists working on local corruption or land scams are often targeted. Example:

		Satish Shetty murder case (Pune) who exposed land scams using RTI.
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Way Forward

- Strengthen **proactive disclosure** to reduce dependency on RTI filing.
- Ensure **functional autonomy** of Information Commissions.
- Enhance **training and awareness campaigns** in rural and tribal areas.
- Provide **legal protection to RTI users**, especially whistleblowers and journalists.

2. Whistleblower Protection Act, 2014

Background and Need

- In a democracy, **corruption thrives in secrecy** and fear. Citizens or officials who expose wrongdoing often face threats or even violence.
- The need for a legal mechanism to protect such individuals — termed "**whistleblowers**" — became urgent after the high-profile murders of:
 - **Satyendra Dubey** (2003) – NHA engineer who exposed corruption in the Golden Quadrilateral project.
 - **Shanmugam Manjunath** and others who tried to expose malpractices in public administration.
- To institutionalize protections, the **Whistle Blowers Protection Act** was enacted in **2014**, following recommendations from the **Law Commission** and demands from civil society.

Objectives of the Act

- To establish a legal mechanism for receiving complaints of corruption or misuse of power by public servants.
- To provide **protection to individuals** making such disclosures from victimization.
- To promote a culture of **transparency, courage, and ethical conduct** in public service.

Key Features

- **Applies to:**
 - All **public servants**, including Central/State government employees, PSUs, and regulatory bodies.
 - Complaints can be made by **any individual**, including private citizens and civil society members.
- **Authorised Bodies to Receive Complaints:**
 - **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)** at the central level.
 - Designated competent authorities at the state level.
- **Types of Disclosures Permitted:**
 - Corruption, willful misuse of power, and criminal offences committed by public servants.
 - Disclosure must be in **good faith** with sufficient basis.
- **Protection Offered:**
 - Protection of the **identity** of the whistleblower.
 - Protection from **disciplinary action, transfers, threats, or harassment.**
 - Penal provisions against those who **reveal identity** or **victimize the complainant**

Limitations and Concerns Associated with the Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014

Category	Limitations / Concerns	Explanation / Implications
Scope of Disclosures	Exclusion of classified information	The 2015 amendment bill (yet to be passed) seeks to bar disclosures related to 10 categories including national security, cabinet proceedings, and foreign relations— <i>even if they reveal corruption.</i> This undermines the very purpose of whistleblowing.

Coverage	Only covers public servants	Private sector whistleblowers are not protected, despite major corporate scams like Satyam having exposed systemic fraud.
	NGOs and civil society actors excluded	RTI activists and journalists who act as whistleblowers receive no protection under this Act.
Anonymity and Identity Disclosure	No provision for anonymous complaints	Complainants must reveal their identity, which increases the risk of retaliation and discourages reporting.
Lack of Independent Authority	Vague mechanism for inquiry	The Act does not provide for a fully independent agency to investigate disclosures. It relies on the vigilance machinery of the government, which may be biased or lack autonomy.
Protection from Victimization	Weak and reactive protection	Protection is only provided after the disclosure is made and victimization has occurred, making it ineffective in preventing threats or harassment.
No Witness Protection Scheme	Absence of institutional support for safety	Unlike many countries, India lacks a formal witness or whistleblower protection program, exposing individuals to violence and social ostracization.

Retaliation and Violence	Numerous attacks on whistleblowers	Over 80 whistleblowers have been assaulted or killed since 2005 (e.g., <i>Satyendra Dubey, Shehla Masood</i>). Lack of proactive protection remains a major concern.
No Penalty for Non-action	Officials face no consequences for inaction	There is no deterrent for authorities who ignore or delay investigations into disclosures.
Judicial Criticism	SC highlighted need for better safeguards	The Supreme Court in <i>CBI vs. R.S. Misra</i> emphasized the need to create a robust system of protection for whistleblowers.

Way Forward

- **Notify operational rules** and make the Act fully functional.
- Ensure **time-bound investigation** of complaints.
- Provide **interim relief and legal aid** to whistleblowers facing threats.
- Strengthen the independence and capacity of **CVC and state authorities**.
- Pass a revised Amendment Bill that balances **security concerns with public interest**.

3. Social Audits

What is a Social Audit?

- A **social audit** is a **participatory tool** through which the performance and implementation of government schemes are **evaluated by the people themselves**.
- It involves **verification of official records** and **physical inspection of works and services**, followed by **public hearings** where findings are discussed.
- It ensures that governance is not just for the people, but **by the people** — at least in terms of oversight.

Objectives of Social Audits

- Promote **transparency** by making scheme records accessible to the public.
- Ensure **accountability** of public servants and contractors.
- Detect and prevent **corruption, leakage, and irregularities**.
- Empower local communities to demand corrective action.

Legal Backing and Policy Mandate

- **Statutorily mandated under Section 17 of the MGNREGA Act, 2005.**
 - States are required to set up **Social Audit Units (SAUs)** independent of the implementing agencies.
 - Social audits must be carried out by the **Gram Sabha** at regular intervals.
- **Recommended by:**
 - **2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (11th Report)**.
 - **CAG** as an effective supplement to financial audits.
 - Supreme Court has upheld their importance in welfare governance.

Methodology of a Social Audit

- Collection of official records related to scheme implementation.
- Physical verification of work (e.g., inspecting MGNREGA worksites).
- Interviews with beneficiaries and stakeholders.
- **Public hearing (jan sunwai)** where findings are shared, and authorities are questioned in an open forum.
- Submission of audit report with identified gaps and recovery suggestions.

Successful Examples in India

- **Andhra Pradesh:**
 - Pioneer in institutionalizing social audits through an independent SAU.
 - Conducted audits across all districts under MGNREGA, uncovering wage theft and job card fraud.
- **Rajasthan and Jharkhand:**
 - Used social audits to track delivery under PDS, pension schemes, and housing.

- **Chhattisgarh:**
 - Gram Sabhas actively audited forest rights and midday meals.

Achievements and Impact

- Identified **misappropriation and ghost beneficiaries** in welfare schemes.
- Led to **recovery of public funds** and penal action against corrupt officials.
- Enhanced **community awareness**, participation, and ownership.
- Increased **credibility of welfare programs** in rural areas.

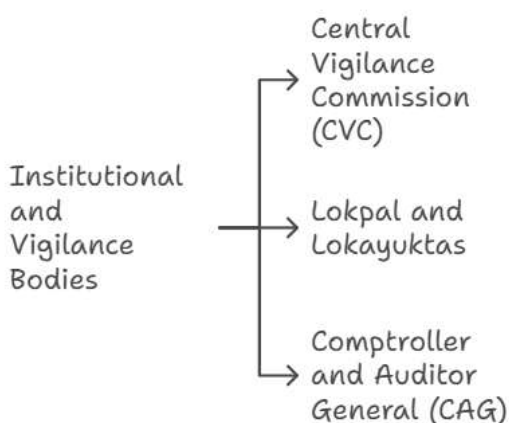
Challenges in Implementation

- **Inadequate staffing and funding** of Social Audit Units.
- **Resistance from local officials and vested interests.**
- Lack of **legal enforceability** of audit findings.
- Low awareness and **community capacity** in some regions.
- Often treated as a **ritualistic formality** rather than a robust oversight tool.

Way Forward

- **Strengthen and fund independent SAUs** with trained personnel.
- Make social audits **mandatory across all major schemes** (e.g., PMAY-G, NSAP).
- Provide **legal backing to audit findings** to ensure enforcement.
- Ensure **capacity building of Gram Sabha members.**
- Use **technology (GIS, mobile apps)** for real-time data collection and public dashboards.

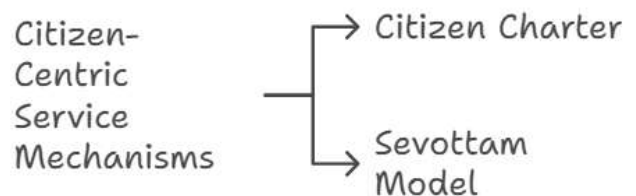
B. Institutional and Vigilance Bodies



- The following bodies have been covered in greater detail in **Prayaas Polity & Constitution notes**. However, their **general role** in promoting transparency and accountability in governance is summarized below:

- **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC):** Functions as the apex **anti-corruption watchdog**, overseeing vigilance administration and ensuring integrity in public services.
- **Lokpal and Lokayuktas:** Serve as independent **ombudsman institutions** to investigate complaints against public functionaries, including high-level corruption.
- **Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG):** Acts as the **constitutional auditor**, promoting fiscal transparency by auditing government revenues and expenditures.
- These institutions play a **critical role in enforcing ethical governance**, exposing irregularities, and holding the executive accountable to the Constitution and the public.

C. Citizen-Centric Service Mechanisms



1. Citizen Charter

What is a Citizen Charter?

- A **Citizen Charter** is a public declaration by a government department or agency that outlines:
 - The **standards of service delivery**,
 - The **rights and obligations of citizens**,
 - The **mechanism for grievance redressal.**
- It aims to make the administration **transparent, accountable, and responsive** by setting clear expectations between the service provider and the citizen.

Origin and Evolution

- The concept originated in the **United Kingdom in 1991** as part of a public service reform movement.
- Introduced in India in **1997** through the '**Citizens' Charter Initiative**' under the Department of

Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG).

Key Components of a Good Citizen Charter

- **Vision and Mission Statement** : Reflects the values and objectives of the organization.
- **Details of Services Provide** : Specifies the type of services, eligibility, documents required, and timelines.
- **Service Standards** : Time-bound commitments for each service (e.g., passport within 30 days).
- **Grievance Redress Mechanism** : Contact points, escalation process, time limits for resolution.
- **Expectations from Citizens** : Duties such as providing accurate documents or complying with procedures.

Importance in Governance

- Makes public service delivery **predictable and measurable**.
- Enhances **citizen trust and satisfaction**.
- Encourages **ethical and professional conduct** in public offices.
- Facilitates **performance monitoring** and policy feedback.
- **Example:** Passport Seva Kendras include timelines and contact points in their Citizen Charter, significantly improving efficiency.

Limitations and Challenges

- Many charters are **generic, outdated, or not displayed publicly**.
- Lack of **legal enforceability**; failure to meet standards carries no penalties.
- Citizens often unaware of their rights due to **poor dissemination**.
- No standardized format or monitoring mechanism across departments.

Recommendations (2nd ARC, 12th Report – “Citizen Centric Administration”)

- Ensure **legal backing** to Citizen Charters to make them enforceable.
- Develop **standard templates** and ensure wide publicity in local languages.
- Link service standards to **performance appraisals of officials**.

- Empower **citizens to hold departments accountable** through social audits and feedback platforms.

2. Sevottam Model

Meaning and Origin

- **"Sevottam"** is a Hindi acronym derived from **"Seva" (service)** and **"Uttam" (excellence)** — meaning **"Excellence in Service Delivery."**
- It is a **quality management framework** developed by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)** to **institutionalize citizen-centric service delivery** in government departments.
- Recommended by the **2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)** in its 12th Report: *Citizen-Centric Administration*.

Core Objectives

Objective	Explanation
1. Improve Quality of Public Services	Ensure delivery of services that meet the needs and expectations of citizens in a timely, transparent, and efficient manner.
2. Promote Citizen-Centric Governance	Shift focus from internal processes to the satisfaction of citizens through responsive and accountable administration.
3. Institutionalize Service Standards	Encourage government departments to define and publicly commit to service standards via Citizen Charters .
4. Strengthen Grievance Redressal Mechanisms	Build robust systems to receive, process, and resolve citizen grievances within a defined timeframe.
5. Enhance Transparency and Accountability	Ensure transparent processes and empower citizens to demand accountability in service delivery.

6. Create a Culture of Continuous Improvement	Enable government departments to regularly evaluate, learn from feedback, and improve service mechanisms.
7. Encourage Replicable Best Practices	Promote adoption of successful service delivery models across departments and states.

Components of the Sevottam Framework

The model consists of **three key modules**, each addressing a pillar of service delivery:

Component	Focus Area
1. Citizen Charter	Specifies services, timelines, expectations, and redress mechanisms.
2. Public Grievance Redressal	Establishes a system for receiving, processing, and responding to grievances.
3. Service Delivery Capability	Focuses on capacity building, process re-engineering, and performance tracking.

Benefits of the Sevottam Model

- Improves **citizen satisfaction** and public image of government departments.
- Promotes **evidence-based governance** and **process accountability.**
- Encourages **continuous improvement** through periodic feedback and audits.
- Strengthens **grievance redressal mechanisms**, reinforcing trust in institutions.

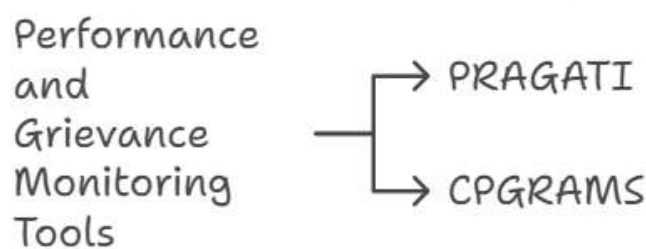
Challenges in Implementation

- **Lack of awareness and training** among departmental staff.
- Departments often treat it as a **symbolic exercise** rather than a transformative tool.
- Absence of **external auditing** or standardized rating systems.
- Limited coordination between departments and grievance redress portals.

Way Forward

- Make Sevottam adoption **mandatory across central and state departments.**
- Link **citizen feedback to performance appraisals** and awards.
- Integrate Sevottam parameters with **Digital India dashboards.**
- Use **third-party audits** and publish **public rating reports.**

D. Performance and Grievance Monitoring Tools



1. PRAGATI - Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation

Overview and Launch

- Launched on **25th March 2015** by the **Prime Minister's Office (PMO).**
- A **technology-based multi-purpose platform** that integrates:
 - **Project monitoring,**
 - **Grievance redressal,** and
 - **Inter-governmental coordination.**
- Designed to provide a **direct communication channel between the Prime Minister and field officers.**

Objectives of PRAGATI

- To **expedite implementation** of key infrastructure and welfare projects.
- To **identify and remove bottlenecks** through real-time intervention by the PM.
- To enable **timely grievance redressal** by tracking long-pending public complaints via CPGRAMS.
- To improve **Centre-State coordination** by including Chief Secretaries and District Collectors.
- To promote a **culture of data-based performance accountability** in governance.
- To ensure **minimum delays** in approvals, clearances, and inter-ministerial coordination.

- To institutionalize **monthly high-level reviews** on the **fourth Wednesday** of each month.

Key Features of PRAGATI

Feature	Description
Real-time video conferencing	PM, Chief Secretaries, Secretaries, and Collectors interact live.
Integration with CPGRAMS	Uses grievance data to push for time-bound citizen service delivery.
GIS-enabled dashboards	Map-based visualization of project locations and progress.
Multi-layered interface	Combines MIS systems from 20+ ministries.
Proactive data input	Ministries/states upload progress, pending tasks, and grievances.

Achievements and Impact

- **Faster project execution:** Revived stuck infrastructure projects (e.g., highways, irrigation, power plants).
- **Enhanced inter-ministerial coordination:** Issues that previously took months to resolve were cleared in days.
- **Citizen grievance redressal:** Ensured follow-up on **long-pending complaints**, especially in pensions, PF, and land acquisition.
- **Promoted cooperative federalism:** Brought state machinery into national decision-making processes.
- **Administrative pressure:** Real-time presence of PM encouraged **officers to be more responsive and prepared**.
- **Monitored mega programs:** Such as **Swachh Bharat Mission, PMGSY, Smart Cities, Gati Shakti**.
- **Quantitative output:** Over **300+ projects worth ₹10 lakh crore** monitored; thousands of grievances resolved.

Challenges and Limitations

- **Top-down centralised approach:** May lead to lack of ownership at local levels.
- **Focus limited to selected flagship schemes and projects.**
- **No legal enforceability:** Ministries or states are not legally bound to follow up on decisions.
- **Over-reliance on digital MIS:** Data gaps, incorrect uploads, or outdated entries may mislead reviews.
- **Inadequate citizen visibility:** Public not fully aware of follow-up on their grievances.
- **One-way accountability:** PMO reviews departments, but feedback loop from ground-level citizens is weak.
- **Dependency on bureaucratic culture:** Officers may prioritize visibility over substance to show compliance.

Way Forward

- **Expand the scope:** Include real-time tracking of **health, education, and social welfare outcomes**.
- **Ensure follow-through mechanisms:** Monitor post-review compliance across departments and states.
- **Institutionalize feedback loops:** Integrate citizen surveys or feedback post-grievance resolution.
- **Link PRAGATI with performance appraisals** of senior officials and scheme fund releases.
- **Promote transparency:** Periodically publish **PRAGATI dashboards in the public domain**.
- **Use AI/ML tools:** For predictive project delays, citizen sentiment analysis, and automated escalation.
- **Capacity-building at district level:** Equip District Magistrates with support teams to act on PRAGATI directions efficiently.

2. CPGRAMS – Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System

Overview and Purpose

- **CPGRAMS** stands for **Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System**.
- It is an **online platform** developed by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)** to enable **citizens**

to lodge grievances related to government services.

- Launched in **2007**, it has become a central tool to enhance **accountability and responsiveness** in administration.

Objectives

- To provide a **time-bound, transparent, and accountable system** for grievance redressal.
- To enable **citizens to lodge complaints online** from anywhere.
- To facilitate **monitoring of complaint status** by concerned authorities.
- To ensure **policy feedback** through data analytics from recurring grievances.
- To serve as a **backbone of citizen-centric governance**, in line with Sevottam and Digital India.

Key Features

Feature	Description
Multi-channel access	Complaints can be filed online, by post, mobile app, or through Common Service Centres (CSCs).
Integration with ministries	Linked to 90+ ministries/departments and all State/UT governments.
Unique registration number	Each complaint is assigned a number for tracking.
Auto-escalation mechanism	Complaints not resolved in 30 days are escalated to higher officers.
Feedback module	Citizens can rate satisfaction with grievance redressal.
Multilingual platform	Available in multiple Indian languages for accessibility.

Institutional Mechanism

- **Public Grievance Officers (PGOs)** are appointed in each ministry/state department.

- The **DARPG** is the nodal agency for oversight, analysis, and system updates.
- Integrated with platforms like **PRAGATI** and **MyGov** for coordination and visibility.

Achievements and Impact

- **High citizen usage:** Over 20 lakh grievances received annually.
- **Improved transparency:** Public dashboards track departmental responsiveness.
- **Feedback-informed policy:** Recurring issues help ministries refine schemes (e.g., PF withdrawal complaints improved EPFO processes).
- **Departmental accountability:** Response timelines have made grievance redressal a **performance metric**.
- **Reduction in pendency:** Many departments have adopted **Sewa Weeks** and **Grievance Redress Drives**.
- **Flagship initiatives monitored:** Used to track issues in schemes like **PMAY, Ujjwala, PDS**, etc.

Challenges

- **Quality of redressal:** Many grievances are marked as "disposed" without substantive resolution.
- **Poor coordination:** Inter-departmental or Centre-State issues often bounce without action.
- **Low citizen awareness:** Especially in rural or tribal areas.
- **One-way communication:** Limited proactive communication or follow-up with complainants.
- **Language and digital divide:** Though multilingual, effective usage among non-literate citizens remains low.
- **Lack of deterrents:** No penalties for delayed or poor-quality redressal.

Way Forward

- **Strengthen quality checks:** Introduce third-party audits of grievance redressal.
- **Link resolution with citizen satisfaction scores** for officer evaluation.
- **Enhance training of PGOs** to handle sensitive and technical complaints effectively.
- **Public awareness campaigns** to improve citizen engagement.

- **Use AI tools** to auto-categorize, prioritize, and detect grievance trends.

Better integration with social audits and ombudsman systems to enforce accountability.

Introduction

- E-Governance represents a transformative shift in how governments engage with citizens, businesses, and other arms of the state. It refers to the use of **Information and Communication Technology (ICT)** to enhance the **efficiency, transparency, responsiveness, and inclusivity** of governance processes.
- In India, e-governance gained momentum post the **National e-Governance Plan (NeGP)** in 2006, and has since evolved into a digitally driven ecosystem through flagship initiatives like **Digital India, UMANG, and DigiLocker**.
- With rising internet penetration and mobile usage, e-governance has emerged as a key enabler of **citizen-centric and data-driven governance**. As we move forward, the integration of emerging technologies like **Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, and Internet of Things (IoT)** promises to redefine the future of public service delivery in India.

Definition of E-Governance

- **E-Governance** refers to the application of **Information and Communication Technology (ICT)** by government agencies for delivering services, exchanging information, and integrating processes across various stakeholders.
- It involves the use of **digital platforms, databases, mobile apps, and online portals** to enhance the **efficiency, transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness** of public administration.

Evolution of E-Governance in India

Phase & Period	Key Features and Initiatives
1. Foundation Phase (Pre-1990s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on internal computerisation of government departments. • Establishment of NIC (1977) and NICNET (1987). • Basic ICT usage in payroll, finance, admin.
2. Early ICT Adoption (1990s-2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiation of citizen-facing services like railway reservation and passport issuance. • Enactment of Information Technology Act, 2000. • Formation of SWANs and departmental-level digitisation.
3. NeGP Era (2006-2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of National e-Governance Plan (NeGP). • Implementation of 31 Mission Mode Projects (e.g., MCA21, eCourts, eDistrict). • Establishment of Common Service Centres (CSCs). • Emphasis on process re-engineering and service integration.
4. Digital India Era (Post-2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of Digital India Programme (2015) to transform service delivery. • Key initiatives: UMANG, DigiLocker, eNAM, MyGov. • Use of JAM Trinity (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile) for direct benefit transfers.
5. Intelligent Governance (2020s onwards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of AI, IoT, Blockchain, GIS in governance. • Focus on real-time data dashboards, predictive

	<p>analytics, and automated systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater emphasis on cybersecurity, privacy, and digital ethics.
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	processes, licensing, and taxation.	
4. G2E (Government to Employee)	Involves ICT tools used to manage government employee data , payroll, service records, and internal services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • iGOT Karmayogi • HRMS portals • e-SamikSha • EPFO Services

Major Models of E-Governance

Model	Description	Examples
1. G2G (Government to Government)	Refers to electronic sharing of data and coordination between various government departments, agencies, and levels (Union-State-Local).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e-Office • Government e-Marketplace (GeM) • SPARROW (Smart Performance Appraisal Report Recording Online Window) • Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS)
2. G2C (Government to Citizen)	Covers all digital services delivered to citizens , enhancing accessibility, convenience, and transparency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UMANG • DigiLocker • Passport Seva • PM-KISAN portal • e-SHRAM
3. G2B (Government to Business)	Encompasses interactions between government and private sector to streamline business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GSTN Portal • MCA21 • eBiz Portal • Single Window Clearance System

Key Features of E-Governance

- **Citizen-Centricity**
 - E-Governance prioritizes **citizen needs and convenience** by offering **24x7, accessible, and location-neutral** services.
 - Focus on **user-friendly interfaces**, mobile-first design, and inclusion of marginalized groups.
- **Transparency**
 - Real-time access to **data, schemes, and processes** reduces information asymmetry.
 - Public dashboards, e-tendering, and RTI portals ensure **openness in decision-making**.
- **Accountability**
 - Integration of **monitoring tools**, such as **CPGRAMS** and **PRAGATI**, holds departments and officials responsible.
 - Time-bound service delivery under initiatives like **Citizen Charter**, Sevottam Model.
- **Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness**
 - Automation eliminates redundancies, reducing **delays, paperwork, and costs**.
 - E-Governance enhances **resource optimization** and **financial discipline** (e.g., Direct Benefit Transfer).
- **Integration and Interoperability**
 - Promotes **seamless coordination across ministries, departments, and states**.

- Use of **Application Programming Interfaces (APIs)** allows data-sharing across platforms (e.g., Aadhaar, DigiLocker, GSTN).
- **Paperless and Cashless Governance**
 - Digital records, e-signatures, and cloud-based storage reduce dependence on paper.
 - Services like **BHIM, e-RUPI, Bharat BillPay** promote cashless transactions.
- **Time-Bound and On-Demand Services**
 - Citizens can access services **anytime and anywhere**, without dependency on office hours.
 - Examples: Passport Seva, online tax filings, DigiLocker access.
- **Participatory and Inclusive**
 - Platforms like **MyGov**, online surveys, and public consultation forums allow citizen input.
 - E-Governance bridges the rural-urban divide via **Common Service Centres (CSCs)** and mobile governance.
- **Security and Privacy Focus**
 - Adoption of **encryption standards, Aadhaar masking, digital signature certificates (DSC)**, etc.
 - Growing emphasis on **data protection frameworks** (e.g., Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023).

Key E-Governance Initiatives in India

- **Governance and Administrative Services**
 - **Digital India Mission (2015)** : Umbrella program to transform India into a **digitally empowered society and knowledge economy**, focusing on infrastructure, digital literacy, and paperless delivery.
 - **UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-Age Governance)** : Single mobile interface integrating 100+ government departments and 1,200+ services including Aadhaar, EPFO, passport, tax filing, etc.
 - **DigiLocker** : Cloud-based platform to store and share official documents digitally (e.g.,

- driving license, CBSE marksheets) linked with Aadhaar.
- **CPGRAMS (Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System)** : Online platform for grievance registration, monitoring, and resolution by all ministries and departments.
- **PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation)** : PMO-led real-time project and grievance review mechanism integrating central ministries and states.
- **MyGov Portal** : Citizen engagement platform enabling participatory governance via idea submissions, discussions, and polls.
- **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** : Online public procurement platform ensuring transparency, efficiency, and MSME participation in government contracts.
- **Agriculture and Rural Development**
 - **eNAM (National Agriculture Market)** : Integrates APMC mandis to create a unified digital marketplace for farmers to sell produce across India.
 - **PM-KISAN Portal** : Platform to transfer direct income support (₹6,000 annually) to eligible farmers under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi.
 - **eGramSwaraj** : Real-time monitoring of Gram Panchayat activities including financial transactions, planning, and execution under RGSA.
 - **Bhu-Naksha & Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP)** : Digitisation of land records, maps, and ownership titles for reducing disputes and enabling online access.
- **Health and Nutrition**
 - **e-Hospital Portal** : Online registration, appointment booking, lab reports, and discharge summaries in government hospitals.

- **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) :** Provides each citizen with a **unique Health ID** to integrate health records across platforms and hospitals.
- **Poshan Tracker :** Real-time monitoring tool for tracking delivery of nutrition services by Anganwadi workers under ICDS.
- **CoWIN Portal :** Online platform for COVID-19 vaccination registration, tracking, and certificate generation.
- **Education and Skill Development**
 - **SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) :** Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) platform , offering free online courses by IITs, IIMs, and universities with optional certification.
 - **DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing) :** Digital platform for school education, teacher training, and multilingual e-content delivery.
 - **National Scholarship Portal (NSP) :** Unified platform for applying, processing, and disbursing scholarships to students from various ministries.
 - **Skill India Portal :** Facilitates skilling, reskilling, and upskilling programs linked with job market analytics.
- **Judiciary and Legal Affairs**
 - **e-Courts Mission Mode Project :** Digitization of court records, cause lists, judgments, and case-tracking through National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG).
 - **Virtual Courts & e-Filing Systems :** Enable remote hearings and electronic submission of petitions, especially strengthened post-COVID.
- **Finance and Taxation**
 - **GSTN (Goods and Services Tax Network) :** Online platform for GST registration, return filing, and tax payments.
 - **TReDS (Trade Receivables Discounting System) :** E-platform to finance MSME receivables from corporate buyers through invoice discounting.
- **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) Portal :** Transfers subsidies and welfare benefits directly to Aadhaar-linked bank accounts to reduce leakage.
- **Public Financial Management System (PFMS) :** Real-time tracking of fund flow from central government to beneficiaries under various schemes.
- **Employment and Labour**
 - **e-SHRAM Portal :** National database of unorganised workers linked with Aadhaar for targeted delivery of benefits.
 - **National Career Service (NCS) Portal :** One-stop job matching and career guidance platform for job seekers, employers, and training institutions.
 - **Shram Suvidha Portal :** Single compliance platform for labour laws, returns, and inspections.
- **Urban Services and Infrastructure**
 - **Smart Cities Mission Dashboards :** Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs) in cities for real-time governance of utilities and mobility.
 - **Online Building Plan Approval System (OBPAS) :** Simplifies and automates building construction approvals.
 - **Urban Local Body Portals :** Digital payment of taxes, water bills, property registration, etc.
- **Environment and Disaster Management**
 - **PARIVESH Portal :** Single-window clearance system for environmental impact assessments and project clearances.
 - **India Meteorological Department (IMD) Mobile Apps :** Including **Mausam**, **Meghdoot**, and **Damini** for weather alerts, agriculture forecasts, and lightning tracking.
 - **NDMA Portals and Apps :** Real-time disaster alerts, emergency planning, and coordination tools during crises.

- **Security and Internal Affairs**

- **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS)** : Online police reporting and crime tracking across states and agencies.
- **ICJS (Interoperable Criminal Justice System)** : Integrates police, forensic labs, prosecution, courts, and prisons on one digital platform.
- **Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration and Tracking (IVFRT)** : Improves visa services, foreigner monitoring, and border security processes.

Benefits and Challenges of E-Governance

Benefits of E-Governance	Challenges of E-Governance
<p>1. Enhanced Transparency Digital records and dashboards reduce discretion and corruption (e.g., e-tendering, RTI portals).</p>	<p>1. Digital Divide Lack of access to smartphones, internet, or digital literacy, especially in rural and tribal areas.</p>
<p>2. Increased Accountability Tools like CPGRAMS and PRAGATI help track performance and fix responsibility.</p>	<p>2. Cybersecurity Threats Increased risk of data breaches, identity theft, and cyber attacks due to lack of robust safeguards.</p>
<p>3. Faster and Efficient Service Delivery Automation reduces delays, paperwork, and cost (e.g., DigiLocker, UMANG).</p>	<p>3. Resistance to Change Administrative inertia and reluctance among officials to adopt new technologies.</p>
<p>4. Citizen Empowerment Information access, grievance redress, and participatory platforms</p>	<p>4. Interoperability Issues Lack of integration across departments and platforms due to legacy</p>

like MyGov increase democratic participation.	systems and inconsistent standards.
<p>5. Inclusive Governance Platforms like e-SHRAM, NSP, and CSCs ensure services reach marginalized and remote populations.</p>	<p>5. Low Awareness and Digital Literacy Many citizens are unaware of their digital rights or how to use e-governance tools.</p>
<p>6. Real-Time Monitoring and Decision Making Dashboards and MIS tools (e.g., Poshan Tracker, ADP portal) enable data-driven governance.</p>	<p>6. Infrastructure Deficits Unreliable internet connectivity and lack of ICT infrastructure in remote areas.</p>
<p>7. Cost Reduction and Resource Optimization Paperless, faceless systems reduce administrative overheads (e.g., DBT, GeM).</p>	<p>7. Language and Accessibility Barriers Most platforms lack multilingual support or disabled-friendly design.</p>

Recent Development

Use of f AI, Blockchain, IoT in Governance

Introduction

Emerging technologies like **AI, Blockchain, and IoT** are rapidly transforming governance by enabling **predictive policymaking, real-time service delivery, transparency, and efficiency**. India has started incorporating these tools across various sectors to move from **e-governance to smart governance**.

A. Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Governance

- **Definition:** AI refers to computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically

require human intelligence such as learning, decision-making, and problem-solving.

• **Applications:**

- **Predictive Analytics:** For real-time policy intervention in health (e.g., disease outbreak predictions), agriculture (e.g., crop yield forecasting).
- **Chatbots & Virtual Assistants:** AI-powered helpdesks on government portals (e.g., MyGov Helpdesk, UMANG chatbot).
- **Traffic Management:** Intelligent traffic signals and surveillance (e.g., AI in Delhi Traffic Police system).
- **Judicial Support:** AI tools used in **Supreme Court’s SUVAAS** (Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software) for translation and research.

• **Government Initiatives:**

- **National AI Portal** (IndiaAI.gov.in)
- **Responsible AI Strategy by NITI Aayog**
- **AI for All** campaign and AI Pledge

B. Blockchain in Governance

• **Definition:** Blockchain is a **decentralized, tamper-proof digital ledger** technology used to record and verify transactions securely.

• **Applications:**

- **Land Records Management:** Ensures tamper-proof, transparent ownership records (piloted in **Telangana and Maharashtra**).
- **Digital Certificates:** Issuance of tamper-proof educational or vaccination certificates.
- **E-Voting and Identity Management:** Enables secure, fraud-resistant remote voting.
- **Supply Chain Tracking:** Used in **food procurement, drug tracing, and logistics management**.

• **Government Initiatives:**

- **IndiaChain (proposed)** – A national blockchain infrastructure.
- **Tamil Nadu Blockchain Policy (2020)** – First state-level blockchain strategy.
- **Coffee Board of India** – Blockchain used for coffee traceability and farmer verification.

C. Internet of Things (IoT) in Governance

• **Definition:** IoT refers to a network of **interconnected devices** that can collect and exchange data in real-time via the internet.

• **Applications:**

- **Smart Cities Mission:** IoT used in **Intelligent Street Lighting, Solid Waste Management, Water Quality Monitoring, and Air Pollution Sensors**.
- **Smart Agriculture:** Soil moisture sensors, precision irrigation, and livestock tracking (pilot in Andhra Pradesh).
- **Disaster Management:** IoT-enabled flood alert systems, seismic sensors, and early warning systems.
- **Transport and Safety:** Real-time vehicle tracking systems in public transport (e.g., FASTag, AIS 140 standard GPS).

Government Initiatives:

- **National Smart Cities Mission**
- **National Digital Communication Policy (NDCP) 2018**
- **IoT Centres of Excellence** by MeitY & NASSCOM

Challenges in Adoption

Technology	Key Challenges
AI	Bias in algorithms, data privacy, lack of regulation and skilled workforce.
Blockchain	High energy consumption, scalability issues, interoperability, legal uncertainties.

IoT	Cybersecurity risks, inadequate infrastructure, standardization gaps, and digital divide.
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Way Forward

- Formulate a **national strategy for ethical and inclusive AI** deployment.
- Accelerate adoption of **Blockchain pilots** in land, education, and procurement across states.
- Strengthen **IoT infrastructure** in smart cities and agriculture.
- Ensure **data privacy and security laws** are enforced alongside tech adoption.
- Promote **R&D, skilling, and local innovation ecosystems** (e.g., through Atal Innovation Mission and AI Centres of Excellence).

Data Governance in the Digital Age

Context

- In the digital era, **data is a foundational public asset**, influencing governance, innovation, service delivery, and economic competitiveness. With the exponential growth of data through initiatives like **Digital India**, the need for **robust, transparent, and rights-based data governance** has become urgent. The **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023** represents India's attempt to create a framework balancing **privacy, transparency, and innovation**.

Why is Data Considered the New Oil?

- **Powers Digital Public Infrastructure:** Aadhaar, UPI, and DBT systems demonstrate how granular public data can streamline service delivery.
- **Enables Evidence-Based Governance:** Portals like UDISE and GST data provide real-time inputs for targeted interventions and policy corrections.
- **Catalyst for Innovation:** Public datasets combined with **AI and private alternative data** (e.g., satellite imagery, IoT) enable startups to develop data-driven solutions in

agriculture, education, and health.

- **Drives Economic Value:** Tax and financial datasets are critical for **macroeconomic forecasting** and **sectoral stimulus design**.
- **Supports Public Accountability:** Open government data platforms foster transparency and enable **citizen-led audits and monitoring**.

India's Legal and Institutional Response

- **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023:**
 - Recognises roles of **Data Principals** (citizens) and **Data Fiduciaries** (data processors).
 - Sets up **Data Protection Board of India (DPBI)** for dispute resolution and penal action.
 - Introduces **Consent Managers**, data rights (correction, erasure, nominee), and fiduciary duties.
- **Draft DPDP Rules, 2025:**
 - Awaiting final notification; they detail grievance redressal, fiduciary obligations, and children's data protection norms.
- **Oversight & Adjudication:**
 - Appeals lie with **Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT)**.

Challenges in India's Data Governance Ecosystem

- **Privacy vs Transparency Trade-off :** Section 44(3) of the DPDP Act restricts access to information, overriding RTI provisions (Section 8(1)(j)), undermining transparency.
- **State Surveillance & Exemptions:** Vague terms like "public order" and "sovereignty" allow **unchecked government surveillance** without judicial safeguards.
- **Regulatory Weakness:** Short tenure and political appointments in DPBI compromise its independence, unlike institutions like SEBI.
- **Digital Illiteracy and Consent Limitations:** Consent-based framework is ineffective in a country with **information asymmetry** and **dark pattern interfaces**.

- **Children's Data Vulnerabilities:** Weak safeguards against profiling and targeting; impractical parental consent norms exclude undocumented families.
- **Lack of Redress for Emerging Harms:** No framework to address **algorithmic discrimination, financial fraud, or identity theft**, unlike GDPR.
- **Cross-Border Data Ambiguities:** No clear criteria for data transfer jurisdictions; absence of data localization weakens sovereignty and protection.
- **RTI Portals Violating Privacy:** Mandating Aadhaar or device geolocation for filing RTIs breaches the Supreme Court's privacy verdict.

Way Forward

- **Adopt Global Best Practices:** Emulate **EU-US Data Privacy Framework** for cross-border data sharing and harmonised safeguards.
- **Strengthen Institutional Independence:** DPBI must be restructured with longer tenures, diverse appointments, and oversight from judiciary and civil society.
- **Define and Limit Exemptions:** Terms like "sovereignty" and "public order" must be **narrowly defined and judicially reviewable**.
- **Establish an AI-Privacy Task Force:** A multi-stakeholder body to **monitor AI-related risks**, recommend regulation, and ensure adaptive policy evolution.
- **Reform RTI Digital Interfaces:** Remove Aadhaar/device tracking from portals; implement **privacy-by-design and data minimization** principles.
- **Revise Children's Data Norms:** Prohibit behavioural tracking and ad targeting, following **COPPA-like frameworks** in the US.
- **Clarify Significant Data Fiduciary Criteria:** Mandate impact assessments, algorithmic transparency, and ethical audit trails for large-scale data processors.
- **Ensure Timely Rule Notification:** Establish a legal mandate for **fixed timelines** to operationalise data protection legislation.

Value Addition for Unit 1

Keywords : Ghost Beneficiaries, Information Asymmetry, Excellence in Service Delivery, Citizen-Centric Governance, Ethical Administration, Digital Exclusion, Administrative Inertia, Performance Accountability, Rule-Based Governance, Predictive Policymaking, Participatory Oversight, Grievance Redress Mechanisms, Transparency Architecture, Outcome-Oriented Governance, Data-Driven Decision Making, Public Service Obligations, Institutional Opacity, Social Audit Culture, Democratic Decentralisation, Proactive Disclosure, Algorithmic Bias, Consent Fatigue, Collaborative Federalism, Last-Mile Service Delivery, Rights-Based Governance.

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. "Good governance and constitutionalism are inseparable in the Indian context." Discuss.
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of the RTI Act and Social Audits in enhancing transparency and accountability in public service delivery.
3. Examine the role of the Citizen Charter and Sevottam model in promoting citizen-centric governance. What are the challenges in their implementation?
4. E-governance is more about governance reform than technology adoption. Comment.
5. Critically assess the role of institutions like Lokpal, CAG, and CVC in ensuring ethical and accountable governance in India.

Acronyms

1. LEGIT – Core Principles of Good Governance

Use when defining or elaborating on good governance.

- **L** – Legality (Rule of Law)
- **E** – Equity & Inclusiveness
- **G** – Good Service Delivery (Efficiency & Effectiveness)
- **I** – Integrity (Accountability & Ethics)
- **T** – Transparency

→ "For governance to be LEGIT, it must be lawful, inclusive, and transparent."

2. GOVERN – Stakeholders in Governance

Use to describe who makes governance work.

- **G** – Government (Executive, Legislature, Judiciary)

- **O** – Oversight bodies (CAG, Lokpal, EC, CVC)
- **V** – Voluntary Sector (NGOs, civil society)
- **E** – Elected Representatives (PRIs, ULBs)
- **R** – Regulatory Institutions (SEBI, TRAI, IRDAI)
- **N** – Non-state actors (Media, citizens, private sector)

→ "GOVERN reminds us governance is a multi-actor ecosystem."

3. SMART GOV – E-Governance Objectives

Use for features/benefits of e-governance.

- **S** – Simple
- **M** – Moral
- **A** – Accountable
- **R** – Responsive
- **T** – Transparent
- **G** – Green (paperless/digital)
- **O** – Open Access (interoperable)
- **V** – Value-based

→ "E-governance must be SMART GOV to deliver impact."

4. ACT FAST – Transparency & Accountability Tools

Use when asked about legal & institutional mechanisms.

- **A** – Audit (CAG, performance audits)
- **C** – Citizen Charters
- **T** – Transparency Laws (RTI)
- **F** – Feedback Systems (Sevottam, CPGRAMS)
- **A** – Accountability Bodies (Lokpal, CVC)
- **S** – Social Audits
- **T** – Technology (Dashboards, e-tendering)

→ "ACT FAST to deepen democracy through accountability."

6. SERVE – Citizen-Centric Governance Framework

Use when framing reforms or solutions.

- **S** – Standards (via Citizen Charters)
- **E** – Empowerment (via RTI, PRIs)
- **R** – Redressal (grievance portals, CPGRAMS)
- **V** – Voice (Janbhagidari, MyGov)
- **E** – Efficiency (via e-Governance & MIS)

→ "To truly SERVE citizens, governance must be responsive and inclusive."

7. CHIP – Challenges to E-Governance Implementation

Use for issues in ICT adoption.

- **C** – Connectivity gaps (digital divide)
- **H** – Human resource constraints
- **I** – Infrastructure inadequacy
- **P** – Privacy and data security concerns

→ "E-governance can crash if we don't fix the CHIP."

8. RAISE – Measures for Effective Citizen Charters

Use for reforming or strengthening Charters.

- **R** – Regular Updates
- **A** – Awareness among citizens
- **I** – Institutional monitoring
- **S** – Standard Templates
- **E** – Enforceability through legal backing

→ "To RAISE the quality of services, improve Citizen Charters."

Readymade Template

1. Governance

Dimension	Key Elements of Governance	Associated Issues
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency in decision-making • Rule of law • People's participation • Democratic accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criminalization of politics • Misuse of power • Lack of decentralization • Weak accountability mechanisms
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity and social justice • Protection of human rights • Social cohesion • Universal access to basic services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denial of basic services to large sections • Discrimination and exclusion • No voice to marginalized communities • Violation of human rights

Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive economic growth • Poverty reduction • Equitable distribution of resources • Reduction of income inequality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High poverty levels • Income and regional disparities • Fiscal mismanagement • Leakages in welfare schemes
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable development • Conservation of natural resources • Pollution control • Climate resilience and action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak implementation of environmental regulations • Development prioritized over ecology • Depletion of resources • Poor EIA enforcement
Administrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient and effective service delivery • Capacity building • Decentralized governance • Information management and transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption and red-tapism • Lack of transparency and accountability • Limited institutional capacity • Inefficient bureaucracy

2. E-Governance: A Ready-Made UPSC Template

Section	Content
Definition	E-Governance refers to the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to improve the activities of government, enhance transparency, increase

	efficiency, and facilitate participation.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve service delivery • Promote transparency and accountability • Reduce corruption and red-tapism • Enable citizen participation • Improve efficiency in governance
Core Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government to Citizen (G2C) • Government to Business (G2B) • Government to Government (G2G) • Government to Employees (G2E)
Models of E-Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SILO Model – Independent departmental applications • Cluster Model – Integrated inter-department services • Integrated Service Model – Single-window, citizen-centric delivery (e.g., UMANG, Digital Seva Kendra)
Key Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National e-Governance Plan (NeGP), 2006 • Digital India Mission, 2015 • UMANG, DigiLocker, e-SHRAM, MyGov • Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) • BharatNet (Rural broadband connectivity) • e-Courts, e-Office, e-NAM
Success Stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport Seva Kendra – efficient G2C model • GSTN Portal – unified tax filing system

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CoWIN Platform - digital vaccination management • Bhoomi Project in Karnataka - land record digitization
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital divide and lack of rural connectivity • Low digital literacy • Cybersecurity threats • Resistance to change in bureaucracy • Poor inter-departmental coordination
Way Forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote digital literacy through PMGDISHA • Strengthen cybersecurity frameworks • Ensure last-mile connectivity (BharatNet) • Encourage citizen-centric design and feedback • Build capacity of government personnel • Promote public-private partnerships (PPP) in ICT deployment

1. Governance & SDG Mapping for UPSC Mains

How to Use This Table in UPSC Mains Answers

- Use SDGs to **anchor your conclusion or way forward** in governance-based questions.
- Quote them directly when referring to government reform efforts, digital interventions, or accountability frameworks.
- Add legitimacy by showing how **national reforms align with global developmental agendas**.

Navigating the Syllabus: What You Need to Know

1. Foundations of Policy-Making in India

- Meaning, objectives, and types of public policy (distributive, regulatory, redistributive, etc.)
- Constitutional basis: Preamble, Fundamental Rights, DPSPs, 7th Schedule
- Key institutions: PMO, Cabinet Committees, NITI Aayog, Parliament, Judiciary
- Stakeholders: Civil society, media, think tanks

2. Policy Design and Implementation Issues

- Top-down approach, lack of consultation and evidence-based planning
- Administrative bottlenecks, capacity constraints
- Monitoring gaps, funding delays, and political influences
- Bureaucratic role: Strengths (continuity, reach) and weaknesses (status quoism, politicization)

3. Sector-Wise Government Interventions**a. Agriculture**

- Key schemes: PM-KISAN, PMFBY, e-NAM, PMKSY, Soil Health Cards
- Challenges: Exclusion of landless, weak market access, irrigation stress

b. Industry & Manufacturing

- Key schemes: Make in India, PLI, Startup India, MSME support
- Challenges: Policy overlap, infrastructure, credit access, tech gaps

c. Infrastructure

- Flagship missions: Gati Shakti, Bharatmala, Sagarmala, UDAN, Smart Cities
- Challenges: Land acquisition, financing, coordination, regional imbalance

d. Urban Development

- Key programs: SCM, AMRUT, PMAY-U, SBM-U, NULM
- Issues: Weak ULBs, fund constraints, exclusion, sustainability concerns

e. Rural Development

- Major schemes: MGNREGA, PMAY-G, DAY-NRLM, PMGSY, SBM-G, JJM
- Problems: Targeting errors, fund delays, capacity gaps, monitoring issues

f. Health Sector

- Initiatives: PM-JAY, HWCs, NHM, NDHM, Mission Indradhanush
- Issues: Access, low public spending, HR shortages, weak primary care

g. Education Sector

- Policies: RTE Act, NEP 2020, Samagra Shiksha, PM POSHAN, digital learning
- Challenges: Learning poverty, digital divide, teacher shortage, quality gaps

4. Role of Private Sector

- Involvement in PPPs, CSR, health, edtech, infrastructure, fintech
- Issues: Equity, regulation, profit vs public good, data concerns

5. Key Case Studies & Recent Initiatives

- **MNREGA:** Political-bureaucratic-civil society synergy
- **Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP):** Micro-level equity, real-time monitoring
- **SPMEPCI:** Boost to EV manufacturing with investment and localization focus

UPSC Previous year Questions

Question	Nature of Question	Core Demand
The Gati-Shakti Yojana needs meticulous coordination between the government and the private sector to achieve the goal of connectivity. Discuss. (2022)	Analytical + Implementation-focused	Discuss coordination aspects for achieving connectivity goals under Gati-Shakti Yojana
'Earn while you learn' scheme needs to be strengthened to make vocational education and skill training meaningful" Comment. (2021)	Evaluative + Policy recommendation	Comment on how to make vocational education more meaningful through strengthening the scheme
'In the context of neo-liberal paradigm of development planning, multi-level planning is expected to make operations cost effective and remove many implementation blockages.'- Discuss. (2019)	Conceptual + Analytical	Discuss how multi-level planning helps cost-efficiency and reduces implementation hurdles in the neo-liberal context
The need for cooperation among various service sector has been an inherent component of development discourse. Partnership bridges bring the gap among the sectors. It also sets in motion a culture of 'Collaboration' and 'team spirit'. In the light of statements above examine India's Development process. (2019)	Conceptual + Critical Analysis	Examine role of cooperation and partnerships in India's development process
"Policy contradictions among various competing sectors and stakeholders have resulted in inadequate 'protection and prevention of degradation to environment.'" Comment with relevant illustrations. (2018)	Critical Commentary	Comment on how policy contradictions hinder environmental protection
'To ensure effective implementation of policies addressing water, sanitation and hygiene needs, the identification of beneficiary segments is to be synchronized with the anticipated outcomes' Examine the statement in the context of the WASH scheme. (2017)	Implementation + Analytical	Examine outcome-oriented implementation in WASH scheme

<p>Has the Indian governmental system responded adequately to the demands of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization started in 1991? What can the government do to be responsive to this important change? (2016)</p>	<p>Evaluative + Suggestive</p>	<p>Evaluate government's response to LPG reforms and suggest improvements</p>
<p>Though 100 percent FDI is already allowed in non-news media like a trade publication and general entertainment channel, the government is mulling over the proposal for increased FDI in news media for quite some time. What difference would an increase in FDI make? Critically evaluate the pros and cons. (2014)</p>	<p>Critical Evaluation</p>	<p>Critically evaluate increased FDI in news media</p>
<p>Two parallel run schemes of the Government, viz the Aadhar card and NPM, one of voluntary and the other as compulsory, have led to debates at national levels and also litigations. On merits, discuss whether or not both schemes need run concurrently. Analyse the potential of the schemes to achieve development benefits and equitable growth. (2014)</p>	<p>Analytical + Critical</p>	<p>Analyse concurrent operation of Aadhar and NPM schemes and assess developmental impact</p>
<p>An athlete participates in Olympics for personal triumph and nation's glory; victors are showered with cash incentives by various agencies, on their return. Discuss the merit of state sponsored talent hunt and its cultivation as against the rationale of a reward mechanism as encouragement. (2014)</p>	<p>Discussion + Comparison</p>	<p>Discuss comparative merits of state-sponsored talent hunt vs. reward-based encouragement</p>
<p>The concept of Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme is almost a century old in India with early beginnings in Madras Presidency in pre-independent India. The scheme has again been given impetus in most states in the last two decades. Critically examine its twin objectives, latest mandates and success. (2013)</p>	<p>Critical Examination</p>	<p>Critically examine objectives, mandates and success of Mid-Day Meal scheme</p>

<p>The Central Government frequently complains on the poor performance of the State Governments in eradicating suffering of the vulnerable sections of the society. Restructuring of Centrally sponsored schemes across the sectors for ameliorating the cause of vulnerable sections of population aims at providing flexibility to the States in better implementation. Critically evaluate. (2013)</p>	<p>Critical Evaluation</p>	<p>Evaluate restructuring of CSS for improving delivery to vulnerable sections</p>
<p>Electronic cash transfer system for the welfare schemes is an ambitious project to minimize corruption, eliminate wastage and facilitate reforms Comment. (2013)</p>	<p>Commentary</p>	<p>Comment on how e-cash transfer helps reduce corruption and wastage</p>
<p>The basis of providing urban amenities in rural areas (PURA) is rooted in establishing connectivity Comment. (2013)</p>	<p>Commentary</p>	<p>Comment on the connectivity rationale behind PURA scheme</p>

Introduction

"Policy is not just decision-making, it is nation-building in action." — Paul Appleby

In a diverse and democratic country like India, **public policy serves as the bridge between constitutional vision and ground realities**. It determines how governments allocate resources, regulate society, and respond to public needs. India's policy-making is shaped not only by the Constitution but also by a wide range of institutions — from the **executive and legislature to civil society and judiciary** — making it a **multi-actor and multi-layered process**.

What is Public Policy? Definition and Types

Meaning and Definition

- **Public Policy** refers to a **deliberate course of action** adopted by a government to address issues of public concern. It includes laws, plans, strategies, programs, and decisions taken by public authorities to achieve **economic, social, political, or administrative goals**.
 - **Thomas Dye** defines public policy as: "Whatever governments choose to do or not to do."
- In India, public policy derives its legitimacy from the **Constitution**, its implementation from the **bureaucracy**, and its feedback from **citizens and institutions**.

Objectives of Public Policy

- Promote **social justice and welfare**
- Ensure **economic development and redistribution**
- Maintain **law, order, and national security**
- Respond to **citizen demands and emerging challenges**
- Fulfill **constitutional directives** (e.g., DPSPs, Fundamental Rights)

Types of Public Policy

Type	Nature & Aim	Examples
1. Distributive Policy	Allocates resources, benefits, or services to particular sections or regions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) • Ujjwala Yojana • Ration under PDS
2. Regulatory Policy	Prescribes rules, norms, or restrictions to regulate behaviour of individuals or institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSSAI regulations • Environmental laws • RBI monetary policy
3. Redistributive Policy	Transfers resources from one group to another to promote equity and justice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MNREGA • Reservations for SC/ST/OBC • Taxation and subsidies
4. Constituent Policy	Pertains to institutional or structural reorganization of government or constitutional bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of NITI Aayog • Reorganisation of states
5. Foreign/External Policy	Governs India's relations with other countries and international institutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act East Policy • Free Trade Agreements • Neighbourhood First Policy

Constitutional Basis of Policy-Making in India

Public policy in India draws its **legitimacy, direction, and limitations** from the Constitution. It serves as the foundational document guiding the **objectives, scope, and instruments** of governance.

- **Fundamental Rights (Part III)**
 - Provide the **ethical and legal framework** within which all public policies must operate.

- Courts can **strike down policies** violating fundamental rights.
- **Example:**
 - **Right to Education (Article 21A)** → Led to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and RTE Act, 2009.
 - **Right to Life (Article 21)** → Guided health, environmental, and privacy policies (e.g., Janani Suraksha Yojana, Puttaswamy case).
- **Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV)**
 - Act as **guiding principles** for policy-makers to ensure **social and economic justice**.
 - Though non-justiciable, they form the **philosophical foundation** of welfare schemes.
 - **Examples:**
 - **Article 39(b):** Equitable distribution of resources → Land ceiling laws, food security schemes
 - **Article 47:** Nutrition and public health → National Health Policy, POSHAN Abhiyaan
- **Preamble of the Constitution**
 - Articulates core policy goals like **Justice, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity**.
 - Inspires policy thrust on **inclusive development, affirmative action, and human dignity**.
- **Seventh Schedule (Union, State, Concurrent Lists)**
 - Defines the **jurisdiction of policy-making** between the Centre and States.
 - Union List (e.g., defense, foreign affairs), State List (e.g., police, public health), Concurrent List (e.g., education, forests).
 - **Example:**
 - Education shifted from State to Concurrent list → Enabled centrally-sponsored schemes like SSA and RMSA.
- **Other Constitutional Provisions Supporting Policy-Making**
 - **Article 263:** Creation of inter-governmental bodies (e.g., Inter-State Council)
 - **Article 280:** Finance Commission recommendations shape fiscal policy
 - **Schedules 5 & 6:** Influence tribal area governance policies
 - **73rd & 74th Amendments:** Decentralized policy-making via Panchayats and ULBs

Institutional Architecture of Policy-Making in India

India's policy-making landscape is shaped by a **complex interplay of institutions**, each contributing to **agenda-setting, formulation, implementation, and review**. This layered architecture ensures both **democratic legitimacy** and **bureaucratic continuity** in governance.

1. Political Executive

- **Prime Minister's Office (PMO):** Core of executive decision-making and inter-ministerial coordination. Drives flagship schemes (e.g., PRAGATI, Digital India).
- **Cabinet Committees:** Sub-groups of ministers handling specialized domains.
 - Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) – approves major infrastructure, pricing, and investment policies.
 - Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) – defense, internal security, strategic affairs.
 - Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs – legislative calendar, ordinance decisions.

2. Bureaucracy and Civil Services

- Implement policies on the ground and provide continuity across political regimes.
- Involved in **drafting bills**, conducting stakeholder consultations, **monitoring implementation**, and preparing feedback reports.
- Play a crucial role in converting political intent into actionable policy (e.g., framing guidelines for Swachh Bharat Mission).

3. NITI Aayog (vs Planning Commission)

- **NITI Aayog (est. 2015):**
 - Functions as a **policy think tank**, not a funding body.
 - Focuses on **cooperative federalism**, outcome-based monitoring, and innovation.
 - Promotes evidence-based policy via platforms like **Aspirational Districts Programme** and **SDG Index**.
- **Planning Commission (1950–2014):**

- Centralized body for 5-Year Plans and fund allocation.
- Followed a top-down, command-and-control approach.
- Key Shift: From centralized planning → to strategic policy advisory with state partnership.

4. Role of Parliament in shaping policy

- **Legislation:** Enacts laws that become policy instruments.
- **Budgetary Oversight:** Approves finance bills, monitors public expenditure.
- **Deliberative Role:** Debates policy issues, raises questions, and motions.
- **Committee System:**
 - Standing Committees: Scrutinize ministries' performance and bills.
 - PAC, Estimates Committee: Audit and expenditure oversight.
- Significance: Ensures **democratic accountability** in the policy process.

5. Role of Judiciary in shaping policy

- Ensures **constitutional validity** of policy decisions.
- Acts as a **policy catalyst** through judicial directions and interpretative rulings.
- **Key interventions:**
 - **Vishaka Guidelines (1997)** – workplace safety for women.
 - **Unnikrishnan Case (1993)** – Right to Education as a fundamental right.
 - **MC Mehta cases** – shaped environmental policy.

Other Stakeholders in Policy-Making

While the formal architecture of policy-making involves the executive, legislature, judiciary, and NITI Aayog, several **non-state actors** also play a significant role in shaping public discourse, influencing policy agendas, and ensuring accountability.

1. Civil Society and NGOs

- Act as **advocates, watchdogs, and service providers.**
- Mobilize public opinion, conduct social audits, and lobby for rights-based legislations.

● Examples:

- **RTI Movement** → led to the Right to Information Act, 2005.
- **Right to Food Campaign** → influenced NFSA, 2013.
- **MKSS (Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan)** → pioneered social audit practices.

2. Media

- Acts as the **fourth pillar of democracy**, shaping public perception and setting the policy agenda.
- Investigative journalism exposes policy failures, corruption, and implementation gaps.
- **Examples:**
 - Mid-day meal quality issues in Bihar and UP highlighted by national dailies.
 - Debates around Aadhaar privacy and Pegasus surveillance influencing data protection discourse.

3. Think Tanks and Academia

- Provide **evidence-based inputs**, policy briefs, and draft recommendations.
- Facilitate dialogue between government, private sector, and civil society.
- **Examples:**
 - **PRS Legislative Research** – tracks bills, aids parliamentary research.
 - **Centre for Policy Research (CPR)** – works on urban policy, governance, and environment.
 - **NIPFP, Observer Research Foundation (ORF)** – fiscal and strategic policy analysis.

Issues Associated with Public Policy in India

● Institutional and Structural Issues

- **Multiplicity of Institutions:** Overlapping jurisdictions between ministries, departments, and agencies (e.g., Ministry of Education and Skill Development Ministry) leads to fragmented policies.
- **Lack of Policy Continuity:** Change in political leadership often leads to abrupt policy reversals or relabeling, hampering long-term outcomes (e.g., Planning Commission to NITI Aayog transition criticisms).

- **Centralised Planning Mindset:** Despite cooperative federalism, many policies are drafted centrally with minimal state inputs, undermining local needs (e.g., one-size-fits-all schemes like Smart Cities).
- **Procedural and Design Deficits**
 - **Top-Down Approach:** Policies are often designed without adequate field-level feedback, ignoring local realities and leading to poor targeting (e.g., misidentification in PDS, housing schemes).
 - **Inadequate Stakeholder Consultation:** Limited engagement with civil society, academia, and affected communities results in technocratic or politically-driven designs.
 - **Weak Evidence-Based Policy:** Absence of robust data, real-time evaluation, and policy labs hinders rational policy-making (e.g., learning outcomes not considered in education reforms).
- **Implementation Challenges**
 - **Administrative Bottlenecks:** Delays, red-tapism, and poor inter-departmental coordination slow down execution (e.g., infrastructure projects stuck due to land or environment clearances).
 - **Capacity Deficits:** Lack of trained manpower and institutional capacity at the district/block levels affects last-mile delivery (e.g., shortage of doctors in Ayushman Bharat rollout).
 - **Corruption and Leakages:** Weak accountability allows diversion of funds and inefficiencies (e.g., past MGNREGA wage delays, ghost beneficiaries in subsidies).
- **Political and Ideological Influences**
 - **Populist Pressures:** Many policies are framed with short-term electoral gains in mind, neglecting long-term sustainability (e.g., farm loan waivers vs investment in irrigation).
 - **Policy Myopia:** Focus remains on visible infrastructure or benefits rather than systemic reforms (e.g., overemphasis on highways but weak public transport policy).
- **Monitoring and Evaluation Gaps**
 - **Lack of Real-Time Feedback Mechanisms:** Monitoring is often periodic and static, leading to outdated course corrections.
- **Tokenistic Social Audits:** Despite provisions, many audits are procedural and lack genuine community participation.
- **Outcome vs Output Focus:** Bureaucratic systems often reward completion of targets (e.g., number of toilets built) rather than outcomes (actual usage).
- **Fiscal and Financial Issues**
 - **Resource Constraints:** Many ambitious policies are underfunded or delayed in fund release (e.g., National Education Policy, Jal Jeevan Mission).
 - **Inadequate Centre-State Fund Flow:** States often struggle to implement centrally sponsored schemes due to fund delays and cost-sharing issues.
- **Legal and Judicial Delays**
 - **Policy Paralysis due to Litigation:** Many policies face prolonged legal challenges (e.g., land acquisition, environmental clearances), creating investor uncertainty.
 - **Regulatory Uncertainty:** Frequent changes in rules (e.g., retrospective taxation, telecom regulations) deter both investors and implementing agencies.

Role of Bureaucracy in Policy Making

Overview :

- Bureaucracy refers to the permanent executive comprising civil servants who play a critical role in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of public policies.
- As Max Weber defined it, bureaucracy is a rational-legal authority structure essential for modern administrative states. In India, the bureaucracy acts as the **steel frame** of governance, ensuring continuity, neutrality, and technical competence in policy-making.

Bureaucracy's Role in Different Stages of Policy-Making

Stage of Policy-Making	Role of Bureaucracy	Example
Problem Identification	Ground-level officials report socio-economic problems to	ASHA workers reporting maternal health gaps

	higher authorities	
Policy Formulation	Drafting policy proposals, conducting feasibility studies, inter-ministerial consultations	Drafting of National Education Policy 2020
Policy Advice to Ministers	Advising the political executive based on administrative experience and data	NITI Aayog's inputs on Atmanirbhar Bharat
Legislative Drafting	Preparing bills, rules, and notifications in coordination with legal departments	Drafting of GST legislation by Revenue Department
Policy Implementation	Actual rollout of schemes through field agencies and departments	Implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission
Monitoring and Evaluation	Data collection, MIS, audits, and impact assessments	Rural Development Ministry's role in MNREGA audits

Strengths of Bureaucracy in Policy-Making

- **Institutional Memory:** Bureaucrats possess long-term knowledge of administrative systems.
- **Expertise and Specialisation:** Subject-specific officers (e.g., IRS, IFS, IES) bring domain knowledge.
- **Impartiality and Continuity:** Serve irrespective of the ruling political party.
- **Pan-India Presence:** Bureaucracy connects the central government with grassroots realities.

- **Coordination Role:** Ensures inter-ministerial and centre-state coordination (e.g., during COVID-19 crisis).

Limitations and Criticisms

- **Status-quoist Attitude:** Risk-averse and resistant to innovation (Paul Appleby called Indian bureaucracy "wooden").
- **Politicisation:** Frequent transfers and political interference reduce autonomy.
- **Generalist vs. Specialist Debate:** Lack of domain expertise in policy areas like technology, health, etc.
- **Bureaucratic Red-Tape:** Delays in decision-making due to procedural formalism.
- **Lack of Accountability Mechanisms:** Bureaucrats often operate within complex hierarchies where responsibility is diffused. The absence of direct electoral accountability and weak grievance redressal mechanisms makes it difficult to ensure responsiveness to citizens.
- **Urban Bias and Detachment from Grassroots:** Many top-level bureaucrats come from urban and elite backgrounds, leading to disconnect with rural realities and the marginalised sections. This affects the inclusiveness and relevance of policies designed at the top.

Reform Measures and Way Forward

- **Lateral Entry:** To bring in domain experts and enrich policy discourse.
- **Performance-Based Evaluation:** Implementation of SPARROW and PRAGATI for accountability.
- **Capacity Building:** Mission Karmayogi for training bureaucrats in policy innovation.
- **Reducing Political Interference:** Civil Services Board reforms for secure tenures.

Case study to show Evolution of Public Policy

Evolution of MNREGA – A Case of Political and Bureaucratic Synergy

The **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), 2005** stands as a classic example of how **political commitment, bureaucratic initiative, and civil society advocacy** converged to produce a

transformative public policy.

governance reforms.

Political Will

- **UPA Government (2004–2009)** placed rural employment at the heart of its Common Minimum Programme.
- Political leadership, especially **Dr. Manmohan Singh** and **Sonia Gandhi**, pushed for legal entitlements instead of discretionary schemes.
- Commitment to **inclusive development** and **rights-based legislation** drove the formulation of MNREGA.

Bureaucratic Leadership

- Drafting and design led by Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), supported by experts like **Jean Drèze** and **N.C. Saxena**.
- Innovative mechanisms introduced:
 - **Social audits**
 - **Mandatory work within 15 days**
 - **Compensation for delayed payments**
- Bureaucracy also created institutional infrastructure:
 - MIS for real-time tracking
 - Gram Panchayats as implementing agencies

Civil Society & Grassroots Mobilization

- Groups like **MKSS** and the **Right to Work Campaign** mobilized public support and created bottom-up pressure.
- Pilot experiments in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh influenced the final legislation.

Institutionalization of the Policy

- MNREGA enacted as a **legal entitlement**, not a scheme.
- Implementation decentralized via **Gram Sabhas**, ensuring local accountability.
- MoRD ensured ongoing revisions through field studies, consultations, and monitoring.

Conclusion

- MNREGA illustrates how **strong political vision, responsive bureaucracy, and active citizen participation** can synergize to produce a durable, rights-based public policy. It remains a **model of policy-making in India**, relevant in discussions on welfare, rural economy, and

Introduction

- In a diverse and unequal country like India, **government intervention is vital** to ensure equitable access to health, education, employment, and welfare. Guided by the **Directive Principles**, the state has launched numerous sectoral schemes to promote development and social justice.
- However, many interventions face challenges such as **design flaws, poor targeting, weak implementation**, and lack of convergence. This chapter explores major government efforts across key sectors and highlights the **systemic issues** affecting their outcomes.

Key Sectors & Government Interventions

1. Agriculture Sector: Interventions and Challenges

The agriculture sector supports over **45% of India's workforce**, but suffers from low productivity, price volatility, and climate vulnerabilities. The government has launched several schemes for **income support, risk mitigation, market access, and sustainable farming**.

Key Interventions:

- **PM-KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi)**
 - Direct income support of ₹6,000 annually to small and marginal farmers.
 - Reaches over 11 crore beneficiaries.
- **PMFBY (Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana)**
 - Crop insurance scheme to mitigate weather and pest-related risks.
 - Premium subsidized by Centre and States.
- **e-NAM (Electronic National Agriculture Market)**
 - Online trading platform integrating APMCs for price discovery and competition.
- **Soil Health Card Scheme**
 - Scientific assessment of soil for better input application and fertility management.
- **PM Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)**
 - Aims to enhance irrigation efficiency and water-use optimization ("More crop per drop").
- **National Mission on Natural Farming (NMNF)**
 - Focus on promoting chemical-free, sustainable agriculture practices.
- **Agri-Infrastructure Fund**
 - Financing post-harvest infrastructure like storage and value-addition facilities.

Challenges in Design and Implementation of Agricultural Interventions

- **Exclusion and Targeting Gaps**
 - **Land ownership-centric schemes** like PM-KISAN exclude **tenant farmers, sharecroppers, and landless labourers**, who form a significant portion of the rural poor.
 - **Lack of updated land records** further hampers beneficiary identification and targeting efficiency.
- **Insurance and Risk Coverage Deficits**
 - PMFBY suffers from **low awareness, delayed claim settlements, and inadequate transparency** in crop loss assessments.
 - Farmers often **opt out** due to lack of trust and complex enrolment procedures.
- **Market Access and Structural Rigidities**
 - Though e-NAM aims at market integration, it is hindered by:
 - **APMC-centric operations**
 - **Poor physical infrastructure** (grading, assaying labs)
 - **Low digital literacy among farmers**
 - Lack of **private sector competition** reduces price discovery efficiency.
- **Fragmentation and Scale Limitations**
 - Over **85% of farmers are small and marginal**, limiting the impact of interventions like soil health cards, farm mechanisation, and agri-infrastructure funding.
 - **Scattered holdings** make input delivery and extension services inefficient.
- **Irrigation and Resource Mismanagement**
 - PMKSY's implementation is uneven with **overdependence on groundwater** and **low adoption of micro-irrigation** in rain-fed areas.
 - Absence of **water budgeting and sustainability** in scheme design undermines long-term outcomes.
- **Climate and Ecological Blind Spots**

- Current policies lack **climate risk buffers** such as insurance against extreme events or adaptive cropping systems.
- Natural farming initiatives remain **pilot-driven**, with limited scalability and farmer buy-in.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation Weaknesses**

- Most schemes lack **real-time data feedback loops**, third-party evaluations, or integration into **digital agri-stack systems**.
- There is **no uniform convergence mechanism** across schemes at the field level (e.g., between irrigation and input subsidy schemes).

Way Forward

- **Integrate land tenancy records** to include sharecroppers and tenant farmers.
- **Expand FPO (Farmer Producer Organisation) coverage** for better input-output aggregation.
- Link PMFBY with **real-time weather data and mobile-based claim tracking**.
- Strengthen **APMC reforms + private market participation** for e-NAM expansion.
- Promote **climate-resilient agriculture** through convergence with MGNREGA and Jal Shakti Abhiyan.
- Ensure **convergence of schemes** under a unified digital agri-stack for efficiency.

2. Industry and Manufacturing: Interventions and Challenges

The manufacturing sector holds the key to India's structural transformation by shifting labour from low-productivity agriculture to higher-productivity industry. It contributes around **17% to GDP** and has the potential to absorb India's **demographic dividend** through large-scale employment generation. Recognizing this, the government has launched several **targeted interventions** to make India a global industrial hub.

Key Government Interventions

- **Make in India (2014)**
 - Objective: Promote India as a global manufacturing hub.

- Focus on 25 sectors (e.g., electronics, textiles, defense manufacturing).
- Incentives for FDI, ease of doing business, and innovation.

- **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Schemes**

- Sector-specific incentives based on incremental output
- Promotes domestic manufacturing in electronics, pharma, solar modules, textiles, etc.
- ₹1.97 lakh crore outlay across 14 sectors.

- **National Industrial Corridor Development Programme**

- Aims to develop integrated industrial townships (e.g., DMIC, Amritsar-Kolkata Corridor).
- Focus on logistics efficiency and multimodal connectivity.

- **Startup India & Stand-Up India**

- Promote entrepreneurship, particularly among SC/ST and women.
- Tax exemptions, credit guarantee, and ease-of-registration.

- **MSME Development Initiatives**

- Udyam portal, CGTMSE, PMEGP to formalize, finance, and skill the MSME base.
- Champion Portal and SAMARTH for support and grievance redressal.

Challenges in Design and Implementation

- **Policy Fragmentation and Sectoral Silos**

- Lack of coordination between Centre and States delays industrial approvals and land acquisition.
- Industrial policies often overlap with sectoral initiatives without convergence.

- **High Cost of Compliance and Regulation**

- Procedural complexities, slow clearances, and frequent changes in rules hinder investor confidence.
- India's Ease of Doing Business rankings improved globally, but challenges persist at **state and district levels**.

- **Infrastructure and Logistics Bottlenecks**

- Despite Gati Shakti, many industrial clusters suffer from **connectivity gaps, power instability, and urban congestion**.

- Inland freight and warehousing inefficiencies raise production costs.
- **Skilling and Human Capital Mismatch**
 - Skill development programs like PMKVY have low placement rates.
 - **Mismatch between industry needs and vocational training curricula.**
- **MSME Vulnerabilities**
 - Delayed payments, inadequate credit, and technological obsolescence affect MSME growth.
 - Many MSMEs remain **informal** and outside the reach of formal interventions like PLI.
- **Global and Technological Disruptions**
 - Dependence on China for inputs (e.g., APIs, electronics).
 - Low investment in **Industry 4.0 technologies** (automation, IoT, AI) compared to global competitors.

Way Forward

- Promote **state-level manufacturing strategies** with fiscal and infrastructure support.
- Strengthen **single-window clearances** and plug regulatory delays.
- Expand PLI to **labour-intensive sectors** (e.g., garments, footwear).
- Deepen formal credit access for MSMEs and improve **TReDS** adoption.
- Encourage **R&D and Industry-Academia collaboration** for technological upgrading.

3. Infrastructure Sector: Interventions and Challenges

Infrastructure forms the **backbone of economic development**, influencing growth, investment, and social mobility. Roads, railways, power, ports, and digital infrastructure directly affect productivity and service delivery. However, issues like **project delays, financing gaps, land acquisition hurdles**, and environmental concerns continue to hamper India's infrastructure potential. To address this, the government has adopted a multi-modal, integrated, and digitally coordinated strategy.

Key Government Interventions

- **PM Gati Shakti – National Master Plan (2021)**

- Digital platform for infrastructure planning and execution across ministries.
- Aims at reducing logistics cost and time by integrating roads, railways, waterways, and airways.
- **National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP)**
 - ₹100+ lakh crore investment blueprint (2019–25) across 20+ sectors.
 - Includes energy, transport, urban, rural, and social infrastructure.
- **Bharatmala Pariyojana**
 - Focuses on improving road connectivity, economic corridors, and border infrastructure.
 - Targets over 34,000 km of highways in Phase I.
- **Sagarmala Programme**
 - Port-led development to improve cargo movement, industrial clusters near coasts.
 - Emphasis on port modernization, connectivity, and inland waterways.
- **UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik)**
 - Aims to improve regional air connectivity by subsidizing air routes to tier-2 and tier-3 cities.
 - Over 400 routes awarded; promotes tourism, business access in remote regions.
- **Smart Cities Mission & AMRUT**
 - Urban infrastructure upgrade through improved mobility, water, and sanitation.
 - Promotes use of ICT for governance and real-time service delivery.
- **Power Sector Reforms (e.g., Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme – RDSS)**
 - Focus on smart metering, loss reduction, and reliable electricity supply.
 - Push for renewable energy integration and electrification of remote areas.

Challenges in Design and Implementation

- **Land Acquisition and Environmental Clearances**
 - Delays due to unclear land titles, compensation disputes, and forest rights conflicts.
 - Cumbersome environmental approvals cause cost overruns and stalled projects.
- **Financing Bottlenecks**

- High capital intensity and long gestation periods deter private investors.
- PPPs often suffer from risk-sharing disputes, contract renegotiations, and viability gaps.
- **Inter-Agency Coordination**
 - Lack of convergence between Centre, States, and departments.
 - Overlapping jurisdictions and poor data sharing impact seamless project implementation.
- **Quality and Maintenance Gaps**
 - Focus remains on asset creation rather than lifecycle maintenance.
 - Poor quality construction and corruption undermine long-term utility.
- **Regional Disparities**
 - Most infrastructure growth concentrated in western and southern states.
 - Northeastern and tribal areas remain under-connected despite national missions.

Way Forward

- Implement **single-window clearance systems** for land and environment approvals.
- Promote **blended finance** models and deepen bond markets for long-term funding.
- Use **real-time project dashboards** under Gati Shakti to monitor execution.
- Strengthen **contract enforcement and dispute resolution mechanisms** in PPPs.
- Encourage **green infrastructure** aligned with India's climate commitments.

4. Urban Development: Government Interventions and Challenges in Implementation

Urban development in India is central to economic growth, but it is also a site of rising inequality, unplanned expansion, and service deficits. With over 35% of India's population now residing in urban areas (expected to reach 40% by 2030), the government has launched several mission-mode programmes to address infrastructure gaps, affordable housing, sustainability, and inclusive governance..

Key Government Interventions in Urban Development

- **Smart Cities Mission (SCM)**
 - Launched in 2015 to promote sustainable and citizen-centric urban growth through area-based development and technology-enabled governance.
 - 100 cities selected for smart infrastructure, e-governance, and urban mobility solutions.
- **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)**
 - Focuses on improving water supply, sewerage, urban transport, and green spaces in 500 cities.
 - Encourages reform-linked funding with emphasis on service-level benchmarks.
- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U)**
 - Aims to provide *Housing for All* by 2022 through affordable housing for urban poor via four verticals: In-situ slum redevelopment, credit-linked subsidy, affordable housing in partnership, and beneficiary-led construction.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM-U)**
 - Focuses on elimination of open defecation and scientific solid waste management.
 - Swachh Survekshan rankings used to foster competitive federalism among cities.
- **National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM)**
 - Aims to enhance the employability and livelihoods of urban poor through self-employment and skill training.
 - Includes support for street vendors under the *PM SVANidhi* scheme.
- **Urban Transport Initiatives**
 - Includes funding for metro rail projects, bus rapid transit systems (BRTS), and electric mobility initiatives.
 - Implemented under National Urban Transport Policy and FAME scheme.
- **National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM)**
 - Launched in 2021 to create a digital ecosystem for urban governance and service delivery by 2024.
- **Jal Jeevan Mission – Urban (JJM-U)**
 - Focused on universal access to functional household tap connections (FHTCs) and wastewater management in urban areas.

Challenges in Design and Implementation

- **Fragmented Institutional Framework**
 - Multiple overlapping agencies (ULBs, parastatals, SPVs) with poor coordination lead to inefficiencies.
 - Weak devolution under 74th Constitutional Amendment has limited autonomy and accountability of Urban Local Bodies.
- **Financing and Resource Constraints**
 - Urban development remains underfunded; ULBs generate less than 1% of GDP.
 - Limited own-source revenue (OSR), dependence on state/central grants, and poor property tax compliance weaken fiscal sustainability.
- **Implementation and Capacity Deficits**
 - Delays in project execution (e.g., Smart Cities lag in completion of works).
 - Lack of skilled urban planners, engineers, and IT personnel at municipal level.
 - Inadequate data systems hamper planning and monitoring.
- **Inadequate Focus on Inclusivity**
 - Affordable housing often fails to reach slum dwellers due to eligibility or design mismatch.
 - Urban poor face displacement without proper rehabilitation (e.g., slum evictions, metro projects)
 - Women, elderly, and disabled remain underserved in urban mobility and safety infrastructure.
- **Environmental Sustainability Concerns**
 - Poor integration of climate resilience in urban planning.
 - Issues of air pollution, urban flooding, and heatwaves persist due to flawed land-use patterns and inadequate green cover.

Way Forward

- **Strengthen Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** through fiscal empowerment, cadre-based recruitment, and training in urban governance.
- **Promote Integrated Planning** by ensuring convergence between SCM, AMRUT, PMAY, and climate action plans.
- **Innovative Financing** such as municipal bonds, land value capture, and public-private partnerships (PPPs) should be scaled up.

- **Inclusive Urbanism** through participatory planning, gender-sensitive infrastructure, and regularising informal settlements with dignity.
- **Data-Driven Governance** using GIS mapping, real-time dashboards, and citizen feedback mechanisms to improve transparency and accountability.
- **Environmental Mainstreaming** in urban policy through green buildings, sustainable mobility, and nature-based solutions.

5. Rural Development: Government Interventions and Challenges in Implementation

Rural development in India is vital to inclusive growth, given that over 65% of the population resides in rural areas. It encompasses multi-dimensional improvements in agriculture, livelihoods, housing, infrastructure, health, education, and social inclusion. The government has launched a series of flagship missions and rights-based programmes aimed at improving the quality of life in rural India.

Key Government Interventions in Rural Development

- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)**
 - Provides 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to rural households.
 - Focus on creating durable assets, natural resource management, and women's participation.
- **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G)**
 - Aims to provide pucca houses with basic amenities to all rural homeless and those living in kutcha houses by 2024.
 - Utilizes socio-economic caste census (SECC) for beneficiary identification.
- **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**
 - Promotes self-help groups (SHGs) and women-led micro-enterprises to enhance income and social empowerment.
 - Includes financial inclusion, skill development, and community-based institutions.

- **Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM)**

- Aims to develop “rurban” clusters—urban-like infrastructure in rural areas—to bridge the rural-urban divide.
- Promotes convergence of various sectoral schemes.

- **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)**

- Focuses on rural road connectivity to unconnected habitations.
- Key to enabling access to markets, health, and education.

- **Swachh Bharat Mission – Gramin (SBM-G)**

- Aims to eliminate open defecation and promote solid and liquid waste management.
- Emphasizes behaviour change and community ownership.

- **Jal Jeevan Mission – Rural (JJM-R)**

- Seeks to provide functional household tap connections (FHTCs) to all rural households by 2024.
- Based on a community-led approach with village action plans.

- **e-GramSwaraj and Audit Online**

- Digital governance platform to enhance transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

- **Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY)**

- Encourages MPs to adopt and develop model villages through convergence and participatory planning.

Challenges in Design and Implementation

- **Targeting and Inclusion**

- Use of outdated SECC data leads to exclusion/inclusion errors in housing and livelihood schemes.
- Marginalised communities (SCs, STs, single women) often lack documentation or access to entitlements.
- Gender disparities persist in access to assets, credit, and decision-making roles in SHGs and Panchayats.

- **Funding and Resource Constraints**

- Delay in wage payments under MGNREGA and fund releases in PMAY-G affects public trust.

- PRIs lack financial autonomy and struggle to plan and implement projects effectively.

- Fragmented and underfunded rural health and education infrastructure limits human capital development.

- **Implementation and Capacity Deficits**

- Shortage of trained staff at the block and village levels affects last-mile delivery.
- Poor quality of construction in rural housing and roads due to lack of monitoring.
- Leakage, corruption, and lack of transparency in procurement and beneficiary identification.

- **Monitoring and Accountability**

- Weak social audit mechanisms in many states dilute accountability.
- Over-centralisation in programme design often ignores local socio-economic contexts.
- MIS systems exist but are underutilised by frontline workers due to lack of digital literacy.

Way Forward

- **Strengthen Gram Sabhas and PRIs** with financial devolution, technical support, and real-time data access for local planning.

- **Improve Targeting** through periodic updating of beneficiary databases and use of Aadhaar-linked socio-economic profiling.

- **Timely Fund Flow** with transparent DBT systems and performance-linked incentives for officials and SHGs.

- **Capacity Building** of functionaries, women collectives, and Panchayat leaders for effective scheme convergence.

- **Revive Participatory Governance** by institutionalising social audits, citizen charters, and grievance redress mechanisms.

- **Digital Infrastructure** must be expanded alongside digital literacy to ensure bottom-up monitoring and service delivery.

6. Health Sector: Government Interventions and Challenges in Implementation

Health is both a social investment and a constitutional obligation (Article 47: Duty of the State to improve public health). India's health sector faces a complex mix of achievements and persistent challenges—improved life expectancy and disease control on one hand, and high out-

of-pocket expenditure and inequities on the other. Recognising this, the government has launched a series of flagship health interventions aiming for universal, affordable, and quality care, especially post-COVID-19.

Key Government Interventions in the Health Sector

- **Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)**
 - Launched in 2018 under Ayushman Bharat umbrella.
 - Provides ₹5 lakh health insurance coverage per family/year for secondary and tertiary care to over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families.
- **Ayushman Bharat – Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs)**
 - Target of transforming 1.5 lakh sub-health centres and PHCs into HWCs.
 - Deliver comprehensive primary healthcare including non-communicable disease screening, mental health, and maternal-child services.
- **National Health Mission (NHM)**
 - Umbrella programme launched in 2013 by combining NRHM and NUHM.
 - Focus on reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health (RMNCH+A) and health system strengthening.
- **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)**
 - Aims to correct regional imbalances in tertiary healthcare.
 - Establishes new AIIMS-like institutions and upgrades district hospitals.
- **National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) (now Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission)**
 - Focuses on creating digital health IDs, electronic health records, and digital infrastructure for seamless healthcare access.
- **Mission Indradhanush (including Intensified & Gram versions)**
 - Targets full immunization of children under 2 years and pregnant women.
 - Special focus on low coverage districts.
- **Jal Jeevan Mission – Rural and Urban**
 - Though primarily an infrastructure programme, it directly impacts public health

through safe drinking water access and reduction in waterborne diseases.

- **COVID-19 Response Measures**
 - CoWIN platform, free vaccination drive, emergency production of PPEs, and emergency health infrastructure expansion under ECRP.
- **Food Safety and Nutrition Programmes**
 - POSHAN Abhiyaan, Mid-Day Meals, and ICDS aimed at combating malnutrition and ensuring maternal and child health.

Challenges in Design and Implementation

- **Accessibility and Equity**
 - Stark rural-urban and interstate disparities in availability of public health facilities.
 - Marginalised groups (tribals, women, disabled) often excluded from institutional care and insurance enrolment.
 - Specialist care and mental health services are heavily urban-centric.
- **Financing and Human Resources**
 - India's public health expenditure (~2.1% of GDP in 2023–24) remains below global average.
 - High out-of-pocket expenditure (~48%) continues despite insurance schemes.
 - Severe shortages of doctors, nurses, and ASHAs in rural areas; uneven distribution across states.
- **Quality and Infrastructure Deficit**
 - Poor quality of care in PHCs and CHCs; infrastructural gaps in Tier II/III towns.
 - Delay in operationalisation of HWCs and non-availability of drugs/equipment.
 - Insufficient focus on preventive and promotive healthcare.
- **Monitoring and Data Challenges**
 - Fragmented data systems, lack of real-time disease surveillance in many states.
 - Weak grievance redress mechanisms and citizen feedback loops.
 - Incomplete integration between digital health initiatives and grassroots services.

Way Forward

- **Increase Public Spending** to meet 2.5% of GDP target by 2025 (National Health Policy 2017); prioritise primary care.
- **Strengthen Primary Health Infrastructure** through timely expansion and operationalisation of HWCs.
- **Healthcare Workforce Reforms** by ensuring local recruitment, incentives in remote areas, and improved training.
- **Integrate Health and Nutrition** by better convergence of NHM, POSHAN Abhiyaan, and water/sanitation programmes.
- **Promote Preventive Care and Health Literacy** to reduce disease burden and improve community participation.
- **Build Resilient Systems** with decentralised planning, robust disease surveillance, and pandemic preparedness mechanisms.
- **Leverage Digital Health** to improve telemedicine, supply chain monitoring, and interoperability across health databases.

7. Education Sector: Government Interventions and Challenges in Implementation

Education is a critical lever for social mobility, economic progress, and democratic citizenship. Article 21A of the Constitution guarantees the right to free and compulsory education, and successive policy efforts have focused on improving access, equity, and quality across school and higher education. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a paradigm shift in India's educational vision. However, despite reforms, structural and implementation challenges remain.

Key Government Interventions in the Education Sector

- **Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009**
 - Guarantees free and compulsory education for children aged 6–14 years.
 - Specifies norms for pupil-teacher ratio, infrastructure, teacher qualifications, and prohibits capitation fees and screening.
- **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan**
 - Integrated scheme covering school education from pre-primary to Class 12 (merged SSA, RMSA, and Teacher Education).

- Focus on access, equity, and quality improvement, especially for disadvantaged groups.
- **PM POSHAN (formerly Mid-Day Meal Scheme)**
 - Aims to improve nutrition, retention, and attendance of children in government and government-aided schools (Classes 1–8).
 - Linked with health check-ups and school nutrition gardens.
- **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**
 - Proposes a new curricular structure (5+3+3+4), mother tongue as the medium of instruction till Grade 5, and a focus on foundational literacy and numeracy.
 - Introduces Academic Bank of Credits, National Research Foundation, and a common higher education regulator (HECI).
- **Digital Education Initiatives**
 - **DIKSHA**: National platform for school education and teacher training.
 - **SWAYAM**: MOOCs for school and higher education.
 - **PM e-Vidya**: One Nation, One Digital Platform initiative to promote online learning during COVID-19.
- **Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)**
 - Residential schools for girls from SC/ST/OBC and minority communities in educationally backward blocks.
- **Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)**
 - Centrally sponsored scheme to improve infrastructure, research, and teaching quality in state universities and colleges.
- **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)**
 - Provide quality residential education to tribal students in remote and underdeveloped areas.
- **National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme (NMMSS)**
 - Scholarships for economically weaker but meritorious students to reduce secondary school dropouts.

Challenges in Design and Implementation

- **Targeting and Inclusion**
 - Learning poverty remains high, especially among rural, tribal, and marginalized children.

- Digital divide during and after COVID-19 exacerbated inequalities in access to online learning.
- Girls, children with disabilities, and first-generation learners face multiple entry barriers.
- **Funding and Resource Constraints**
 - Public expenditure on education (~2.9% of GDP) falls short of NEP's 6% target.
 - Delays in fund disbursement and underutilization of allocations in schemes like Samagra Shiksha.
 - Persistent teacher vacancies, especially in rural and tribal regions.
- **Delivery Mechanism and Quality Issues**
 - Inadequate school infrastructure: lack of toilets, libraries, ICT labs, and learning materials.
 - Poor quality of in-service teacher training and classroom pedagogy.
 - Private schools continue to attract enrollment due to perceived better quality.
- **Monitoring and Accountability**
 - Weak mechanisms to track learning outcomes and enforce RTE norms at the local level.
 - Fragmented data systems across central and state departments.
 - Limited involvement of School Management Committees (SMCs) in actual decision-making.

Way Forward

- **Enhance Public Investment** to align with NEP targets; focus on underfunded segments like ECCE and teacher training.
- **Bridge the Digital Divide** through affordable devices, multilingual content, and community learning centres.
- **Focus on Foundational Literacy** via initiatives like NIPUN Bharat and robust early-grade assessments.
- **Teacher Policy Reform** to ensure regular recruitment, merit-based transfers, and continuous professional development.
- **Strengthen Local Governance** by empowering SMCs and involving Panchayats in school functioning and monitoring.

- **Promote Inclusive Curriculum and Pedagogy** that addresses gender, disability, and socio-cultural diversity.
- **Build Institutional Capacity** in higher education and streamline regulatory architecture under HECI.

Private Sector Interventions for Development and Associated Challenges

In India's mixed economy model, the private sector plays a critical complementary role in development alongside the State. From infrastructure and education to healthcare, agriculture, and digital services, private players are increasingly involved through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and market-based innovations. However, these interventions, while resource-rich and scalable, often raise questions around equity, accountability, and public interest.

Key Areas of Private Sector Involvement

- **Infrastructure Development**
 - *Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)* in roads, airports, metros, ports (e.g., GQ Expressways, Mumbai Metro).
 - *Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM)* used in highways to reduce upfront risk for private investors.
 - Real estate and smart cities also driven by private capital infusion.
- **Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals**
 - Dominance in secondary and tertiary care delivery (Apollo, Fortis), diagnostics, and vaccine manufacturing (e.g., Serum Institute's Covishield).
 - Telemedicine platforms like Practo and 1MG scaling access to urban and semi-urban populations.
- **Education and EdTech**
 - Low-cost private schools and coaching centres expanding in underserved areas.
 - EdTech firms like BYJU'S, Unacademy, and Vedantu offering remote learning solutions.
 - Skill development through industry-led Sector Skill Councils (SSC) under NSDC.
- **Agriculture and Allied Sectors**
 - Contract farming, agribusiness startups (e.g., DeHaat, Ninjacart), and agri-fintechs.

- Cold chain and food processing infrastructure largely developed with private investments.
- **Digital and Financial Inclusion**
 - UPI-based platforms (PhonePe, Paytm), fintech services, and private banks promoting financial inclusion.
 - Technology solutions in governance (e.g., Aadhaar authentication, DBT pipelines) often built by private IT firms (Infosys, TCS).
- **Renewable Energy and Environment**
 - Private investments in solar parks, wind farms, EV infrastructure.
 - CSR efforts in sanitation, afforestation, water harvesting (e.g., Coca-Cola India's water stewardship).
- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**
 - Mandated under Companies Act, 2013; funds used in education, health, sanitation, and livelihoods.
 - Notable examples: Infosys Foundation (rural education), Reliance Foundation (healthcare), Tata Trusts (nutrition and skilling).

Challenges in Design and Implementation

- **Equity and Access**
 - Private interventions often remain market-driven, leading to regional and class-based exclusions.
 - EdTech and private health services remain inaccessible to the poorest, widening inequality.
 - Urban-centric investments leave rural and tribal areas underserved.
- **Regulation and Accountability**
 - Weak enforcement of quality standards and consumer protection in private health and education.
 - Limited social audit mechanisms for CSR spending and PPP projects.
 - Capture of regulatory bodies (regulatory capture) undermines public interest.
- **Profit vs Public Good Dilemma**
 - Tendency to cherry-pick profitable sectors and ignore non-lucrative but essential areas (e.g., sanitation, disability services).
 - Infrastructure PPPs sometimes shift financial burdens (e.g., toll charges, water tariffs) onto citizens.

- **Data and Privacy Concerns**
 - Growing role of private firms in digital governance raises concerns of data monetization and surveillance (e.g., Aadhaar authentication by private entities).
 - Regulatory framework for data protection remains underdeveloped (DPDP Act is yet evolving).
- **Fragmentation and Coordination Issues**
 - CSR activities often unaligned with local development plans and lack convergence with government schemes.
 - Inadequate institutional mechanisms to ensure private contributions align with national development goals.

Way Forward

- **Strengthen PPP Frameworks** by ensuring transparent bidding, risk-sharing, and independent regulatory oversight.
- **Promote Inclusive Models** like viability gap funding and blended finance for backward regions and sectors.
- **Enhance CSR Effectiveness** through local government convergence, district planning, and outcome-based tracking.
- **Strengthen Data Governance** via robust enforcement of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act and ethical AI guidelines.
- **Ensure Equitable Access** by mandating minimum public interest obligations (e.g., universal service requirements in telecom and education).
- **Foster Ethical Private Participation** through ESG norms, responsible business reporting, and social impact evaluation.

Recent Development

Aspirational Blocks Programme: Building blocks of Viksit Bharat

Context : Recently Gangaram Block in Mahabubabad district (Telangana) tops in Delta Ranking under Aspirational Blocks Programme across the nation

Background

- **Rooted in the ADP (2018)**: Focused on 112 underdeveloped districts using the 3C approach – **Convergence, Collaboration, Competition.**

- **Historical Precedent:** Idea of community development blocks originates from the **1950s Community Development Programme**, aimed at grassroots-level holistic rural development.
- **Need for Block-Level Focus:** Despite district-level improvements, **intra-district disparities persist** due to terrain, marginalization, or resource gaps.

What is the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP)?

Feature	Details
Coverage	500 blocks across 28 States and 4 UTs
Key Sectors	Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development, Basic Infrastructure, Social Development
Implementation Strategy	- Convergence of existing schemes - Real-time monitoring through KPIs - Ranking of blocks to foster competition
Institutional Mechanism	- District-led with block-level officers as implementation anchors - States to guide, support, and build capacity
Focus States	Over 50% of the identified blocks are in UP, Bihar, MP, Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal

Significance and Need for ABP

- **Bridges Micro-Level Inequities:** Targets blocks within aspirational districts that are still lagging.
- **Decentralised Governance:** Blocks as **functional administrative units** help avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.
- **Inclusive Development:** Focuses on **vulnerable**

groups through proximity-driven governance and service delivery.

- **Jan Andolan + Data-Driven Governance:** Promotes bottom-up accountability with **community involvement** and technology-backed evaluation.

Success of ADP as a Foundation

Indicator	Improvements Achieved
Maternal Health	Paschimi Singhbhum: early registration from 39% (2018) → 91% (2022)
Institutional Delivery	Gumla, Karauli, Dhalai: 40% → 90%
School Electrification	Kupwara: <50% → >95%
Immunisation	Dhenkanal: 50% → 90%
Justice Access	Osmanabad: Court services fully digitized
Women Empowerment	SHGs in Ranchi used UPI, BHIM for financial inclusion
Local Entrepreneurship	Goalpara (Assam): "GoalMart" e-portal for rural and ethnic products

Challenges in Implementation of ABP

- **Administrative Capacity Deficit:** Block-level functionaries often lack training, infrastructure, and autonomy to plan and monitor development effectively.
- **Data Collection and Reliability Issues:** Real-time monitoring depends on robust MIS systems, but ground-level data is often inconsistent, delayed, or manipulated.
- **Inter-Departmental Coordination Gaps:** Departments at the block level may work in silos, reducing convergence and creating implementation bottlenecks.
- **Financial Constraints and Fund Flow Delays:**

Though schemes are converged, lack of timely and adequate fund release affects delivery.

- **Social Exclusion and Local Power Structures:** Marginalised communities may still be left out due to entrenched caste, class, or gender hierarchies at the village/block level.
- **Sustainability of Outcomes:** Competition-based incentives may deliver short-term results, but without systemic reforms, gains may not be institutionalised.

Way Forward

- **Capacity Building of Block Officers:** Through programs under **Mission Karmayogi** and dedicated training modules for data management and convergence planning.
- **Strengthen Digital Infrastructure:** Develop robust, tamper-proof MIS for real-time monitoring with community-level validations (like social audits).
- **Ensure Horizontal and Vertical Coordination:** Promote **block-level convergence cells** involving all departments with clear accountability norms.
- **Fiscal Empowerment and Autonomy:** Devolve **untied funds** to blocks for innovation and flexible need-based spending.
- **Community Participation and Social Accountability:** Institutionalise **Jan Bhagidari** platforms to ensure marginalised voices are heard and included.
- **Focus on Outcome Sustainability:** Shift focus from short-term rankings to **long-term capacity creation**, institutionalising best practices beyond the programme cycle

Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars in India (SPMEPCI)

Context : The **Ministry of Heavy Industries (MHI)** issued detailed guidelines for the **SPMEPCI**, aimed at attracting global EV manufacturers and strengthening India's position as a global hub for electric vehicles.

About the Scheme

Aspect	Details
Objective	Boost domestic manufacturing of electric passenger cars (e-4Ws) and align with India's net-zero goals by 2070.
Eligibility	Companies with ₹10,000 crore automotive revenue & minimum ₹3,000 crore fixed asset investment.
Customs Duty Concession	Import of high-end EV CBUs (≥\$35,000) at reduced 15% customs duty for 5 years (max 8,000 units/year).
Investment Requirement	₹4,150 crore investment within 3 years; manufacturing and production must start within that period.
Domestic Value Addition (DVA)	Minimum 25% in 3 years and 50% in 5 years (aligned with PLI Auto Scheme).

Challenges

- **High Entry Barriers:** Restricting eligibility to companies with ₹10,000 crore turnover may exclude promising domestic startups and MSMEs.
- **Import Concession vs Local Manufacturing:** Critics argue that lower import duties on high-end EVs may benefit foreign companies without strong assurance of long-term domestic value creation.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Inadequate charging infrastructure and grid readiness in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities may limit EV adoption despite increased manufacturing.
- **Battery Supply Chain Dependence:** India still relies heavily on imported lithium-ion cells and rare earth materials, which undermines the goal of full value-chain localisation.
- **Technology Adaptation:** Global EV manufacturers may face challenges in adapting to India's climate, road, and consumer usage

patterns.

- **Regulatory & State-Level Bottlenecks:** Land acquisition, single-window clearances, and state-level EV policies remain fragmented and vary across regions.

Way Forward

- **Inclusive Eligibility Norms:** Allow tiered participation from Indian startups and joint ventures to encourage domestic innovation and broader ecosystem growth.
- **Time-bound Localization Monitoring:** Ensure strict compliance with DVA timelines and publish periodic audits to avoid misuse of import concessions.
- **Strengthen Charging Ecosystem:** Integrate the scheme with FAME-III and state EV policies to develop a widespread, fast-charging network.
- **Battery Manufacturing Incentives:** Complement SPMEPCI with focused support for cell and battery recycling industries under the **ACC PLI Scheme**.
- **Collaborative R&D Platforms:** Promote joint R&D initiatives between foreign OEMs and Indian institutes to tailor products for Indian conditions.
- **Streamlined Regulatory Support:** Create a central EV facilitation desk to coordinate with states and ensure quicker clearances for setting up plants.

Value Addition for Unit 2

Keywords : Last-Mile Delivery, Policy-Implementation Gap, Targeting Efficiency, One-Size-Fits-All Approach, Administrative Bottlenecks, Social Audit Deficit, Fragmented Governance, Demand-Side Financing, Participatory Planning, Convergent Governance, Decentralised Development, Capacity Deficit, Outcome-Based Monitoring, Institutional Coordination, Fiscal Federalism, Resource Asymmetry, Rights-Based Approach, Digital Public Infrastructure, Behavioural Change Communication, Data-Driven Governance, Siloed Policy Frameworks, Bottom-Up Planning, Inclusion-Exclusion Errors, Sustainable Localisation, Competitive Cooperative Federalism.

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Despite robust policy frameworks,

implementation bottlenecks remain the Achilles' heel of public service delivery in India. Analyse.

2. How has the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP) attempted to address micro-level inequalities in development? Discuss its potential and limitations.
3. Do government schemes like PM-KISAN and PMFBY adequately address the structural issues in Indian agriculture? Examine.
4. Evaluate the role of the private sector in India's development journey. Should development be profit-driven or public-good centric? Justify with examples.
5. The success of infrastructure projects depends not only on investment but also on institutional coordination. Illustrate with reference to Gati Shakti and related missions.

Acronyms

1. SHAPE - Challenges in Policy Design & Implementation

- **S** - Stakeholder exclusion (top-down design)
- **H** - Human capacity gaps
- **A** - Administrative bottlenecks
- **P** - Political influence & populism
- **E** - Evidence & data deficits

→ "When policies fail to SHAPE properly, implementation falters."

2. FARMER - Agriculture Interventions & Constraints

- **F** - Farmer coverage (landless exclusion)
- **A** - Access to markets (e-NAM, infrastructure)
- **R** - Risk protection (crop insurance)
- **M** - Mechanisation & finance
- **E** - Ecology (irrigation, soil health)
- **R** - Real-time monitoring

→ "To support the FARMER, interventions must be holistic."

3. INDIA - Industry & Manufacturing Policies

- **I** - Infrastructure & connectivity
- **N** - Need-based incentives (PLI, MSME)
- **D** - Digitalisation & tech upgrade
- **I** - Investment climate
- **A** - Access to credit

→ "A thriving manufacturing sector must address each letter of INDIA."

4. BUILD - Infrastructure Sector Design Issues

- **B** - Bottlenecks in land & environment clearance
- **U** - Uncertain financing
- **I** - Institutional coordination gaps
- **L** - Lifecycle maintenance neglected
- **D** - Disparities in regional access

→ "Projects don't just need bricks—they need to BUILD bridges across issues."

Readymade Template

1. Introductions/Conclusions

(In questions related to Social Justice, it is better to start the answer with relevant data/facts/current news, etc. In conclusion, provide a way forward for addressing the challenges. You may also conclude your answers by using SDGs.)

Common for any Government Policy Intervention

- In democratic socialist countries like India, the state needs to play a crucial role in the development. In this context, government intervention through this policy is significant in ensuring social justice.
- Considering the lacunas in implementation, the government needs to work on service delivery. Through public-private partnership and evidence based mapping the government can achieve the goal of social justice.

2. Development: Interventions, Implementation Issues & Way Forward

Section	Category	Key Points
Development Interventions	Political Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panchayati Raj System • Right to Information (RTI) Act • Citizen's Charter • VVPAT for electoral transparency

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reservation Policy • NITI Aayog
	Economic Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LPG Reforms (Liberalization, Privatization, Globalization) • Land Reforms • Infrastructure Development • Gender Budgeting • Poverty Alleviation Programs • Financial Inclusion & Banking Services
	Social Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Health Coverage (e.g., Ayushman Bharat) • Education Policies (e.g., NEP 2020) • Skill Development (e.g., PMKVY) • Welfare Policies for Vulnerable Sections • Social Security Measures • Food Security (e.g., NFSA)
Issues in Policy Implementation	Structural Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucratic red-tapism • Legal and regulatory hurdles • Inadequate infrastructure • Limited citizen participation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Errors in beneficiary targeting • Budgetary constraints
	Non-Structural Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of public acceptance • Corruption and leakages • Weak communication and awareness • Political interference and populism
Way Forward	Short-Term Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building of implementing agencies • Streamlining bureaucracy and reducing red tape • Legislative Impact Assessments • Transparent decision-making • Involving SHGs, NGOs and civil society
	Long-Term Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalizing citizen engagement • Creating robust feedback mechanisms • Digitization of governance processes • Promoting evidence-based policy design • Expanding Public-Private

		Partnerships (PPP)
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3. SDG Mapping: Development Policies & Implementation Issues

Theme within the UPSC Unit	Examples / Focus Areas	Relevant SDG(s)
Agriculture and Rural Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM-KISAN, PM-AASHA • e-NAM, Soil HealthCards • MGNREGA, Watershed schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 1 – No Poverty • SDG 2 – Zero Hunger • SDG 15 – Life on Land
Health Sector Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ayushman Bharat • National Health Mission • POSHAN Abhiyan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-being
Education Sector Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEP 2020 • Samagra Shiksha • Mid-Day Meal Scheme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 4 – Quality Education
Women & Child Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beti Bachao Beti Padhao • ICDS, Mission Shakti 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 5 – Gender Equality
Skill Development & Employment Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill India Mission • PMKVY • Startup India, Stand-Up India 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth

Urban Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart Cities Mission • AMRUT • PMAY-Urban 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities
Environment & Climate Resilience Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) • CAMPA • EIA framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 13 – Climate Action • SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption
Infrastructure & Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM Gati Shakti • Bharatmala, Sagarmala • UDAY, UJALA, Solar Mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy • SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation, Infrastructure
Governance & Service Delivery Mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTI Act, CPGRAMS, Digital India • DBT, JAM Trinity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDG 16.6 – Transparent & Accountable Institutions
Policy Implementation Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural: Poor design, coordination gaps • Non-structural: Corruption, exclusion errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-cutting across SDG 16, SDG 17 – Effective institutions, partnerships

Why This Matters in UPSC Answers

- Shows **alignment with India's global commitments** under Agenda 2030.
- Helps in **conclusion writing**: "To meet SDG X, India must reform policy design..."

Navigating the Syllabus: What You Need to Know

1. Evolution of Development Paradigms

- From state-led industrialisation to rights-based and sustainable models.
- Key phases: growth-centric → poverty alleviation → liberalisation → human development → SDG-aligned, bottom-up governance.

2. Core Development Approaches

- **Participatory:** Community-led planning (e.g., social audits, PRA).
- **Sustainable:** Balancing economic, social, environmental needs (e.g., SDGs, climate plans).
- **Rights-based:** Legal entitlements like MGNREGA, RTE, NFSA.
- **Capability approach:** Focus on freedom and agency (e.g., literacy, health).

3. State & Non-State Roles

- **State actors:** Governments, PRIs/ULBs, NITI Aayog.
- **Non-state actors:** NGOs, SHGs/CBOs, donors, private sector, academia.

4. The Development Industry

- Ecosystem: NGOs, donors (multilateral/bilateral), philanthropies, CSR arms, think tanks.
- Benefits: Technical support, innovation, funding.
- Critiques: Donor agendas, fragmentation, accountability issues.

5. Non-State Institutions

- **NGOs:** Service delivery, advocacy, legal status (Society, Trust, Section 8). Challenges include funding, capacity, and monitoring.
- **SHGs/CBOs:** Savings-credit, livelihood, women's empowerment (e.g., Kudumbashree, Jeevika). Issues: elite capture, financial sustainability.
- **Donors & Foundations:** USAID, World Bank, Gates Foundation—support health, education, governance. Concerned with coordination and alignment.
- **Institutional stakeholders:** PRIs/ULBs, cooperatives, FPOs, faith-based bodies, media, academia. Challenges include weak autonomy and capacity.

6. Synergistic Models & Convergence

- **Triple partnerships:** PPPP model (e.g., SBM).
- **Flagship schemes:** Aspirational Districts, DAY-NRLM + MGNREGA + POSHAN.
- **Collaborative platforms:** CSR–government–NGO alliances, tribal development models.

UPSC Previous Year Questions

Question	Nature of Question	Core Demand
Public charitable trusts have the potential to make India's development more inclusive as they relate to certain vital public issues. Comment. (2024)	NGOs/Charities + Inclusive Development	Comment on role of public trusts in bridging development gaps and promoting inclusiveness.
The crucial aspect of development process has been the inadequate attention paid to Human Resource Development in India. Suggest measures that can address this inadequacy. (2023)	Development Process + HRD	Suggest measures to address inadequacy in HR development in India's development strategy.
E-governance, as a critical tool of governance, has ushered in effectiveness, transparency and accountability in governments. What inadequacies hamper the enhancement of these features? (2023)	E-Governance + Development	Identify inadequacies in realizing e-governance goals of transparency, accountability, and efficiency.
Do you agree with the view that increasing dependence on donor agencies for development reduces the importance of community participation in the development process? Justify your answer. (2022)	Donors + Community Participation	Examine donor dominance vs. community-led development models and justify your position.
Can Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations present an alternative model of public service delivery to benefit the common citizen? Discuss the challenges of this alternative model. (2021)	NGOs + Public Service Delivery	Assess NGO role in service delivery and challenges to scaling and legitimacy.

Introduction

The concept of development has evolved from a narrow focus on economic growth to a broader understanding that includes human well-being, social justice, and environmental sustainability. In the Indian context, development is guided by constitutional principles and shaped by both state and non-state actors. Understanding development processes thus requires an examination of changing development paradigms, participatory frameworks, and the institutional architecture that drives inclusive and rights-based progress.

Evolution of the concept of development in India

Period & Development Approach	Key Features	Representative Examples
1. Growth-Centric Phase (1950s–1970s) <i>Nehruvian socialism; planned industrialisation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDP growth, industrialisation, and capital accumulation as core goals State-led development through heavy industries and public sector Social sectors (health, education) received limited attention 	1st & 2nd Five-Year Plans, Planning Commission, Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), Import Substitution Strategy
2. Poverty Alleviation & Basic Needs Phase (1970s–1980s) <i>Shift to welfare-oriented rural programmes</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition of limits of trickle-down growth Direct anti-poverty and employment generation schemes Global influence of ILO's Basic 	Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Food for Work, Minimum Needs Programme, Operation Flood

	Needs Approach	
3. Structural Adjustment & Liberalisation (1991 onwards) <i>Market-led reforms and global integration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liberalisation, Privatisation, Globalisation (LPG) reforms Emphasis on macroeconomic stability, efficiency, and competitiveness Criticised for increasing inequality and regional disparity 	1991 Economic Reforms, Deregulation, SEZs, Disinvestment, FDI reforms, WTO membership
4. Human Development & Rights-Based Approach (2000s onwards) <i>Welfare through legal entitlements</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broader focus on health, education, dignity, and social security Institutionalisation of welfare via legislation Human development as central policy concern 	MGNREGA (2005), RTI Act (2005), RTE Act (2009), NFSA (2013), National Rural Health Mission
5. Sustainable & Inclusive Development (2015 onwards) <i>SDGs, digital and bottom-up governance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment with UN SDGs (2015–2030) and climate action Emphasis on last-mile delivery, digital public infrastructure, environmental justice 	Aspirational Districts Programme, Jal Jeevan Mission, Digital India, PM-Gati Shakti, Lifestyle for Environment (LIFE), AMRUT 2.0

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on inter-generational equity and convergence-based governance | |
|--|---|--|

Key Approaches to Development

• Participatory Development

- **Definition:** An approach that emphasizes active involvement of communities and stakeholders in planning, implementation, and monitoring of development initiatives.
- **Core Features:**
 - Empowers people to articulate their needs and priorities.
 - Enhances accountability and ownership of outcomes.
 - Often institutionalised through local governance mechanisms like **Gram Sabhas**, **Village Development Committees**, and **School Management Committees**.
- **Examples:**
 - **Social Audits under MGNREGA:** Community-led monitoring of expenditures.
 - **Watershed Development Projects** in Maharashtra (Pani Panchayat model).
 - Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) used by NGOs for local planning.
- **Limitations:**
 - Tokenism and elite capture.
 - Lack of capacity and awareness among communities.
 - Top-down bureaucratic inertia often undermines grassroots participation.

• Sustainable Development

- **Definition:** Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland Commission, 1987).

○ Pillars:

- **Economic sustainability:** Efficient use of resources.
- **Social sustainability:** Inclusive, equitable growth.
- **Environmental sustainability:** Protection of natural capital.

○ Global Context:

- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** 17 goals adopted by UN in 2015.
- India's VNRs (Voluntary National Reviews) reflect efforts to localise SDGs via schemes like SBM, JJM, Ujjwala, and PMAY.

○ Examples:

- National Solar Mission, National Electric Mobility Mission.
- State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs).

○ Challenges:

- Trade-offs between growth and sustainability.
- Poor integration of environmental impact assessments.
- Weak enforcement of environmental laws.

• Rights-Based Approach to Development

- **Definition:** A framework that treats developmental entitlements (like education, food, work, health) as legal and moral rights of citizens rather than acts of state benevolence.
- **Foundations:**
 - Anchored in **constitutional guarantees (FRs, DPSPs)** and **international human rights law**.
 - State acts as a duty-bearer; citizens are rights-holders.
- **Key Legislation in India:**
 - **MGNREGA (2005)** – Right to work.
 - **Right to Education Act (2009)** – Free, compulsory education for 6–14 years.
 - **National Food Security Act (2013)** – Right to subsidised food grains.

- **Forest Rights Act (2006)** – Rights of forest-dwelling communities.
- **Advantages:**
 - Empowers marginalized groups to demand accountability.
 - Ensures legal enforceability of entitlements.
 - Strengthens citizen-state relationship.
- **Criticism:**
 - Rights are often underfunded and poorly implemented.
 - Legal rights without institutional capacity can lead to disillusionment
 - Risk of judicialization of policy-making.
- **Capability Approach (by Amartya Sen)**
 - **Definition:** Development is the process of enhancing people’s capabilities—what they can *be* and *do*—rather than merely increasing income.
 - **Core Principles:**
 - Emphasis on freedom, agency, and dignity.
 - Measurement of development should focus on actual outcomes (e.g., literacy, longevity) rather than inputs.
 - **Relevance in India:**
 - Shapes the **Human Development Index (HDI)**.
 - Influenced programmes such as **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Ayushman Bharat,** and **POSHAN Abhiyaan.**

Category	Examples	Primary Role in Development
State Actors	Central and State Governments, PRIs & ULBs, NITI Aayog, Sectoral Ministries, Statutory Bodies (e.g., NHRC, NCW)	Formulating policies, financing programmes, delivering public services, ensuring legal entitlements, and upholding constitutional mandates.
Non-State Actors	NGOs, Civil Society Organisations, SHGs, Community-Based Organisations, Private Sector, Philanthropic Foundations, International Donors (e.g., UNDP, World Bank)	Providing innovative solutions, reaching vulnerable populations, advocating rights, enabling participation, building local capacity, and supporting service delivery.

(A detailed discussion of these actors and their institutional roles will be taken up in the next chapter.)

Role of State and Non-State Actors in Development

Development in India is a collaborative endeavour involving both **state** and **non-state actors**, each playing distinct yet interdependent roles. The synergy between state and non-state actors is essential for inclusive and sustainable development.

Introduction

The term “*development industry*” refers to the network of actors, institutions, and mechanisms involved in planning, funding, implementing, and evaluating development initiatives. This includes not just governments but also international donors, NGOs, consulting firms, philanthropic foundations, and think tanks. While this ecosystem plays a crucial role in shaping developmental outcomes, it has also been critiqued for promoting donor-driven agendas, managerialism, and lack of accountability to local communities.

Origins and Historical Evolution

Period	Key Developments
Post-WWII (1940s–1960s)	Birth of international development aid with institutions like the World Bank, USAID, and UNDP . Focus was on reconstruction and economic growth in newly independent nations.
1970s–1980s	Disillusionment with state-led top-down planning. Rise of Basic Needs Approach and recognition of NGOs as delivery agents. India saw the expansion of voluntary organisations (e.g., SEWA, PRADAN).
1990s (Post-Liberalisation in India)	Shrinking state role led to greater reliance on civil society and external donors . Emergence of PPPs, foreign-funded NGOs, and CSR initiatives . Donor-driven priorities influenced local development strategies.
2000s–Present	Expansion of the sector with rise of philanthropic foundations (e.g., Gates Foundation, Tata Trusts) and social enterprises . Introduction of CSR compliance (Companies Act, 2013) and tightening of FCRA regulations . Growing emphasis on results-based management, monitoring, and evaluation .

Key Stakeholders in the Development Industry

- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

- Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs)
- Donors and International Development Agencies
 - Bilateral Donors (e.g., DFID, USAID, JICA)
 - Multilateral Donors (e.g., World Bank, UNDP, ADB)
- Philanthropic Foundations and Charitable Institutions
 - Domestic (e.g., Tata Trusts, Azim Premji Foundation)
 - International (e.g., Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation)
- Corporate Sector and CSR Arms
- Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)
- Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and Cooperatives
- Faith-Based Organisations and Religious Charities
- Media, Academia, and Policy Think Tanks

1. Role of NGOs in Development

Definition

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are voluntary, non-profit entities operating independently of the government, engaged in developmental, humanitarian, or advocacy activities aimed at promoting social welfare, empowerment, and rights-based governance.



Legal Status of NGOs in India

A. Forms of Legal Registration

Type of NGO	Governing Law	Features
Societies	<i>Societies Registration Act, 1860</i> (or respective state amendments)	Aimed at promoting charitable activities like education, health, culture. Requires minimum seven members and

		democratic functioning through executive committees.
Trusts	<i>Indian Trusts Act, 1882</i> (or state-specific trust laws)	Often created for philanthropic and religious purposes. Managed by trustees; comparatively easier to register but less democratic in structure.
Section 8 Companies	<i>Companies Act, 2013 (Section 8)</i>	More formal and professionally managed organisations focused on not-for-profit objectives. Subject to tighter financial and procedural scrutiny by the Registrar of Companies (RoC).

- Companies with net worth ≥ ₹500 crore, turnover ≥ ₹1000 crore, or net profit ≥ ₹5 crore are required to spend 2% of profits on CSR.
- Eligible NGOs (minimum 3 years old and registered as Trust/Society/Section 8 Company) can receive CSR funds for activities aligned with Schedule VII (e.g., education, health, rural development).
- **Other Oversight Mechanisms**
 - **NITI Aayog NGO-DARPAN Portal:** NGOs seeking government grants must register.
 - **Audits and disclosures:** NGOs receiving large public or foreign funds are subject to financial and performance audits.

Areas of Intervention by NGOs in India

- **Health:**
 - Improving healthcare access and awareness through health camps, mobile clinics, vaccinations, and disease prevention programs.
 - **Example:** Smile Foundation provides mobile health units in underserved areas.
- **Education:**
 - Enhancing literacy and quality education via non-formal schools, adult literacy, skill development, and scholarships.
 - **Example:** Pratham improves learning outcomes through innovative education models.
- **Environment:**
 - Promoting sustainability with afforestation, water conservation, waste management, and climate change advocacy.
 - **Example:** Greenpeace India advocates for environmental policies and sustainable practices.
- **Gender:**
 - Advancing gender equality by promoting women's rights, preventing violence, and supporting vocational training and self-help groups.
 - **Example:** SEWA empowers women through economic self-reliance and cooperatives.
- **Disaster Relief:**

B. Regulatory Frameworks Governing NGOs

- **Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA), 2010**
 - NGOs receiving foreign funds must register under FCRA.
 - Mandates opening of a designated FCRA bank account, disclosure of foreign contributions, and adherence to national interest norms.
 - Amendments in 2020 introduced greater central oversight, capped administrative expenses at 20%, and prohibited re-granting to other NGOs.
- **Income Tax Act, 1961 (Sections 12A & 80G)**
 - **Section 12A:** Provides income tax exemption on NGO earnings if registered.
 - **Section 80G:** Allows donors to claim tax deductions for donations made to eligible NGOs.
 - NGOs must maintain audited accounts and file annual returns to retain these exemptions.
- **Companies Act, 2013 – CSR Rules (Section 135)**

- Providing immediate aid and rehabilitation through food, shelter, medical supplies, and community resilience programs.
- **Example:** Goonj supports disaster-affected communities with relief and rehabilitation.
- **Livelihood and Poverty Alleviation:**
 - Promoting economic empowerment through microfinance, skill development, and income-generating activities.
 - **Example:** Barefoot College trains rural communities in sustainable livelihoods like solar engineering.
- **Child Welfare:**
 - Ensuring child rights and protection through nutrition programs, orphanages, anti-trafficking efforts, and education support.
 - **Example:** CRY (Child Rights and You) advocates for child education and protection.
- **Rural Development:**
 - Uplifting rural communities via infrastructure development, agricultural training, and access to clean water and sanitation.
 - **Example:** Paani Foundation focuses on watershed management and rural sustainability.
- **Human Rights:**
 - Advocating for marginalized groups' rights, including Dalits, tribals, and minorities, through legal aid and awareness campaigns.
 - **Example:** Amnesty India campaigns for human rights and justice for marginalized communities.
- **Urban Slum Development:**
 - Improving living conditions in slums through housing, sanitation, healthcare, and vocational training programs.
 - **Example:** SPARC supports slum dwellers with housing and urban development initiatives.

Challenges Associated with NGOs in India

- **Accountability:** Lack of transparency in operations and fund utilization erodes trust among stakeholders.
- **Funding Dependency:** Heavy reliance on external donors, grants, or CSR funds limits sustainability and autonomy.
- **FCRA Restrictions:** Stringent regulations, including license cancellations and caps on

administrative expenses, hinder foreign funding access.

- **Capacity Constraints:** Limited trained staff, resources, and technical expertise impact effective program implementation.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Complex and frequent reporting requirements under various laws strain small NGOs.
- **Scalability Issues:** Grassroots focus often restricts NGOs' ability to scale interventions to wider regions.
- **Competition for Resources:** Intense competition among NGOs for funding and visibility reduces collaboration.
- **Political Interference:** Government scrutiny or local political pressures can disrupt operations or advocacy efforts.

Case Study

Pratham in Education

Pratham, established in 1995, is one of India's leading NGOs working to improve learning outcomes among children in government schools. Its flagship initiative, the **Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)**, revealed alarming gaps between enrolment and actual learning, shaping national education discourse and influencing policies like *NIPUN Bharat*. Through its **Read India Campaign**, Pratham has delivered low-cost, community-based remedial teaching to enhance foundational literacy and numeracy. By partnering with state governments and mobilising local volunteers, Pratham demonstrates how NGOs can drive scalable, outcome-focused, and evidence-based educational reform.

2. Role of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) in Development

Definition

- **Self-Help Groups (SHGs):** Voluntary groups of 10–20 individuals, primarily women, from similar socio-economic backgrounds who pool resources to promote savings, access credit, and foster economic and social empowerment.

- **Community-Based Organisations (CBOs):** Grassroots organizations formed by local communities to address specific local issues, such as health, education, or livelihood, through collective action and community participation.
- **Distinction:** SHGs are a specific form of CBO focused primarily on credit and livelihoods. All SHGs are CBOs, but not all CBOs are SHGs. CBOs cover a wider spectrum of sectors and institutional formats.
- **Women's Empowerment and Social Capital Formation**
 - Serve as platforms for **collective identity, leadership, and decision-making**.
 - Enable women to access entitlements, resist domestic violence, and engage in public life.
 - Foster **confidence, negotiation skills, and solidarity** among marginalised groups.
- **Health, Nutrition, and Sanitation**
 - Facilitate **awareness campaigns** on maternal-child health, immunisation, and hygiene.
 - Actively support **POSHAN Abhiyaan** and local health monitoring (e.g., weighing children, food intake tracking).
 - Participate in **Swachh Bharat campaigns**, toilet construction drives, and waste management.

Legal Status and Framework

- **SHGs:**
 - Typically informal but may register under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860**, or as cooperatives under state-specific **Cooperative Societies Acts**.
 - Linked to banks under the **SHG-Bank Linkage Programme** (initiated by NABARD) for access to credit without formal registration.
 - Governed by internal bylaws; no mandatory external audits unless registered or receiving government funds.
- **CBOs:**
 - Registered as societies under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860**, trusts under the **Indian Trusts Act, 1882**, or as **Section 8 Companies** under the **Companies Act, 2013**.
 - Subject to **Income Tax Act, 1961** for tax exemptions (Sections 12A and 80G) and **FCRA, 2010** for foreign funds.
 - Must comply with **NGO-DARPAN** registration for government grants and adhere to financial audits.
- **Disaster Preparedness and Community Resilience**
 - Engage in **relief coordination**, distribution of essentials, and post-disaster recovery.
 - Mobilised during **COVID-19** for mask-making, community kitchens, and migrant support.
 - Build long-term resilience through diversified livelihoods and risk-mitigation training.
- **Natural Resource Management and Environmental Action**
 - CBOs involved in **watershed development, afforestation, rainwater harvesting**, and promotion of sustainable agriculture.
 - SHGs promote **eco-friendly practices** such as organic farming and clean energy adoption.
- **Local Governance and Accountability**
 - SHG members increasingly participate in **Gram Sabhas**, contribute to **village development plans**, and act as **social auditors**.
 - CBOs monitor service delivery under schemes like MGNREGA, PDS, and school mid-day meals.
 - Help democratise planning and ensure bottom-up accountability.
- **Skilling and Education**
 - Promote **functional literacy, digital education**, and vocational training for rural women and youth.

Areas of Intervention

- **Livelihoods and Financial Inclusion**
 - SHGs promote **internal savings and credit access**, enabling members to invest in livelihood activities.
 - Support **micro-enterprises** in agriculture, dairy, tailoring, food processing, etc.
 - Enabled by **bank linkages and interest subvention schemes** under DAY-NRLM and state missions.

- Act as implementation arms for schemes like **DDU-GKY, PMKVY**, and state-run livelihood missions.

Challenges Associated with SHGs and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) in India

- **Financial and Resource Constraints**
 - **Limited access to formal credit:** Despite SHG-bank linkage programmes, many groups—especially in remote or tribal areas—struggle to secure timely and adequate loans.
 - **Over-dependence on government grants** and revolving funds leads to weak financial self-reliance.
 - Delays in fund disbursement and lack of financial planning hinder productive investments.
- **Capacity and Skill Gaps**
 - Many SHGs and CBOs **lack managerial, accounting, and entrepreneurial skills**, limiting their ability to scale activities.
 - Weak training and handholding support often reduce them to passive recipients of schemes rather than active implementers.
 - Leaders are frequently **underprepared** to navigate market linkages, digital platforms, or legal compliance.
- **Institutional Weakness and Fragmentation**
 - SHGs are often formed as **isolated entities** without linkages to federations or larger institutions, weakening bargaining power.
 - Overlapping CBOs (health committees, forest groups, SHGs) sometimes lead to **duplication of functions** and poor coordination.
 - Lack of standardisation in practices and institutional protocols creates uneven quality across states.
- **Elite Capture and Internal Inequities**
 - Dominance by local elites or more educated members can lead to **exclusion of the poorest or socially marginalised**, such as Dalits, Adivasis, or single women
 - In some cases, leadership remains concentrated and **rotational leadership norms** are not followed.
 - Gender-based discrimination persists in mixed-gender or male-led groups.

- **Bureaucratic Interference and Political Co-optation**

- Political actors often **interfere in group formation, leadership selection, or fund allocation**, weakening autonomy.
- SHGs and federations are sometimes used as vote banks rather than development platforms.
- Excessive bureaucratic control under livelihood missions may dilute grassroots ownership.

- **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Accountability Deficit**

- Many groups **lack robust monitoring mechanisms**, leading to poor record-keeping, fund misuse, and irregular meetings
- Social audits are either absent or non-functional in many states.
- **Lack of digital systems** or MIS integration in remote areas reduces transparency and scalability.

- **Market Access and Value Chain Limitations**

- Despite producing goods or services, SHGs struggle with **branding, packaging, and marketing**.
- **Limited access to e-commerce platforms**, cold storage, or processing units prevents income enhancement.
- Inadequate convergence with schemes like PMFME or e-NAM reduces economic viability.

Case studies

Kudumbashree - Women-Led Community Development in Kerala

Launched in 1998 by the Government of Kerala, **Kudumbashree** is one of India's most successful women-led community development models. It functions as a **three-tier community network**—Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs), Area Development Societies (ADS), and Community Development Societies (CDS)—with over 45 lakh women members. Kudumbashree integrates **microfinance, livelihood promotion, and social development**, enabling women to access credit, start enterprises, and participate in local governance. It has successfully converged with state schemes and Panchayati Raj Institutions,

showcasing how **institutionalised SHG federations** can drive **gender empowerment, poverty alleviation, and participatory development** at scale.

Jeevika - Bihar's Model for Livelihood Empowerment

Jeevika, launched under the **Bihar Rural Livelihoods Project** in 2006 with support from the World Bank, has emerged as a model for **community-driven poverty alleviation**. It focuses on forming and federating **women-led Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** to promote financial inclusion, social mobilisation, and livelihood diversification. As of 2024, Jeevika has mobilised over **12 million rural women**, enabling access to microcredit, skills training, agricultural productivity support, and social protection schemes. The initiative has also integrated with **DAY-NRLM**, Panchayati Raj Institutions, and various state departments, demonstrating how **institutional convergence and women's collective action** can lead to large-scale development outcomes in low-income states.

3. Role of Donors, Charities, and Philanthropic Institutions in Development

Definition

Donors, charities, and philanthropic institutions refer to entities—both international and domestic—that provide **financial, technical, and strategic support** for development initiatives. While **donors** primarily offer structured funding (bilateral or multilateral), **charities and philanthropic organisations** often pursue mission-driven, flexible interventions in sectors like education, health, sanitation, and gender equity. Their growing presence reflects a shift from state-dominated development models to **multi-actor ecosystems**.

Key Donors and Philanthropic Foundations in Development

Institution	Type	Key Focus Areas
USAID	Bilateral Donor	Health, education, disaster response, climate resilience
DFID (now FCDO)	Bilateral Donor	Gender equality, rural livelihoods, infrastructure
JICA	Bilateral Donor	Infrastructure, skill development, transport
GIZ	Bilateral Donor	Renewable energy, governance, environment
World Bank	Multilateral Donor	Rural/urban development, livelihoods, education, sanitation
Asian Development Bank (ADB)	Multilateral Donor	Urban transport, infrastructure, urban governance
UNDP	Multilateral Donor	Poverty alleviation, SDGs, democratic governance, gender equality
WHO / UNICEF	Multilateral Donor	Health systems, immunisation, child and maternal health
Tata Trusts	Philanthropy	Rural development, healthcare, water management
Azim Premji Foundation	Philanthropy	Education, governance, philanthropy

Infosys Foundation	Philanthropy	Arts, education, rural infrastructure
Reliance Foundation	Philanthropy	Rural transformation, health, sports
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Philanthropy	Health, sanitation, financial inclusion
Ford Foundation	Philanthropy	Social justice, civil society, inclusive development

Areas of Intervention by Donors, Charities, and Philanthropic Institutions

- **Public Health and Sanitation**
 - Support for **disease control programmes** (e.g., HIV/AIDS, TB, COVID-19).
 - Interventions in **maternal-child health**, immunisation, nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).
 - **Example:** Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's work in WASH and family planning.
- **Education and Skilling**
 - Focus on **school infrastructure, teacher training, digital education**, and girls' education.
 - Promotion of **vocational skills and employability** among youth.
 - **Example:** Azim Premji Foundation's systemic interventions in government school education.
- **Rural Development and Livelihoods**
 - Investments in **agriculture, irrigation, micro-enterprises, and income diversification**.
 - Capacity-building of SHGs and community institutions.
 - **Example:** Tata Trusts' work in rural livelihoods and watershed development.
- **Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality**
 - Programmes on **gender-based violence, leadership, and rights awareness**.
 - Support for **economic empowerment through skilling and financial inclusion**.
 - **Example:** DFID-supported gender equity programmes in states like Bihar and Odisha.

- **Infrastructure and Urban Development**
 - Funding for **housing, urban sanitation, public transport, and smart city initiatives**.
 - Technical assistance for city planning and public-private partnerships.
 - **Example:** JICA's support for metro rail systems and infrastructure corridors.
- **Environment and Climate Change**
 - Interventions in **renewable energy, natural resource management, climate adaptation, and disaster resilience**.
 - Support for **policy reforms and sustainable practices**.
 - **Example:** GIZ's projects on climate-smart agriculture and green energy.
- **Governance and Institution Building**
 - Support for **strengthening local governance, decentralisation, transparency, and capacity development**.
 - Tools for **monitoring, evaluation, and outcome-based planning**.
 - **Example:** UNDP's collaboration with India's Aspirational Districts Programme.
- **Humanitarian Relief and Disaster Response**
 - Rapid mobilisation of **relief materials, funds, and health services** during natural disasters or pandemics.
 - Long-term **rehabilitation and rebuilding of infrastructure and livelihoods**.
 - **Example:** Reliance Foundation's role in COVID-19 crisis response.

Challenges Associated with Donors, Charities, and Philanthropic Institutions in India

- **Donor-Driven Priorities**
 - Programmes are often **shaped by donor agendas** rather than local community needs or national development priorities.
 - May lead to a **supply-driven approach**, with fragmented and short-term interventions rather than sustainable development.
 - Risks of **overlooking marginalised groups** if funding metrics do not align with grassroots realities.
- **Fragmentation and Lack of Coordination**
 - **Multiple agencies operate independently**, leading to duplication of efforts and inefficient resource utilisation.

- Poor convergence with government schemes or local plans reduces effectiveness.
- Lack of common platforms for knowledge-sharing and policy alignment.
- **Limited Accountability and Transparency**
 - **Charities and philanthropic bodies**, especially those not working with government funds, face limited regulatory oversight.
 - Absence of mandatory **social audits** or public disclosures in many cases.
 - Inconsistent monitoring and reporting standards across institutions.
- **Foreign Funding and Regulatory Concerns**
 - Tensions over **foreign influence on domestic policymaking**, especially in sensitive areas like environment, governance, or minority rights.
 - **FCRA compliance issues**: Several NGOs have lost their registration due to procedural lapses or alleged political bias.
 - The 2020 FCRA amendments introduced stricter conditions—capping administrative expenses at 20%, banning sub-granting—affecting smaller organisations dependent on larger intermediaries.
- **Urban and Elite Bias**
 - Many philanthropic initiatives remain **urban-centric**, focusing on visible, scalable, or media-friendly interventions.
 - Rural, tribal, and conflict-affected areas receive less sustained attention or investment.
 - Tendency to focus on **measurable, quantifiable outcomes**, neglecting complex social change processes.
- **Risk of Depoliticising Development**
 - Philanthropic approaches may promote **technical fixes over structural change**, avoiding issues like land rights, labour justice, or caste-based exclusion.
 - This can weaken the transformative potential of development by **ignoring power relations and social movements**.
- **Compliance and Legal Ambiguity**
 - Differences in how **CSR funds, foreign grants, and domestic donations** are regulated leads to operational uncertainty.

- Small grassroots organisations may lack legal literacy or administrative capacity to comply with complex regulations.

4. Role of Institutional Stakeholders in Development

Overview

Institutional stakeholders play a critical role in India's development landscape by serving as **intermediaries between the state and society**. These actors—including constitutional bodies like Panchayats, statutory collectives like cooperatives, community institutions, and knowledge partners—are vital for **localised planning, democratic participation, service delivery, and innovation**. Their institutional nature lends credibility, continuity, and scalability to the development process.

Key Institutional Stakeholders & their Intervention in Development

- **Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)**
 - **Local Governance and Planning**: Constitutionally mandated to prepare and implement development plans.
 - **Scheme Implementation**: Key role in executing schemes like MGNREGA, PMAY, SBM, and NRLM.
 - **Participatory Democracy**: Gram Sabhas and Ward Committees act as platforms for citizen voice and accountability.
 - **Social Audits and Monitoring**: Conduct audits of funds and programmes at the village level.
- **Cooperative Societies**
 - **Collective Economic Empowerment**: Facilitate credit, procurement, and marketing for members.
 - **Agriculture and Allied Sectors**: Dairy (e.g., AMUL), sugar, fisheries, and housing cooperatives support small producers.
 - **Social Security Services**: Provide housing, health, and insurance services in some sectors.
- **Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)**

- **Aggregation and Market Access:** Pool produce from small farmers for better bargaining and sale.
- **Value Addition and Branding:** Processing and packaging of products to increase returns.
- **Input Procurement:** Bulk purchase of seeds, fertilisers, and farm equipment.
- **Government Convergence:** Supported under schemes like the Central Sector Scheme to create 10,000 FPOs.
- **Faith-Based Organisations and Religious Charities**
 - **Service Delivery:** Run schools, hospitals, mid-day meals, and shelters based on community donations. **Akshaya Patra Foundation** – Mid-Day Meal Scheme implementation.
 - **Disaster Relief and Food Security:** Mobilise volunteers and resources quickly in crises (e.g., COVID-19).
 - **Welfare Targeting:** Often fill gaps in regions with weak state presence or deep social exclusion.
- **Media**
 - **Awareness and Advocacy:** Highlights development deficits, success stories, and policy gaps.
 - **Accountability Mechanism:** Investigative journalism promotes transparency in governance.
 - **Behavioural Change Campaigns:** Drives public discourse on sanitation, health, environment, etc.
- **Academia and Policy Think Tanks**
 - **Policy Formulation and Review:** Provide data-driven inputs to ministries and states.
 - **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E):** Assess impact of schemes (e.g., Aspirational Districts Programme).
 - **Capacity Building:** Train local administrators, social workers, and elected representatives.

Challenges Associated with Institutional Stakeholders in Development

Stakeholders	Challenges
Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and ULBs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of fiscal autonomy and own revenue generation ● Capacity deficits (technical, human resources) ● Political interference and delayed elections ● Tokenism in Gram Sabhas and ward committees
Cooperative Societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bureaucratic control and weak member participation ● Governance issues and elite capture ● Financial mismanagement and corruption ● Lag in modernisation and professionalism
Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limited capital, managerial skills, and business orientation ● Inadequate market access and branding capacity ● Overdependence on government and promoting agencies
Faith-Based Organisations and Religious Charities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of formal oversight and audits ● Risk of religious bias or exclusionary practices ● Increased scrutiny under FCRA and political suspicion
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decline in editorial independence due to corporate/political influence ● Sensationalism over developmental issues ● Underrepresentation of rural and marginalised voices

Academia and Think Tanks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disconnection from grassroots realities • Funding and autonomy challenges • Research not translated into accessible or actionable policy inputs
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	media's role in accountability and welfare delivery.
Academia and Think Tanks	NITI Aayog – Aspirational Districts Programme – Uses data from think tanks like IDInsight and collaborations with NGOs to rank and monitor district-level performance in health, education, and agriculture.

Case Studies for Institutional Stakeholders in Development

Stakeholder	Case Study
Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)	Hiware Bazar, Maharashtra – Under Sarpanch Popatrao Pawar, the village used participatory planning, water conservation, and convergence of schemes to become drought-free and prosperous.
Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)	Indore Municipal Corporation, Madhya Pradesh – Achieved 7 consecutive years as India's cleanest city under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan through citizen engagement and decentralised waste systems.
Cooperative Societies	AMUL (Gujarat) – A classic example of a dairy cooperative empowering millions of rural women and small farmers, with decentralised procurement and centralised processing/marketing.
Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)	Chitrakoot FPO, Madhya Pradesh – Enabled marginalised farmers to collectively market pulses and oilseeds, access input subsidies, and enhance bargaining power in local mandis.
Faith-Based Organisations	Ramakrishna Mission (Pan-India) – Engaged in education, rural development, and disaster relief through its network of schools, health camps, and spiritual-volunteer service.
Media	The Hindu's ground reporting on MGNREGA delays – Helped push government responsiveness to wage payment backlogs, highlighting

Synergistic and Convergent Development Models Overview

Development challenges in India are multidimensional—requiring coordinated action across sectors, institutions, and stakeholders. Synergistic and convergent models aim to **integrate efforts of government, private sector, civil society, and communities** to maximise impact, minimise duplication, and enhance service delivery. These models reflect a shift from isolated interventions to **holistic, collaborative approaches**.

Key Features of Synergistic Development Models

- **Multi-Stakeholder Involvement:** Government departments, NGOs, donors, corporates, SHGs, and academia collaborate on shared objectives.
- **Cross-Sectoral Planning:** Combines inputs across sectors like health, nutrition, education, and livelihoods.
- **Resource Pooling:** Financial, technical, and human resources are leveraged from multiple sources.
- **Decentralised Implementation:** Local bodies and community organisations act as executing partners.
- **Result-Based Monitoring:** Emphasis on measurable outcomes using technology and real-time data.

Key Models and Examples

- **Public-Private-People Partnership (PPPP)**
 - An expanded model of PPP where **citizen engagement and community ownership** are embedded into planning and execution.

- Example: **Swachh Bharat Mission** – involved ULBs, private firms (waste management), NGOs (awareness), and citizens (behaviour change).
- **Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP)**
 - Flagship initiative by **NITI Aayog**, targeting 112 underdeveloped districts.
 - Converges efforts across **health, nutrition, education, agriculture, water, and infrastructure**.
 - Implements **real-time data monitoring**, district-level innovation cells, and NGO partnerships.
 - Encourages **competitive federalism** through performance-based ranking.
- **Convergence in Rural Livelihoods**
 - Example: **DAY-NRLM + MGNREGA + Poshan Abhiyaan**
 - SHGs mobilised under NRLM engage in nutrition-sensitive farming, while MGNREGA supports creation of agricultural assets.
 - Health and ICDS functionaries converge for awareness and behaviour change.
- **CSR-Government-NGO Collaboration**
 - Corporate funds under CSR are channelled into development priorities through NGO execution, aligned with government schemes.
 - Example: **Vedanta Foundation + Government of Rajasthan + NGOs** in maternal and child health in tribal areas.
- **Integrated Tribal Development Model**
 - Multi-sectoral interventions involving **PESA gram sabhas, tribal cooperatives, forest departments, and NGOs**.
 - Focus on land rights, forest-based livelihoods, education, and health.
 - Example: **Livelihood and Enterprise Development Project (LEDP)** in Odisha tribal belts.

Value Addition For Unit 3

Keywords : Participatory Planning, Rights-Based Development, Capability Enhancement, Sustainable Development, Bottom-Up Governance, Non-State Actors, Community Empowerment, Triple Partnership, Institutional Accountability, Donor Dependency, Local Capacity

Building, Technical Support Mechanism, CSR-NGO Convergence, SHG Federation, Elite Capture, Financial Inclusion, Regulatory Oversight, FCRA Compliance, Section-8 Company, Community-Based Organisation (CBO), Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), Fragmentation of Interventions, Scalability Constraints, Philanthropic Innovation, Public Private People Partnership (PPPP)

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. The rise of non-state actors has reshaped the development landscape in India. Examine the evolving role of NGOs, SHGs, and philanthropic foundations in this context.
2. Community-based organisations are increasingly being recognised as vehicles of participatory development. Critically assess their contribution and challenges.
3. Donor-driven development often undermines grassroots priorities. Do you agree? Substantiate with examples from India's development experience.
4. Development is no longer the exclusive domain of the state. Discuss the relevance of synergistic and convergence-based models in contemporary governance.
5. Evaluate the impact of legal frameworks like FCRA, CSR regulations, and NGO-DARPAN on the functioning and autonomy of development organisations in India.

Acronyms

1. ENGAGE - Core Roles of NGOs in Development

- **E** – Empowerment of marginalized
- **N** – Non-state service delivery
- **G** – Governance advocacy
- **A** – Awareness generation
- **G** – Grassroots mobilisation
- **E** – Education, health, and environment initiatives

→ "To ENGAGE the grassroots effectively, NGOs must perform across these functions."

2. SHINE - Functions of SHGs in Development

- **S** - Social capital & solidarity
- **H** - Health & nutrition awareness
- **I** - Income generation & microcredit
- **N** - Negotiation power in governance
- **E** - Empowerment, especially of women

→ "SHINE reflects how SHGs light the path to bottom-up development."

3. DONORS - Criticism of Donor-Driven Development

- **D** - Donor agenda imposition
- **O** - Overdependence on external aid
- **N** - Neglect of local needs
- **O** - Operational fragmentation
- **R** - Reduced community ownership
- **S** - Short-term, supply-driven projects

→ "Unchecked DONORS may distort priorities and dilute impact."

4. TRUSTED - Features of Effective Philanthropy & NGOs

- **T** - Transparency in fund use
- **R** - Results-based approach
- **U** - Understanding local needs
- **S** - Scalability and innovation
- **T** - Technology integration
- **E** - Equity focus
- **D** - Democratic engagement

→ "To be TRUSTED, development actors must balance performance and participation."

6. LOCUS - Institutional Stakeholders in Development

- **L** - Local Bodies (PRIs/ULBs)
- **O** - Organisations (NGOs, SHGs, CBOs)
- **C** - Cooperatives & FPOs
- **U** - Universities & Think Tanks
- **S** - Spiritual/faith-based groups

→ "Development has its LOCUS in a shared institutional ecosystem."

Readymade Templates

1. Development Challenges & Reforms **Industry:** **Stakeholders,**

Key Stakeholders in Development	Key Points
Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service delivery (education, health, environment) • Policy advocacy • Community mobilization • Social audits & RTI activism
Self-Help Groups (SHGs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women empowerment through microfinance • Livelihood generation (e.g., DAY-NRLM) • Grassroots democratic participation
Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local governance support • Monitoring government schemes • Conflict resolution & community leadership
Donors & Charities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding support for welfare programs • International aid (e.g., WHO, UNICEF) • CSR-based developmental initiatives
Faith-Based Organizations & Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relief work during disasters • Running schools, orphanages, and hospitals • Bridging trust gaps in conflict areas
Institutional Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NITI Aayog, Ministry of Rural Development, NABARD • Multilateral agencies (UNDP, World Bank)

- Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)

2.Challenges in the Development Industry

Structural Issues	Non-Structural Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented coordination among actors • Lack of legal regulation & transparency • Poor financial and impact audits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust deficit between government and NGOs • Political interference • Tokenistic community participation • Urban bias in donor focus

3. Way Forward for Strengthening Development Industry

Short-Term Measures	Long-Term Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen FCRA compliance and NGO accountability • Build capacity of SHGs & CBOs • Encourage PPP and CSR convergence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutionalise participatory development (e.g., Gram Sabhas, Village Development Plans) • Leverage digital platforms for transparency (e.g., NGO-DARPAN) • Foster trust-based, long-term collaboration between State and civil society • Promote outcome-based funding and performance-linked metrics

Navigating the Syllabus: What You Need to Know

<p>1. Conceptual Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerability, Welfare State, Social Justice • Rationale for state intervention (Equity vs Equality, Inclusive Development) <p>2. Tools for Welfare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted Welfare Schemes (e.g., MGNREGA, ICDS) • Legal Safeguards (e.g., SC/ST Act, FRA) • Institutional Mechanisms (e.g., Commissions, Ministries) • Affirmative Action (e.g., Reservations, Scholarships) <p>3. Group-Specific Coverage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduled Castes (SCs): Historical injustice, reservations, sub-classification, SCSP, major schemes • Scheduled Tribes (STs): Isolation, FRA, PESA, EMRS, PMJVM, habitat rights • Other Backward Classes (OBCs): Reservation, sub-categorisation, educational & economic schemes • Women and Children: Constitutional protections, key schemes (BBBP, PMMVY, POSHAN, POCSO), challenges and reforms • Elderly, PwDs, Minorities & Transgender Persons: Key laws (e.g., RPwD Act, SMILE), welfare schemes, best practices, and emerging issues <p>4. Recent Developments</p>
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UPSC Previous Year Questions

Question	Nature of Question	Core Demand
Reforming the government delivery system through the Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme is a progressive step, but it has its limitations too. Comment. (2022)	DBT + Welfare Delivery Reform	Comment on the advantages and limitations of DBT in reforming welfare delivery systems.
The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 remains only a legal document without intense sensitization of government functionaries and citizens regarding disability. Comment. (2022)	PwD + Legal vs Social Implementation	Assess how lack of awareness and sensitization limits implementation of the Act.
Besides the welfare schemes, India needs deft management of inflation and unemployment to serve the poor and the underprivileged sections of the society. Discuss. (2022)	Poverty Alleviation + Macro Policy	Discuss how inflation and unemployment management complements welfare schemes in aiding the poor.

Though women in post-Independent India have excelled in various fields, the social attitude towards women and feminist movement has been patriarchal. What interventions can help change this milieu? (2021)	Women Empowerment + Social Change	Suggest interventions beyond education and schemes to change patriarchal attitudes.
The reservation of seats for women in the institutions of local self-government has had a limited impact on the patriarchal character of the Indian Political Process. Comment. (2019)	Women's Reservation + Political Patriarchy	Comment on the limitations of women's reservation in changing patriarchal structures.
Performance of welfare schemes that are implemented for vulnerable sections is not so effective due to absence of their awareness and active involvement at all stages of policy process. Discuss. (2019)	Policy Design + Community Participation	Discuss how lack of awareness and participation hampers welfare scheme effectiveness.
Multiplicity of various commissions for the vulnerable sections of the society leads to problems of overlapping jurisdiction and duplication of functions. Is it better to merge all commissions into an umbrella Human Rights Commission? Argue your case. (2018)	Institutional Reform + Vulnerable Sections	Evaluate pros and cons of merging multiple commissions under a unified body.
Does the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ensure effective mechanism for empowerment and inclusion of the intended beneficiaries in the society? Discuss. (2017)	PwD Empowerment + Legal Mechanism	Discuss the effectiveness of the Act's provisions for empowerment and inclusion.
Examine the main provisions of the National Child Policy and throw light on the status of its implementation. (2016)	Child Policy + Implementation	List provisions and evaluate actual on-ground implementation.
Do government's schemes for uplifting vulnerable and backward communities by protecting required social resources for them, lead to their exclusion in establishing businesses in urban economies? (2014)	Welfare vs Urban Economic Participation	Critically assess how protective measures may limit urban entrepreneurial integration.

Introduction

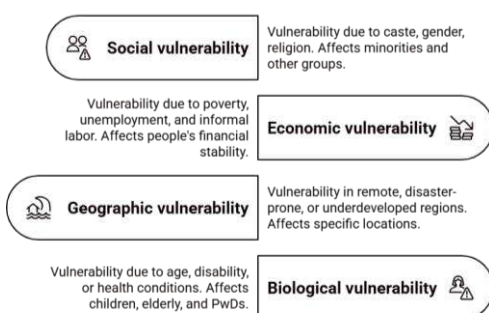
India's commitment to being a welfare state is rooted in its constitutional vision of justice, equality, and dignity for all. Despite sustained economic growth, deep social and structural inequalities continue to marginalise certain sections of society. Addressing such exclusion demands a proactive role of the state through **targeted welfare policies, legal protections, and institutional support** to ensure inclusive and equitable development.

Understanding Vulnerability, Welfare State, and Social Justice

• What is Vulnerability?

- **Vulnerability** refers to the diminished capacity of an individual or group to anticipate, cope with, resist, and recover from adverse events or structural disadvantages. It may arise due to **social, economic, geographical, political, or biological factors** and results in **exclusion from basic opportunities and entitlements**.
- **"The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members."** – Mahatma Gandhi. This reflects the ethical imperative for a state to prioritise the needs of those most at risk of exclusion and marginalisation.

Vulnerability types



• Concept of Welfare State

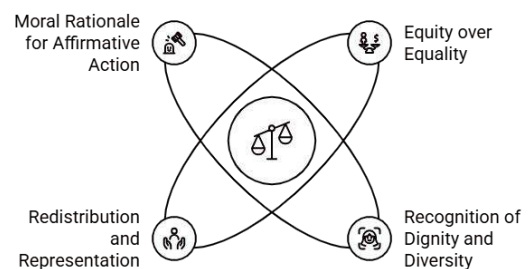
- A **welfare state** is one where the government plays a key role in ensuring the **economic and social well-being of its citizens**, especially the marginalised. It goes beyond mere law and order to guarantee **minimum standards of living, social security, health, education, and equality of opportunity**.

- Enshrined in India's **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs)** under Part IV.
- Embodied in **Article 38(1)**: "The State shall strive to promote the welfare of the people..."
- Supported by institutional mechanisms, affirmative action, and targeted schemes.
- India's post-independence planning and rights-based legislation (e.g., RTE Act, MGNREGA, NFSA) are expressions of this vision.
- **"The idea of a welfare state is that every citizen is guaranteed a minimum standard of living."** – T.H. Marshall. This reflects the importance of **state-led social protection** to uphold **equality, dignity, and social justice** for all citizens.

• Social Justice

- **Social Justice** refers to the **fair and just distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society**, and the removal of institutional and historical disadvantages.
- **"Justice denied anywhere diminishes justice everywhere."** — Martin Luther King Jr. This reflects the idea that **injustice in any part of society threatens the moral foundation of the entire system**, underscoring the **interconnectedness of rights, equality, and social justice** in a democracy.

Pillars of Social Justice



Interconnectedness of the Three Concepts

Concept	Role in Development
Vulnerability	Identifies who needs support and why
Welfare State	Provides the institutional and policy mechanisms to address vulnerabilities
Social Justice	Guides the moral and constitutional rationale behind welfare interventions

Rationale for State Intervention: Equity vs Equality, Inclusive Development

- **Constitutional Mandate**
The Indian Constitution obliges the state to ensure justice and equality through the **Preamble, Fundamental Rights (Articles 14–18), and Directive Principles of State Policy (Articles 38, 39, 46).**
- **Correcting Historical Injustice**
Centuries of caste, gender, and regional discrimination necessitate state-driven policies to **level the playing field** for disadvantaged groups.
- **Limitations of Market Mechanisms**
Free markets often **exclude the poor and marginalised**, making state welfare essential for equitable access to health, education, and employment.
- **Equity vs Equality**
 - **Equality** offers the same treatment to all, which can perpetuate disadvantage.
 - **Equity** ensures differential treatment based on **need and historical marginalisation**, promoting fairness.
- **Justification for Affirmative Action**
Equity-based interventions like **reservations, targeted subsidies, and legal safeguards** are justified to bring the most excluded into the development mainstream.
- **Inclusive Development as a Goal**
Development should **include all sections**, especially those traditionally left out—such as SCs, STs, minorities, women, PwDs, and the poor.

Types of Interventions:

- **Welfare Schemes**
 - Targeted programmes launched by the Centre and States to address specific needs of vulnerable groups such as **scholarships, pensions, employment, housing, nutrition, and health care.**
 - **Examples:** MGNREGA (rural employment), PMAY (housing), ICDS (child nutrition), Ujjwala (clean cooking for women).
- **Legal Safeguards and Rights-Based Laws**
 - Statutory enactments that guarantee legal protection, prohibit discrimination, and ensure access to entitlements.

- **Examples:** SC/ST (PoA) Act, Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, POCSO Act, Maintenance and Welfare of Parents Act.
- **Institutional Mechanisms**
 - Specialised bodies that implement, monitor, and advise on welfare and inclusion of marginalised communities.
 - **Examples:** NITI Aayog, National Commissions (for SCs, STs, OBCs, Women, Minorities, PwDs), State Welfare Departments.
- **Affirmative Action and Positive Discrimination**
 - Constitutionally backed interventions that provide **preferential treatment to historically disadvantaged communities** to ensure equal opportunity.
 - **Examples:** Caste-based reservations in education and employment (Articles 15(4), 16(4)), scholarships for SC/ST/OBCs.
- **Financial and Institutional Support Models**
 - Targeted funding through budgetary allocations (e.g., SC Sub-Plan, Tribal Sub-Plan), and specialised financial institutions like **NSFDC, NBCFDC, TRIFED, and SIDBI.**

List of Vulnerable Groups in India

- Scheduled Castes (SCs)
- Scheduled Tribes (STs)
- Other Backward Classes (OBCs)
- Women
- Children
- Elderly (Senior Citizens)
- Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)
- Religious and Linguistic Minorities
- Transgender Persons

Note:

We are studying each of these vulnerable groups in detail through **separate chapters**, focusing on their specific welfare schemes, legal protections, institutional mechanisms, challenges, and reform suggestions.

Introduction

Scheduled Castes (SCs), historically subjected to untouchability and systemic exclusion, represent one of the most vulnerable social groups in India. Despite constitutional safeguards and decades of affirmative action, they continue to face barriers in access to education, employment, housing, and dignity. State intervention through **welfare schemes, legal protections, and institutional mechanisms** remains crucial to promote their inclusion and social justice in practice.

Scheduled Castes (SCs): Background and Constitutional Basis

- **Definition** : Scheduled Castes are communities notified under **Article 341 of the Constitution**, which empowers the President to specify castes deemed historically disadvantaged due to **untouchability and caste-based exclusion**.
- **Demographic Profile** : As per **Census 2011**, SCs constitute approximately **16.6% of India's population** (over 200 million people), predominantly concentrated in states like **Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, and Tamil Nadu**.
- **Constitutional Recognition and Safeguards**
 - **Article 15(4)**: Enables special provisions for the advancement of SCs.
 - **Article 17**: Abolishes untouchability and makes its practice a punishable offence.
 - **Article 46**: Directs the State to promote educational and economic interests of SCs and protect them from social injustice and exploitation.
 - **Fifth Schedule**: Applies to SC/ST welfare in Scheduled Areas.
 - **Reservation provisions**: Articles 16(4), 243D, 243T, and 330–332 provide for **reservations in education, public employment, and political representation**.
- **Historical Context** : SCs have historically been excluded from land ownership, literacy, temple

entry, and water access, and were forced into degrading occupations such as manual scavenging. **B.R. Ambedkar**, a key architect of the Constitution, emphasised the **need for state-led empowerment and constitutional protection** to dismantle caste hierarchies.

Key Welfare Initiatives for Scheduled Castes (SCs) In India

- **Reservation in Education, Employment, and Legislature**
 - Constitutional provisions under **Articles 15(4), 16(4), 330–332** ensure that Scheduled Castes receive reserved seats in educational institutions, public employment, and legislatures. This is aimed at correcting historical exclusion and providing equal access to opportunities in governance and development.
- **Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan (SCSP)**
 - Introduced during the Sixth Five-Year Plan, this plan mandates that Central and State governments allocate funds **proportionate to the SC population** for their targeted development. SCSP ensures exclusive schemes in sectors like **education, health, housing, livelihood, and skill development**.
- **Stand-Up India Scheme**
 - Launched in 2016, the scheme mandates every bank branch to offer loans between ₹10 lakh and ₹1 crore to at least **one SC/ST and one woman borrower** for setting up greenfield enterprises. It promotes **entrepreneurship and financial inclusion** of SCs in the non-farm sector.
- **Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarships for SC Students**
 - These centrally sponsored schemes support school and college-going SC students by covering **tuition fees, examination fees, and maintenance allowance**, reducing dropout

rates and promoting higher education among SC youth.

- **National Fellowship for Scheduled Castes (NFSC)**
 - A UGC-funded programme providing **financial assistance for M.Phil and Ph.D** studies to SC candidates. It helps ensure representation of SC scholars in academia and research institutions.
- **Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY)**
 - An umbrella scheme that merged multiple standalone schemes targeting SC development. It supports **hostel construction, scholarships, coaching centres, NGO support, skill development, and economic empowerment** initiatives for SC communities.
- **Special Central Assistance to SCSP (SCA to SCSP)**
 - A grant from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to supplement state efforts under SCSP. It focuses on **self-employment, income generation, and community asset creation** for Below Poverty Line (BPL) SC households.
- **Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS)**
 - Offers **capital subsidy, skill training, and concessional loans** to help manual scavengers and their dependents transition into safe, sustainable livelihoods, thereby promoting **dignity and rehabilitation**.
- **Ambedkar Social Innovation and Incubation Mission (ASIIM)**
 - Launched under the **Venture Capital Fund for SCs**, this mission encourages SC youth to become entrepreneurs by offering **seed funding, incubation, mentorship, and market linkage support** to their startups.

Statutory Protection for Scheduled Castes (SCs)

Act / Law	Key Provisions
SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 (Amended in 2015 & 2018) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides legal deterrence against caste-based violence; enables faster justice delivery through special procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defines atrocities against SCs (e.g. social boycott, land grab, humiliation). • Establishes Special Courts and Exclusive Public Prosecutors. • Ensures victim compensation and witness protection. • 2018 Amendment removed requirement of prior approval for arrest of public servants.
Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First post-Constitutional law to directly address caste discrimination in civil life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penalizes untouchability in all forms. • Offences are cognizable and non-compoundable. • Empowers states to appoint special officers for implementation.
Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses occupational caste-based exploitation; ensures dignity and economic reintegration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibits manual scavenging and construction of insanitary latrines. • Provides for rehabilitation, alternative employment, and financial aid. • Mandates safety for sewer/septic tank workers.
Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admission) Act, 2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides 15% reservation for SC students in all centrally

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates access to higher education for SC students in elite institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> funded higher education institutions.
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Institutional Mechanisms for SC Welfare

Institution	Key Functions / Mandate
National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigates complaints regarding deprivation of SC rights Monitors implementation of safeguards Submits annual reports to the President Recommends measures for SC welfare
National Safai Karamchari Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides concessional loans and skill training Focuses on rehabilitation of manual scavengers and sanitation workers Implements schemes like <i>Swachhta Udyami Yojana</i>
National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides financial assistance for income generation, education, and skills Targets SCs living below double the poverty line Supports SC entrepreneurs via state agencies

State SC Commissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor implementation of SC welfare schemes at state level Handle atrocity complaints and grievances Advise state governments on policy matters
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJ&E)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulates policies and oversees implementation of SC welfare schemes Coordinates with states and line ministries Manages funds under SCSP, scholarships, rehab schemes

Key Challenges Faced by Scheduled Castes (SCs) in India

- Persisting Economic Inequality**
 - SCs form **16.6%** of India's population but own less than **7%** of the national wealth (Oxfam, 2022).
 - A large proportion remain landless—**over 71%** SC households own less than 0.01 hectares of land (NSS 70th Round).
 - Economic mobility is hampered by low access to capital, credit, and market networks.
- Entrenched Social Stigma and Everyday Untouchability**
 - Deep-rooted notions of purity-pollution still affect SCs' access to water sources, temples, and common dining spaces.
 - According to the survey by National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) around **over 1 in 4 rural households** admitted to practicing untouchability.
 - Social boycotts in villages remain an invisible but powerful tool of caste control.

- **High Vulnerability to Atrocities and Violence**

- Over **50,000 cases** of crimes against SCs were reported in 2022 alone (NCRB).
- Conviction rates under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act remain low and slow due to systemic caste bias and poor investigation.
- Women face double marginalization — as SCs and as females — especially in rural and semi-urban regions.

- **Poor Access to Quality Education**

- SC literacy rate stands at **66.1%**, far below the national average of **77.7%** (Census 2011).
- High dropout rates prevail beyond primary education, especially for SC girls, due to poverty, early marriage, and caste bias in schools.
- Presence of caste-based bullying and inadequate representation in elite higher education institutions (IITs, IIMs) limits inclusion.

- **Labour Market Discrimination and Precarious Work**

- Around **54%** of SC workers are casual labourers (PLFS 2022), often engaged in unsafe, low-paying, and stigmatized occupations.
- Wage gaps persist between SC and non-SC workers even for similar work.
- Limited access to skill development and formal jobs hampers upward mobility.

- **Lack of Political Empowerment Beyond Tokenism**

- Reservation ensures descriptive representation but not always substantive representation.
- Only **4%** of SC officers occupy senior bureaucratic roles (DoPT 2023).
- Political parties often field SC candidates only in reserved constituencies, limiting their broader leadership appeal.

- **Housing, Water, and Sanitation Deficits**

- Many SC settlements lack basic infrastructure like piped water, electricity, and pucca housing.
- As per NFHS-5, **over 40%** of SC households still lack access to improved sanitation facilities.
- Spatial segregation reinforces their exclusion from mainstream urban development.

- **Poor Health Outcomes and Systemic Neglect**

- SC communities exhibit **higher rates of child stunting, anemia, and maternal mortality** (NFHS-5).
- Inadequate access to health infrastructure and discriminatory attitudes in public hospitals compound health vulnerabilities.

- **Barriers in Accessing Justice and Legal Recourse**

- Victims face social pressure, intimidation, and non-cooperation from local police.
- Cases are often registered under weaker IPC sections rather than the SC/ST Act to dilute their seriousness.
- Judicial delays and low conviction rates undermine confidence in the legal system.

- **Discriminatory Delivery of Welfare Schemes**

- Despite being priority beneficiaries, many SCs report being denied full benefits of schemes like PMAY, MGNREGA, and PDS.
- Social audits have revealed caste bias in last-mile delivery and poor grievance redress mechanisms.

Way Forward: Scheduled Castes Welfare

- **Ensure Effective Enforcement of Laws:** Strengthen implementation of the SC/ST (PoA) Act with faster trials, functional Special Courts, and victim-witness protection.
- **Improve Educational Access and Retention:** Expand residential schools, ensure timely scholarship delivery, and bridge digital gaps in SC-dominated areas.
- **Enhance Economic Empowerment:** Promote skill training, credit linkages, and SC-led

entrepreneurship through targeted schemes like Stand-Up India and NSFD.

- **Eradicate Manual Scavenging:** Ensure full rehabilitation, skill training, and enforcement of mechanised sanitation practices under the 2013 Act.
- **Address Intersecting Marginalisation:** Frame policies specific to Dalit women and LGBTQ+ Dalits, ensuring inclusive access to welfare schemes.
- **Strengthen Institutional Delivery:** Improve SCSP fund utilisation, ensure convergence across ministries, and enhance scheme monitoring with real-time data.
- **Expand Legal and Digital Literacy:** Run awareness campaigns on rights and schemes, and improve access to online grievance redressal in SC habitations.

Recent Development

Sub-Classification of Scheduled Castes (SCs)

Context

- Recently, a **7-Judge Constitution Bench** of the Supreme Court, in the case *State of Punjab & Others v. Davinder Singh & Others (2024)*, held that **sub-classification within Scheduled Castes is constitutionally permissible**.
- This landmark judgment allows the government to create internal quotas within the 15% SC reservation to ensure equitable distribution among more and less backward SC communities.

What is Sub-Classification of SCs?

- It refers to dividing the **15% reservation quota** for SCs into **smaller categories** based on the relative social and educational backwardness of various SC sub-castes.
- The aim is to **prevent domination by relatively better-off SC communities** (like Chamars or Malas in some states) and provide opportunities to **most marginalised groups** (e.g., Madigas, Rellis, Valmikis).
- Sub-classification does **not alter the overall**

SC quota but redistributes benefits more equitably **within** it.

Advantages of Sub-Classification

- **Ensures Equitable Distribution** : Prevents cornering of benefits by dominant SC sub-castes, and ensures justice to historically neglected groups.
- **Recognises Internal Diversity** : Acknowledges that SCs are not a monolithic group and that internal hierarchies affect access to education, jobs, and political power.
- **Fulfil the Spirit of Social Justice** : Aligns with Articles **14, 15(4), and 16(4)**, promoting substantive equality and correcting inter-group imbalances.
- **Judicial Support** : The 2024 judgment reversed the earlier *E.V. Chinnaiah* ruling (2004), which had barred such internal classification, and empowers states to tailor affirmative action.
- **Responsive Policy-Making** : Allows states to respond to region-specific caste dynamics—e.g., **Telangana** and **Andhra Pradesh** already categorise SCs into Group A, B, C for reservations.

Challenges in Implementation

- **Lack of Comprehensive Data** : Reliable, disaggregated data on socio-economic status of sub-castes is limited. Efforts like **caste-based surveys** (e.g., Karnataka) face delays and political resistance.
- **Administrative Complexity** : Creating and enforcing internal quotas requires fresh laws, reservation rosters, and grievance redress mechanisms—posing logistical hurdles.
- **Risk of Fragmentation** : Critics argue it may **weaken Dalit solidarity**, deepen caste consciousness, and encourage intra-SC competition.
- **Creamy Layer Debate** : Questions arise about whether wealthier SC individuals should be excluded from internal sub-quotas, reviving the “creamy layer” controversy within SCs.
- **Political Manipulation** : There’s a risk that

sub-classification becomes an electoral strategy rather than a genuine tool of justice, especially during state elections.

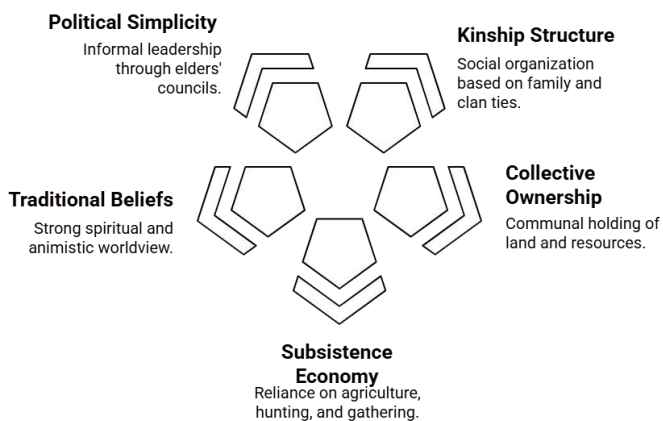
Conclusion

- The SC's verdict on sub-classification marks a **progressive shift from formal to substantive equality**, allowing affirmative action to be **better targeted**. However, its success will depend on **robust data, administrative efficiency, and careful balancing** between justice and social cohesion.

Introduction

Scheduled Tribes (STs), constituting about 8.6% of India's population (Census 2011), are among the most disadvantaged communities, marked by geographical isolation and socio-economic deprivation. Recognized under Article 342, their welfare is a constitutional and developmental priority, addressed through targeted schemes, legal safeguards, and institutional support.

Foundations of Tribal Society



Basic Profile of Scheduled Tribes (STs): A Short Overview

- **Population Share:** 10.45 crore (Census 2011) – around **8.6%** of India's total population.
- **Geographical Spread:** Concentrated in **central India (Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha)** and **Northeast (Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram)**; about **90% live in rural areas**.
- **Livelihood Patterns:** Predominantly dependent on **agriculture, forest produce, and wage labour**; limited access to formal economy.
- **Human Development:** Low literacy (59% vs. national average of 73%), high infant and maternal mortality, poor health and education indicators.
- **Vulnerability:** Frequent displacement due to mining, dams, and infrastructure projects; high incidence of poverty and malnutrition.
- **Cultural Diversity:** Over **700 officially recognized tribes**, with distinct languages, customs, and traditional knowledge systems.

Key Welfare Initiatives for Scheduled Tribes (STs) in India

- **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)**

- **Objective:** To provide quality residential education to ST children in remote and tribal areas from Class VI to XII.

- **Features:**

- Established in blocks with at least 20,000 tribal population and 50% ST concentration.
- Curriculum follows CBSE; integrated with sports, skill development, and local culture.

- **Progress:**

- As of 2023–24: 740+ EMRS sanctioned, ~400 operational.
- Target: One EMRS per eligible block by 2025–26.

- **Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana (VKY)**

- **Objective:** Holistic development of tribal communities through convergence of existing schemes and new initiatives.

- **Focus Areas:**

- Education, health, livelihoods, drinking water, forest rights, and access to infrastructure.
- Promotes institutional strengthening (e.g., TRIs, ITDPs, Gram Sabhas).

- **Limitation:** Lack of legal backing and poor convergence at field level.

- **Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Vikas Mission (PMJVM) (Launched in 2023–24 Budget)**

- **Subsumes** key tribal initiatives including EMRS and VDVK (Van Dhan Vikas Kendras).

- **Focus:** Sustainable livelihoods, entrepreneurship, digital literacy, and women's empowerment among STs.

- **Key Element:** Integration of STs with national value chains using **GI tagging, skill training, and SHG mobilisation**.

- **Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Minor Forest Produce (MFP)**

- **Implemented by:** TRIFED in partnership with State Implementing Agencies.

- **Objective:** To ensure fair pricing for tribal gatherers of MFPs like tendu leaves, sal seeds, mahua, etc.

- **Features:**

- 87 MFPs notified (as of 2023).
- Scheme includes Value Addition and market linkage via **Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs)**.

- **Impact:** Enhanced incomes for forest-dependent tribes, especially women.

- **Scholarship Schemes**

Scheme	Target Group
Pre-Matric Scholarship	ST students in Classes IX-X
Post-Matric Scholarship	ST students pursuing higher education
National Fellowship for ST Students	M.Phil./Ph.D. aspirants

- **Tribal Health and Nutrition Initiatives**

- **Poshan Abhiyan – ST Focus:** Special emphasis on tribal-dominated districts with high malnutrition.
- **Mobile Health Units:** Deployed in tribal areas under NHM to tackle geographic inaccessibility.
- **Sickle Cell Anemia Control Programme:** Targeted screening and treatment in tribal belts (e.g., Odisha, Maharashtra, Gujarat).

- **Forest Rights-linked Livelihood Schemes**

- **Support after FRA Titles:** Skill development, irrigation, agricultural toolkits, and bank credit to STs receiving land under **Forest Rights Act, 2006**.
- **Integration with MGNREGA:** Priority funding for development of FRA land titles.

- **Stand-Up India and Entrepreneurship Schemes**

- **Credit support:** Bank loans between ₹10 lakh- ₹1 crore for ST entrepreneurs.
- **TRIFED-backed e-commerce:** Marketing tribal art, textiles, and handicrafts via *TRIBES India* and Amazon/Flipkart.

- **Special Central Assistance to Tribal Sub-Plan (SCA to TSP)**

- **Objective:** Fund income-generating activities and asset creation for ST families below the poverty line.
- **Disbursed via:** State Tribal Welfare Departments; monitored by Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

Legal Safeguards for Scheduled Tribes (STs)

Law / Provision	Key Features	Relevance for STs
SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act (1989; amended 2015 & 2018)	Criminalises caste/tribe-based atrocities; mandates special courts, relief & rehabilitation	Safeguards dignity and ensures swift justice for victims
Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act – PESA (1996)	Empowers tribal Gram Sabhas with authority over governance, resource use, development approvals, and customary law	Guarantees self-rule and community control in Fifth Schedule Areas
Forest Rights Act – FRA (2006)	Recognises individual and community rights on forest land, access, and governance	Secures land tenure, sustains livelihoods, and protects cultural heritage
Land Acquisition & Fifth Schedule Safeguards	Requires Governor's assent and Tribal Advisory Council consultation before acquiring tribal land	Shields STs from displacement and loss of land without consent
Right to Fair Compensation & Transparency in Land Acquisition Act (2013)	Introduces stringent consent norms, rehabilitation and resettlement provisions in Scheduled Areas	Reinforces protection during development-driven displacement
SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules (1995)	Specifies procedures – special courts; relief; monitoring; district-level oversight committees	Ensures effective implementation of anti-atrocity measures

Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006

What is FRA 2006?

- The **Forest Rights Act, 2006**, formally known as the **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act**, is a landmark legislation aimed at **recognizing the historical injustice** done to forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs) by denying them legal rights over their traditional forest lands and resources.

Objectives of FRA

- To **recognize and vest forest rights** in forest-dwelling communities who have been residing in forests for generations without formal documentation.
- To provide **legal security of tenure** to individuals and communities dependent on forests.
- To **empower Gram Sabhas** as decision-making authorities in forest rights recognition and forest governance.
- To promote **sustainable forest-based livelihoods** and protect forest resources through community ownership and management.
- To correct the **historical injustice** caused by colonial and post-independence forest policies.

Key Rights Recognized under FRA, 2006

Type of Right	Description
Individual Forest Rights (IFR)	Right to hold and live in forest land under individual or household occupation for habitation or self-cultivation (up to 4 hectares).
Community Forest Rights (CFR)	Rights to use, manage, and conserve community forest resources, including grazing, fuelwood, water bodies, etc.
Habitat Rights	Special rights for PVTGs to access and govern their customary habitat and seasonal resource-use areas.

Right to Protect & Conserve Forests	Right to protect, regenerate or manage community forests traditionally conserved.
Right to Development	Right to basic facilities like schools, dispensaries, roads, etc., without eviction.
Right to Intellectual Property & Biodiversity	Rights over traditional knowledge and protection from bio-piracy.

Challenges in Implementation

- **Poor Awareness & Capacity** : Forest dwellers often lack awareness of their rights; many Gram Sabhas are not properly trained to handle claims.
- **Administrative Resistance** : Forest bureaucracy often views FRA as a threat to forest conservation and delays or rejects claims.
- **High Rate of Rejections** : Over **50% of claims** (especially Community Forest Rights) are rejected due to technicalities or lack of documents.
- **Inconsistent State-Level Implementation** : Some states (e.g., Odisha, Chhattisgarh) show progress, while others lag behind significantly.
- **PVTG Habitat Rights Largely Ignored** : As of 2025, only **10 PVTGs in 3 states** have received habitat rights, indicating gross under-implementation.
- **Encroachment Evictions** : Despite FRA, many forest dwellers face eviction due to projects like mining, highways, or protected area creation.

Way Forward

- **Capacity Building of Gram Sabhas** and local officials through training, awareness campaigns, and legal aid.
- **Digitization of Records** and simplification of claims process to ensure accessibility and transparency.
- **Institutional Convergence** with schemes like MGNREGA, CAMPA, and Tribal Sub-Plan for livelihood and infrastructure support.
- **Recognize and Scale Up Community Forest Rights (CFRs)** to enable democratic forest governance.
- **Expedite Habitat Rights Recognition for PVTGs** with anthropological mapping and sensitive, rights-based approaches.

- **Strengthen Monitoring Mechanisms** at central and state levels with periodic audits and grievance redress platforms.

Institutional Mechanisms for Scheduled Tribes (ST) Welfare

Institution / Mechanism	Role and Functions
Ministry of Tribal Affairs (est. 1999)	The nodal central ministry for tribal welfare, responsible for policy formulation, budget allocation (e.g., STC, EMRS), and coordination across line ministries.
National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) – Article 338A, Constitution	A constitutional body created via the 89th Amendment (2003) to monitor ST safeguards, investigate grievances, and advise the President on tribal welfare issues.
Tribal Advisory Councils (TACs) – Under Fifth Schedule (Art. 244(1))	Advisory bodies constituted in states with Scheduled Areas to assist Governors on tribal welfare matters, especially regarding land, resources, and self-governance.
Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs)	State-level institutions funded by MoTA to conduct research, evaluate schemes, preserve tribal heritage, and train officials on tribal issues.
Integrated Tribal Development Projects/Agencies (ITDPs/ITDAs)	Area-specific development agencies for tribal-dominated blocks, implementing projects in education, housing, health, and livelihoods.
TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation), est. 1987	A national-level cooperative under MoTA that promotes tribal entrepreneurship through the marketing of forest and handicraft products and operationalizes the MSP scheme for MFPs.
District Planning Committees (DPCs) – Article 243ZD	Constitutional bodies ensuring tribal representation in local planning processes in Scheduled and tribal-dominated districts.

Key Challenges Faced by Scheduled Tribes (STs) in India

- **Poverty and Livelihood Insecurity**
 - **High Poverty Levels:** Over **45% of STs** remain under multidimensional poverty (NITI Aayog, 2021); tribal pockets like Jharkhand report **46% BPL households** (PRAI Survey, 2023).
 - **Landlessness and Seasonal Migration:** Only **8% of ST households** possess full legal land titles under FRA; **50%+ ST youth** migrate seasonally for work in many states.
 - **Limited Diversification of Income:** Overdependence on **forest-based livelihoods and wage labour** with inadequate access to markets and finance.
- **Health and Nutritional Deprivation**
 - **Child & Maternal Mortality:** Under-5 mortality among STs is **57 per 1,000 live births**, significantly higher than the national average (NFHS-5, 2019–21).
 - **Nutritional Gaps:** Around **25.5% of ST women are underweight** and **41.7% of ST children** are stunted (NFHS-5).
 - **Healthcare Access:** Poor penetration of PHCs/Sub-centres in tribal belts; low immunisation and high disease burden (e.g., **Sickle Cell Anaemia**) persist.
- **Educational Inequalities**
 - **Literacy Gap:** ST literacy rate is **59%**, with **female ST literacy at 50%**, far below the national average of 73% (Census 2011; NSO updates).
 - **High Dropout Rates:** UDISE+ 2022–23 data shows sharp decline in ST enrollment at secondary level—dropout rate **~17% at upper primary** and **25% at secondary level**.
 - **Language and Curriculum Mismatch:** Teaching in non-tribal languages leads to early exclusion; limited implementation of **NEP 2020 multilingual education vision**.
- **Weak Implementation of Land and Forest Rights**
 - **Low FRA Coverage:** Only **17% of the potential forest land** has been secured under individual and community titles (MoTA, 2023).
 - **Encroachment and Displacement:** Large-scale eviction notices continue despite legal protection under FRA and PESA.

- **Loss of Access to Minor Forest Produce (MFP):** Market middlemen and lack of MSP enforcement undermine forest-based livelihoods.
- **Gaps in Welfare Delivery and Governance**
 - **Low Coverage under Social Protection Schemes:** In states like Jharkhand, only **50% ST households** receive entitlements like pensions, ration, or maternity benefits (PRAI Survey, 2023).
 - **Digital Divide:** 29% of ST households remain excluded from digital and financial services (NSO 2022), hampering access to DBT, insurance, and credit schemes.
 - **Bureaucratic Exclusion:** Tribal Gram Sabhas under PESA are often bypassed in developmental planning and land acquisition.
- **Gendered Vulnerabilities**
 - **Double Marginalisation:** ST women face both caste and gender-based disadvantages—limited voice in Gram Sabhas, poor representation in PRIs, and high maternal undernutrition.
 - **Human Trafficking and Violence:** ST girls are vulnerable to trafficking from backward districts; NCRB 2022 shows **disproportionate reporting of atrocities** against tribal women.
- **Legal and Institutional Weaknesses**
 - **Justice Delivery Delays:** Over **90% of cases under SC/ST (PoA) Act involving STs** remain pending in courts (NCRB 2022); conviction rate <10%.
 - **Inadequate Operationalisation of PESA:** Only a few states (e.g., Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra) have formalised PESA Rules; even here, **devolution remains superficial**.

Way Forward

- Strengthen implementation of **FRA and PESA** with real devolution of powers to tribal Gram Sabhas.
- Fast-track **recognition of individual and community forest rights** and integrate them with MGNREGA and livelihood schemes.
- Ensure **universal access to nutrition and health services** in tribal areas through mobile clinics and tribal health action plans.

- Promote **mother-tongue-based early education** and improve transition rates at secondary and higher levels.
- Enhance **tribal representation in planning bodies** and ensure participation in local governance mechanisms.
- Improve **MSP coverage for Minor Forest Produce (MFP)** and expand Van Dhan Vikas Kendras for income diversification.
- Bridge the **digital and financial divide** through targeted digital literacy and access initiatives in ST areas.
- Ensure **timely justice** under SC/ST (PoA) Act with special courts, fast-track procedures, and proper victim compensation.
- Address **gender-specific vulnerabilities** through tribal women’s SHGs, education incentives, and gender budgeting.
- Build capacity of institutions like **NCST, TRIFED, and Tribal Research Institutes** for effective oversight and policy innovation.

Key Commissions & Committees for Scheduled Tribes (STs)

Name of Commission / Committee	Key Recommendations / Roles
U.N. Dhebar Commission (First Backward Classes Commission) 1960-1961	First major review of tribal issues post-independence. Emphasized integration of tribals through welfare and protective measures. Identified issues of land alienation, displacement, and health.
Shilu Ao Committee (Tribal Sub-Plan) 1972	Recommended formulation of the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) – earmarking funds for ST welfare in state and central budgets. Introduced the area-based approach for development.
L.P. Vidyarthi Committee 1973	Focused on Primitive Tribal Groups (now PVTGs) . Identified 52 most vulnerable tribal groups needing targeted interventions. Recommended habitat

	protection, livelihoods, and health focus.
Bhuria Committee 1995	Recommended extension of Panchayati Raj system to Scheduled Areas , leading to the enactment of the PESA Act, 1996 . Emphasized tribal self-rule, control over natural resources, and protection of cultural rights.
Xaxa Committee (High-Level Committee on STs) 2013–2014	Provided a comprehensive review of socio-economic status of STs. Criticized displacement due to mining, poor implementation of FRA and PESA. Suggested legal reforms, better data collection, and special focus on education and health.

Recent Development

Habitat Rights for Scheduled Tribes (STs)

Context

- Recently the government informed in Parliament, only **10 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** across **14 districts in just 3 states** have been granted **habitat rights**.

What are Habitat Rights under FRA?

- Habitat rights are a special provision under **Section 3(1)(e)** of the **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA)**.
- These rights go **beyond individual and community forest rights**, recognizing the **customary territories, cultural practices, seasonal migration routes, access to water bodies, and livelihood patterns** of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).
- The rights allow PVTGs to **protect, access, manage, and conserve their habitats** without external interference, while maintaining their **distinct cultural identity**.
- These are **collective rights** and **not restricted to land ownership**, making them broader than regular forest land titles.

Who are Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)?

- PVTGs are the **most marginalised and isolated subgroups** among the Scheduled Tribes, identified by the government based on:
 - Pre-agricultural level of technology
 - Zero or negative population growth
 - Extremely low levels of literacy
 - Economic backwardness
 - Relative seclusion from the mainstream society
- India currently recognizes **75 PVTGs** across **18 States and 1 UT** (Andaman & Nicobar Islands).
- Prominent PVTGs include:
 - Baigas** (Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh)
 - Savaras** (Odisha)
 - Konda Reddis** (Andhra Pradesh)
 - Birhors** (Jharkhand)
 - Sentinelese** (A&N Islands)
- PVTGs depend heavily on **forest-based livelihoods**, shifting cultivation, hunting, and foraging. Many practice **animism and clan-based governance**.

Significance of Habitat Rights

- Cultural Protection:** Safeguards **identity, belief systems, and spiritual ties to forests** which are not protected under standard land rights.
- Legal Empowerment:** Offers constitutional backing under **Article 13(3)** read with **FRA 2006**, ensuring protection against eviction and encroachment.
- Environmental Stewardship:** Recognizes PVTGs as **custodians of biodiversity**—key to **conservation of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK)**.
- Development Justice:** Ensures that any government intervention in their habitat (e.g., infrastructure, mining, tourism) requires their **free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC)**.

Introduction

Other Backward Classes (OBCs) constitute a socially and educationally disadvantaged group, recognized under **Article 15(4)** and **Article 16(4)** of the Constitution for the purpose of affirmative action. Comprising over **40% of India's population** (as per various estimates, including the SECC 2011), OBCs have historically faced systemic exclusion in education, employment, and governance, necessitating targeted welfare measures and reservation policies.

Recognition of Other Backward Classes (OBCs)

- **Kaka Kalelkar Commission (1953)**
 - First Backward Classes Commission under Article 340.
 - Identified over 2,000 castes as backward, but its recommendations were not implemented due to methodological criticisms.
- **Mandal Commission (1979)**
 - Second Backward Classes Commission headed by B.P. Mandal.
 - Recommended **27% reservation for OBCs** in central services and institutions.
 - Used **social, educational, and economic indicators** to identify backwardness.
 - Its implementation in 1990 (by V.P. Singh government) marked a watershed moment in OBC empowerment.
- **Supreme Court Validation – Indra Sawhney Case (1992)**
 - Upheld the constitutionality of OBC reservations.
 - Capped total reservations at **50%**.
 - Excluded the “creamy layer” of OBCs from quota benefits, introducing a **means-based exclusion principle**.
- **National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)**
 - Established in 1993 by an Act of Parliament; granted **constitutional status by the 102nd Constitutional Amendment Act (2018)** under **Article 338B**.
 - Empowers NCBC to examine inclusion/exclusion requests and monitor safeguards.

- **State Lists of OBCs**

- States maintain their own OBC lists based on local socio-economic contexts.
- The **127th Constitutional Amendment Act (2021)** restored States' power to identify OBCs after the Supreme Court's Maratha reservation verdict limited that power.

Key Welfare Schemes for Other Backward Classes (OBCs)

- **Pre-Matric Scholarship for OBC Students**
 - **Objective:** To reduce dropouts among OBC students in Classes I to X.
 - **Features:**
 - Scholarship of ₹100–500 per month based on class level.
 - Parental income ceiling: ₹2.5 lakh per annum.
 - Centrally Sponsored Scheme with 60:40 Centre-State funding (90:10 for NE/hilly states).
 - **Impact:** Enhanced school-level retention rates, especially among rural OBC students.
- **Post-Matric Scholarship for OBC Students**
 - **Objective:** To support OBC students in pursuing higher education beyond Class X.
 - **Features:**
 - Tuition fees, maintenance allowance, and compulsory non-refundable fees covered.
 - Income limit: ₹2.5 lakh annually.
 - Implemented via State Governments with central assistance.
 - **Recent Reforms:** Digital verification via **National Scholarship Portal** to plug leakages.
- **Dr. Ambedkar Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Economically Backward OBCs**
 - **Components:**
 - **Hostel Construction for OBC Boys/Girls** in higher education institutions.
 - **Assistance for Skill Development Training** for employability enhancement.
 - Funding for NGOs and voluntary organisations for running residential schools and training centres.
 - **Special Focus:** Girls, minority-OBCs, and EBCs.
- **National Fellowship for OBC Students**
 - **Objective:** Financial assistance for M.Phil. and Ph.D. scholars from OBC category.

- **Launched:** 2014–15
- **Coverage:** 1,000 fellowships per year.
- **Administered by:** UGC under Ministry of Social Justice.
- **Assistance for Skill Development of OBCs / EBCs / DNTs**
 - **Objective:** To enhance the employability of youth from backward classes.
 - **Features:**
 - Modular employable skill courses with certification.
 - Toolkits and stipends for trainees.
 - **Implemented Through:** Reputed NGOs, ITIs, and training providers.
- **Venture Capital Fund for OBC Entrepreneurs**
 - **Objective:** To support first-generation OBC entrepreneurs.
 - **Features:**
 - Soft loans up to ₹5 crore via IFCI Venture Capital Funds Ltd.
 - Targeted at greenfield projects and startups.
 - **Impact:** Encourages self-employment and inclusive enterprise development.
- **Free Coaching for OBCs and EBCs**
 - **Objective:** To provide quality coaching for competitive exams (UPSC, SSC, Banking, etc.).
 - **Eligibility:** Family income below ₹8 lakh/year.
 - **Features:**
 - Monthly stipend and coaching fees provided.
 - Empanelled coaching institutions selected via transparent criteria.
- **Lower Transition Rates:** While gross enrollment at school level has improved, **dropout rates rise** at higher secondary and college levels.
- **Access vs. Outcome Gap:** Many OBC students lack quality access (e.g., poor school infrastructure, teacher vacancies), affecting learning outcomes.
- **Inadequate Implementation of Reservation**
 - **Private Sector Exclusion:** OBC reservation applies only to public sector jobs; the **absence of affirmative action in private employment** limits broader upliftment.
 - **Uneven State-Wise Coverage:** Some states (e.g., UP, Bihar) have more inclusive lists, while others exclude marginal OBC sub-groups or have ineffective implementation.
- **Caste Stratification within OBCs**
 - **Creamy Layer Dominance:** Forward/backward divide within OBCs leads to **elite capture** of benefits; marginalised Most Backward Classes (MBCs) are left behind.
 - **Lack of Sub-Categorisation:** Supreme Court in *Indra Sawhney (1992)* upheld sub-classification, but most states have not implemented it effectively.
- **Political Underrepresentation at Higher Levels**
 - While OBCs have significant numerical strength in **local and state politics**, they remain **underrepresented in Parliament and top executive positions**.
 - **No Reserved Seats in Legislature:** Unlike SCs/STs, OBCs lack constitutionally guaranteed political reservation.
- **Identity-Related Exclusion**
 - **Ambiguities in Inclusion Criteria:** Many communities have long-pending demands for OBC status, but lack of **transparent inclusion mechanisms** delays justice.
 - **Litigation and Political Disputes:** E.g., Maratha and Jat reservation cases show how **judicial and legislative tensions** impact backward class claims.

Key Challenges Faced by Other Backward Classes (OBCs)

- **Incomplete Socio-Economic Mobility**
 - **High Poverty and Informality:** A significant section of OBCs remains engaged in **low-paying informal sector jobs** with poor social security.
 - **Under-representation in Class I and II Services:** Despite reservation, representation in higher bureaucracy remains low (e.g., <15% in Group A services as per DoPT 2023 data).
- **Educational Backwardness**

Way Forward

- Ensure **effective implementation of OBC reservation** in central and state government services with regular monitoring and vacancy filling.
- Introduce **sub-categorisation within OBCs** to ensure equitable benefit distribution among Most Backward Classes (MBCs).
- Extend **affirmative action frameworks to the private sector** through incentives, voluntary charters, and public-private models.
- Strengthen **education and skill development pipelines** with hostels, coaching, digital access, and higher education scholarships.
- Promote **entrepreneurship among OBC youth** via targeted credit, incubation, and market linkage support.
- Improve **data transparency** by releasing updated caste-wise socio-economic surveys (e.g., SECC 2011 pending disaggregation).
- Enhance the role and capacity of the **National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)** as an independent monitoring and grievance redressal body.
- Institutionalize **regular review of OBC lists** through evidence-based and community-sensitive processes.

Introduction

Women and children constitute over two-thirds of India's population and are among the most vulnerable to poverty, malnutrition, violence, and exclusion. Recognised as priority groups in national development, their welfare is central to India's social justice and human capital strategy, necessitating targeted legal, policy, and institutional interventions.

A. Women

Legal Measures Taken by the Government for Women in India

Constitutional Provisions

Provision	Purpose
Article 14	Guarantees equality before law and equal protection of laws.
Article 15(1)	Prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex , among other grounds.
Article 15(3)	Permits the State to make special provisions for women and children.
Article 16	Ensures equality of opportunity in public employment for women.
Directive Principles (Art. 39(a), 39(d), 42)	Mandate equal pay for equal work , protection of maternity, and humane working conditions.
Fundamental Duties (Art. 51A(e))	Calls upon citizens to renounce practices derogatory to women's dignity.

Key Legislative Measures

Act / Law	Key Provisions
Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961	Criminalizes giving or taking dowry; penalizes related harassment.
Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended 2017)	Provides 26 weeks of paid maternity leave and mandates crèche facilities in large establishments.

Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005	Provides civil remedies and protection orders for women facing domestic abuse (physical, emotional, economic, sexual).
Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013	Mandates Internal Complaints Committees in all workplaces; ensures time-bound inquiry into harassment complaints.
Criminal Law (Amendment) Acts, 2013 & 2018	Strengthen punishments for rape, acid attacks, stalking; mandate time-bound investigation.
Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006	Makes child marriage a cognizable offence; allows annulment and protection of the girl child.
Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Act, 2021	Increases gestation limit to 24 weeks for special categories of women (e.g., survivors, minors, rape victims).
Equal Remuneration Act, 1976	Mandates equal pay for equal work for men and women across sectors.
National Commission for Women Act, 1990	Established NCW to review laws, advise government, and redress grievances related to women.

Key Welfare Schemes for Women in India

- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)**
 - **Objective:** Maternity benefit scheme for pregnant and lactating mothers.
 - **Features:**
 - ₹5,000 cash incentive in three instalments for the first live birth.
 - Aims to improve **maternal health and nutrition**, and reduce IMR/MMR.
 - Now part of the restructured **Mission Shakti** (since 2022-23).
- **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)**
 - **Launched:** 2015
 - **Objective:** Address **declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR)** and promote girl child education.

- **Key Components:**
 - Awareness campaigns against sex-selective abortion.
 - Focus on improving CSR, especially in 405 gender-critical districts.
- **Recent Reform:** Expanded focus to include girls' **secondary education and skilling** (2022–24).
- **Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0**
 - **Merged Scheme:** Combines Anganwadi Services, POSHAN Abhiyaan, and Scheme for Adolescent Girls.
 - **Focus:**
 - **Early childhood care, maternal nutrition, and adolescent girls' health.**
 - Strengthens real-time monitoring of nutrition indicators via **Poshan Tracker App**.
 - **Target Group:** Pregnant women, lactating mothers, adolescent girls, and children under 6.
- **One Stop Centre Scheme (Sakhi Centres)**
 - **Objective:** Provide **integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence.**
 - **Services Offered:**
 - Emergency medical aid, police assistance, legal aid, and psychological counselling.
 - Function 24×7 at district level; 700+ centres functional as of 2023.
- **Mahila Shakti Kendra (MSK)**
 - **Objective:** Empower rural women through **community participation** and awareness building.
 - **Structure:**
 - District-level centres supported by student volunteers.
 - Links women with government schemes and services.
- **Working Women Hostel Scheme**
 - **Objective:** Provide **safe and affordable accommodation** for working women near urban employment centres.
 - **Features:**
 - Includes childcare facilities for single mothers.
 - Funding shared between Centre and implementing agencies.
- **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)**
 - **Ministry:** Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
 - **Launched:** 2016
 - **Objective:** Provide **clean cooking fuel (LPG)** to women from **Below Poverty Line (BPL)** households.
 - **Features:**
 - Free LPG connection in the name of a woman beneficiary.
 - Financial support of ₹1,600 per connection.
 - **PMUY 2.0** launched in 2021 to cover migrant families and provide a free first refill.
 - **Impact:** Over **9 crore connections** distributed by 2024; significant improvement in indoor air quality and women's health.
- **Nirbhaya Fund Framework**
 - **Purpose:** Financial support for schemes aimed at **enhancing women's safety.**
 - **Implemented Projects:**
 - **CCTV in public transport, panic button integration, women helplines, and safe city initiatives** in metro areas.
- **Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)**
 - **Objective:** Provide **skills and employment opportunities** to women above 16 years.
 - **Sectors:** Agriculture, handloom, handicrafts, tailoring, etc.
 - **Implemented through:** NGOs and institutions approved by MoWCD.
 - **Stand Up India (joint with MoF)**
 - **Objective:** Promote **entrepreneurship among women**, especially SC/ST and rural women.
 - **Features:**
 - Bank loans from ₹10 lakh to ₹1 crore for setting up greenfield enterprises.
 - Handholding support and credit facilitation provided.

Key Challenges Faced by Women in India

- **Gender Gaps in Economic Participation**
 - **Low Labour Force Participation:** Despite improvement, the **female labour force participation rate (FLFPR)** remains low at **~37%**, compared to **77.1% for men** (PLFS 2023–24).

- **Rural–Urban Divide:** Urban women’s participation is just **23.8%**, reflecting both socio-cultural constraints and unsafe urban workplaces.
- **Informal & Unpaid Work:** A majority of women are engaged in **informal or unpaid family labour**, especially in agriculture, lacking social security and legal protection.
- **Educational & Digital Divide**
 - **Literacy Gap:** Female literacy lags behind male literacy, especially in rural areas (PLFS 2023–24).
 - **Low Skill Alignment:** While enrollment in school has improved, women remain **underrepresented in STEM and vocational education**.
 - **Digital Access:** Poor digital literacy and lack of devices restrict participation in the digital economy and education (especially post-COVID).
- **Health and Nutrition Challenges**
 - **Anaemia Burden:** 57% of women aged 15–49 are anaemic (NFHS-5), impacting maternal and child health.
 - **High Maternal Mortality:** Although declining, maternal health indicators remain below global benchmarks, especially in backward districts.
 - **Mental Health Risks:** India accounts for **~36.6% of global female suicides**, often linked to domestic violence, unpaid care burden, and isolation.
- **Violence and Safety Concerns**
 - **Domestic Violence:** Nearly **1 in 3 women** (29.3%) face spousal violence (NFHS-5).
 - **Rising Crime:** Over **445,000 crimes against women** registered in 2022, including **31,500+ rape cases**, with a **conviction rate of just 27–28%** (NCRB).
 - **Underreporting and Stigma:** Cultural taboos, police insensitivity, and fear of retaliation discourage reporting of crimes.
- **Political and Institutional Underrepresentation**
 - **Low Parliamentary Representation:** Women comprise **<15% of MPs**, well below the **33% reservation** provision under the Women's Reservation Act.
- **Leadership Deficit:** Despite high voter turnout (65.78% women in 2024 Lok Sabha elections), leadership roles in political parties, bureaucracy, and judiciary remain male-dominated.
- **Structural Barriers to Empowerment**
 - **Workplace Insecurity:** Lack of maternity benefits, safety infrastructure, and gender-sensitive workspaces deter formal sector participation.
 - **Social Norms and Patriarchy:** Deep-seated cultural biases reinforce male preference, limit mobility, and normalize gender-based discrimination.
 - **Access to Finance & Cooperatives:** Only **7.5% of women participate** in cooperatives, and access to credit and entrepreneurship support remains limited.

Way Forward for Women in India

- **Implement the Women’s Reservation Act** in Parliament and State Assemblies to ensure political empowerment and equal representation.
- **Bridge the Gender Employment Gap** by formalising women's labour, expanding maternity benefits, and ensuring workplace safety and equal pay.
- **Invest in Skill Development** for women in non-traditional sectors (STEM, green economy, digital) to promote economic diversification.
- **Strengthen Enforcement of Gender Laws** (e.g., Domestic Violence Act, POSH Act) through fast-track courts, legal aid, and police training.
- **Tackle Malnutrition and Anaemia** by universalising nutrition services through Poshan 2.0 and targeted anaemia control in tribal and rural regions.
- **Expand Childcare Infrastructure** (e.g., crèches, day-care centres) to support working mothers and increase female workforce participation.
- **Enhance Financial Inclusion** through digital literacy, SHG linkages, and easy credit access via schemes like Stand-Up India and PM Mudra Yojana.
- **Promote Gender-Sensitive Education** from early years to challenge stereotypes and foster equal opportunity mindsets.

- **Strengthen Monitoring of Women-Centric Schemes** using real-time dashboards, social audits, and convergence across ministries.
- **Use Nirbhaya Fund Strategically** to scale up urban safety infrastructure, public transport surveillance, and women-only mobility solutions.

Recent Development

Women's Reservation Act, 2023 (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam)

What is it?

- The **Women's Reservation Act, 2023**, formally known as the **Constitution (106th/128th Amendment) Act, 2023**, provides **33% reservation for women** in the **Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies**, and the **Delhi Legislative Assembly**, including within SC/ST reserved categories. It was passed by Parliament in September 2023 and received Presidential assent the same month.

Key Provisions

- **Scope:** One-third reservation for women in Lok Sabha, State Assemblies, and the Delhi Assembly, including within SC/ST categories.
- **Implementation Timeline:** Will come into effect **after the first Census** post-2023 and subsequent **delimitation** exercise—expected by **2029 general elections**.
- **Duration:** Valid for **15 years**, with a provision for parliamentary extension.
- **Rotation of Seats:** Reserved seats will be rotated among constituencies after every delimitation.

Objectives and Significance

- To ensure **greater political representation of women** in decision-making bodies.
- Builds upon the success of 33% reservation in **Panchayati Raj institutions**, which empowered grassroots women leaders.
- Aims to correct the historical underrepresentation of women in legislatures, where their presence has been below **15%** in the Lok Sabha and often under **10%** in state assemblies.
- Strengthens India's commitment to **gender**

equality under constitutional principles and international obligations.

Challenges

- **Delayed Implementation:** The Act's rollout is contingent on the completion of the **next Census and delimitation**, causing implementation delays.
- **No Sub-Quota for OBC/Minority Women:** Critics argue that it may benefit elite or urban women more than underrepresented sub-groups.
- **Risk of Elite Capture:** Without enabling conditions, women from privileged backgrounds may dominate the reserved seats.
- **Structural Barriers:** Low **female literacy**, **economic dependency**, and **patriarchal norms** may continue to restrict women's political agency.
- **Administrative Complexity:** Requires coordination among Census, Delimitation Commission, and Election Commission.

Way Forward

- **Expedite Census and Delimitation** processes to ensure timely implementation.
- **Enact enabling laws or rules** to consider sub-quotas for OBC and minority women in the future.
- **Invest in political training, mentorship, and campaign funding** support for aspiring women candidates.
- **Promote intra-party democracy and gender quotas** within political parties.
- **Use awareness campaigns** to challenge patriarchal attitudes and encourage voter support for women leaders.

Conclusion

- The Women's Reservation Act, 2023 is a historic leap toward gender-balanced governance. While its enactment is momentous, **its effectiveness will depend on timely implementation, inclusive design, and supportive ecosystems** that truly empower women from all backgrounds to participate meaningfully in Indian democracy.

Women's Labour Force Participation (FLFPR) in India: Trends, Regional Variations, and Policy Reflections

Introduction

- The role of women in India's labour market has long been an area of concern in development policy, with the country exhibiting one of the lowest female labour force participation rates (FLFPR) globally. However, recent evidence suggests an encouraging reversal of this trend.

Recent Trends in Female Labour Force Participation

According to a working paper by the **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)**, **FLFPR between 2017–18 and 2022–23:**

- **Rural female LFPR** surged from **24.6% to 41.5%** — a remarkable **~69% growth**.
- **Urban female LFPR** rose from **20.4% to 25.4%**, indicating slower gains compared to rural India.
- The paper confirms that **this trend holds even after excluding unpaid family labour**, indicating genuine economic participation rather than statistical inflation.
- **Regional Disparities**
 - The study reveals **sharp inter-state variations** in female LFPR, often not aligned with economic development levels:
 - **Lowest FLFPR States:**
 - **Bihar** (rural areas), **Punjab**, and **Haryana** report some of the **lowest female participation rates**, despite being economically contrasting — Bihar being among the poorest and Punjab-Haryana among the richest.
 - **Northeastern Improvement:**
 - **Nagaland** and **Arunachal Pradesh** lead gains in the Northeast, especially in **rural female workforce engagement**.

Challenges That Persist

- **Prevalence of Informal & Unpaid Work:** A significant portion of female participation is in **low-paid, informal, or unpaid family work**, lacking social security or upward mobility.
- **Social Barriers:** Patriarchal norms, household

responsibilities, mobility restrictions, and safety concerns continue to deter women's full economic participation.

- **Education–Employment Mismatch:** Even educated women often remain unemployed or underemployed due to lack of job opportunities, workplace flexibility, or sectoral mismatch.

Way Forward

- **Formalization of Female Work:** Promote inclusion in formal sectors through incentives, maternity benefits, and flexible work models.
- **Sectoral Diversification:** Expand opportunities in **non-traditional fields** like STEM, logistics, and green economy through targeted skilling.
- **Invest in Childcare and Transport Infrastructure:** Critical enablers for improving women's workforce retention.
- **Gender-Aware Policy Design:** Ensure that labour laws, MSME schemes, and entrepreneurship policies integrate **women-specific perspectives**.
- **State-Specific Interventions:** Tackle low participation in states like Bihar, Punjab, and Haryana through localized behaviour change campaigns and tailored policy support.

Conclusion

- India's recent gains in female labour force participation are **encouraging but uneven**. While rural India drives much of the growth, deep **regional and social disparities persist**. To harness the true potential of women's economic participation—estimated to add **\$700 billion+ to India's GDP by 2030**—India must move beyond numerical gains toward **qualitative inclusion**, ensuring that women not only participate but thrive as equal contributors to the economy.

**B.Children
Legal Measures Taken by the Government for
Children in India
Constitutional Provisions**

Provision	Key Focus
Article 15(3)	Allows the State to make special provisions for children.
Article 21A	Guarantees free and compulsory education to all children aged 6 to 14 years.
Article 24	Prohibits child labour in hazardous employment below the age of 14 years.
Directive Principles (Art. 39(e) & (f))	Mandate the State to ensure that children are not abused and are given equal opportunities to develop in a healthy manner.
Fundamental Duties (Art. 51A(k))	Makes it a duty of parents/guardians to ensure education of children aged 6-14 years.

Key Legislations

Act / Law	Provisions
Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act)	Operationalises Article 21A; mandates free, quality education from Class I to VIII; prohibits detention and corporal punishment.
Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016	Prohibits employment of children <14 years in any occupation; bans adolescents (14-18 yrs) from hazardous processes; includes penal provisions for violators.
Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), 2012 (amended 2019)	Provides for gender-neutral legal protection against sexual abuse; mandates child-friendly procedures , time-bound trials, and stricter punishments.

Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 (amended 2021)	Provides for the rehabilitation and social reintegration of children in conflict with law or in need of care; introduces Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) and Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs).
Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006	Declares marriage below 18 (girls) and 21 (boys) as voidable; penalises those promoting or performing such marriages.
Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005	Established the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) to monitor and promote rights under laws and policies.
Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (Amendment), 2021	Permits abortion up to 24 weeks in case of minors and survivors of rape, with special protecti

Key Welfare Schemes for Children in India

Scheme	Nodal Ministry	Key Features / Target Group
Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0	Ministry of Women and Child Development	Merged scheme for nutrition support, early childhood care, and adolescent health ; includes ICDS and POSHAN Abhiyaan; targets children under 6 years, pregnant & lactating mothers.
National Creche Scheme (under Palna)	Ministry of Women and Child Development	Day-care for children of working mothers (6 months-6 years); includes nutrition, early learning, and emergency health care; part of Mission Shakti.
Mid-Day Meal Scheme (PM POSHAN)	Ministry of Education	Provides nutritious cooked meals to school-going children (Class I-VIII); aims to

		improve attendance and reduce classroom hunger.
Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan	Ministry of Education	Umbrella programme for school education (pre-primary to senior secondary); includes gender equity, inclusive education, and digital access.
Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK)	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	Early detection and treatment of 4Ds – Defects at birth, Diseases, Deficiencies, Developmental delays in children (0–18 yrs).
Child Protection Services Scheme (CPS)	Ministry of Women and Child Development	Provides institutional and non-institutional care (foster care, sponsorship, adoption) for children in need of care and protection.
National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship Scheme	Ministry of Education	Financial support to meritorious students from weaker sections to prevent dropouts at secondary stage (Class VIII onwards).
Balika Samriddhi Yojana	Ministry of Women and Child Development	Promotes education of girl children and delays early marriage through conditional cash transfers.
Khelo India Scheme (Youth & Child Component)	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports	Promotes sporting infrastructure, training, and competitions for children and youth to develop sports culture.

Challenges Faced by Children in India

- **Child Malnutrition & Health Risks**
 - **High Prevalence of Undernutrition:**
 - 35.5% of children under five are **stunted**, 32.1% are **underweight**, and 19.3% are **wasted** (NFHS-5).
 - Among children aged 0–6 years, 37% are stunted and 17% are underweight.
 - **Mortality Link:** Nearly half of under-five deaths are linked to undernutrition.
- **Child Labour**
 - **Prevalence:** Over 1.2 million child labourers rescued under National Child Labour Projects since 1988.
 - **Weak Rehabilitation:** In some regions, over 70% of rescued children relapse into labour due to lack of follow-up and economic vulnerability.
 - **Enforcement Gaps:** While FIRs are registered, conviction and long-term rehabilitation remain weak.
- **Child Marriage**
 - **Still Widespread:** 23.3% of women aged 20–24 were married before 18 (NFHS-5).
 - **Legal Enforcement Gap:** Only about three cases of child marriage are reported daily, despite much higher real incidence.
 - **Progress Example:** Assam’s crackdown reduced child marriages by 54% and teen pregnancies by 63% since 2023.
- **Child Trafficking & Exploitation**
 - **Scale:** Estimated 12.6 million children are engaged in hazardous occupations.
 - **Vulnerability:** Children are trafficked for labour, sexual exploitation, and forced begging.
 - **Lack of Prevention:** Weak monitoring in migration corridors and inadequate early intervention systems.
- **Education Deprivation & Dropouts**
 - **Post-Primary Attrition:** High dropout rates beyond primary level, especially among girls, SC/STs, and migrant children.
 - **Excluded Groups:** Street and slum children often remain outside the formal education system due to lack of access and documentation.
- **Urban Poverty & Slum Conditions**

- **Health Impact:** In major city slums, 47–51% of under-five children are stunted, 35–36% are underweight.
- **Poor Sanitation:** Lack of clean water, toilets, and safe play environments leads to repeated illness and poor development outcomes.

Way Forward for Children in India

- **Universalise Nutrition Services** through full coverage of Poshan 2.0, especially in tribal and urban slum areas to tackle stunting and wasting.
- **Strengthen Early Childhood Care** by expanding well-equipped Anganwadis with trained workers, early learning, and health monitoring.
- **Ensure School Retention** by improving access to secondary education, incentivising girl child education, and addressing language/social barriers.
- **Scale Up Anti-Child Labour Measures** with post-rescue rehabilitation, vocational skilling, and strict employer accountability.
- **Strict Enforcement of Child Marriage Laws** with improved registration, early warning systems, and community-based awareness.
- **Combat Child Trafficking** through inter-state coordination, dedicated child protection units, and real-time child tracking systems.
- **Enhance Urban Child Safety** with child-friendly neighbourhood planning, safe sanitation, and inclusive services for street and slum children.
- **Empower Child Protection Institutions** like Child Welfare Committees (CWCs), Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs), and District Child Protection Units with staff and funds.
- **Digitise Child Services Delivery** using tools like Poshan Tracker, PM SHRI Dashboards, and eKYC-based DBT platforms.
- **Promote Child Participation** in governance through platforms like Bal Sabhas and child-led forums, especially in schools and gram panchayats.

Case Studies

Case Study: Velpur Model - A Community-Led Success Against Child Labour

Velpur Mandal in Nizamabad district (Telangana) was once notorious for rampant child labour,

especially in low-income households. In 2001, under the leadership of the District Collector, a 100-day intensive campaign was launched to ensure 100% school enrollment of children aged 5–14 years. Initially met with resistance and misinformation, the initiative gradually gained community trust through consistent outreach, bridge education under the National Child Labour Project (NCLP), and mass awareness meetings. Former employers publicly released debts owed by parents, and local sarpanchs signed formal MoUs with the government to guarantee universal primary education. As a result, Velpur was declared India's first "Child Labour Free Mandal" on October 2, 2001—a status it continues to maintain. This model, lauded by the ILO, VGNLI, and even former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, demonstrates how grassroots mobilisation and accountability can sustainably eliminate child labour.

Case Study: Project Sampoorna - Bongaigaon's Model to Combat Malnutrition

Bongaigaon district in Assam implemented an innovative, community-driven model called **Project Sampoorna** in 2021 to tackle child malnutrition. Initiated by the then Deputy Commissioner, the project aimed to reduce the number of severely and moderately underweight children using a **peer-to-peer model**, wherein **mothers of healthy children were paired with mothers of malnourished children** as 'Nutrition Buddies'. These peer groups shared practices on diet, hygiene, breastfeeding, and child care. Local Anganwadi workers, SHGs, and Panchayats actively supported the initiative. As a result, the district achieved a **95% reduction in SAM and MAM cases** within a year, without any additional government funding. Project Sampoorna not only improved nutrition outcomes but also fostered community ownership, making it a replicable model for other aspirational districts. It has been widely acknowledged by NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Women and Child Development as a best practice in tackling childhood malnutrition.

Introduction

Elderly persons, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), religious minorities, and transgender individuals represent distinct yet often overlapping vulnerable groups facing systemic exclusion, discrimination, and barriers to access. Ensuring their welfare and inclusion is integral to India's commitment to social justice, equality, and sustainable human development.

A. Elderly Persons

Legal Measures for elderly population in India

Act / Law	Purpose
Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007	Mandates children/legal heirs to provide maintenance to senior citizens; enables state governments to establish old age homes and tribunals.
National Policy on Older Persons, 1999 (<i>policy, not law</i>)	Provides framework for social security, health care, housing, and active ageing; under revision for updated 2024 version.
The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016	Includes old-age related disabilities (e.g., hearing, locomotor) under legal protection framework.
Personal Laws & IPC	Sections of Hindu Adoptions & Maintenance Act (1956) and CrPC (Section 125) also mandate support for aged parents.

Key Welfare Schemes for the Elderly

Scheme	Ministry	Features
Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)	Ministry of Rural Development	Provides ₹200-₹500 monthly pension to BPL elderly (60+ years); part of NSAP.
Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana	Ministry of Finance / LIC	Assured pension for senior citizens through LIC;

		protects from market volatility.
National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE)	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	Geriatric OPD and specialised health services at primary to tertiary levels; mobile units in rural areas.
Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY)	Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment	Free distribution of assistive aids (e.g., walking sticks, hearing aids) to BPL elderly with age-related disabilities.
Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS)	Ministry of Finance	Tax-saving scheme offering higher interest rates for 60+ citizens.
SAMPANN	DoT / Ministry of Communications	Timely pension disbursement and grievance redressal for retired telecom employees; increasingly used as a model.

Key Challenges Faced by the Elderly

- **Rising Elderly Population:** Estimated to reach **19.5% of India's population by 2050** (UNFPA, 2023); rapid ageing with inadequate infrastructure.
- **Economic Insecurity:** Majority lack regular income or pensions; especially acute in the **informal sector retirees**.
- **Health Burden:** High prevalence of **non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**, mental health issues, and geriatric neglect.
- **Social Isolation and Abuse:** Increasing nuclear families and urbanisation have led to **emotional neglect and elder abuse** (reported in ~50% of cases by HelpAge India 2022).

- **Digital and Mobility Divide:** Limited access to digital platforms and public transport reduces autonomy and dignity.

Way Forward

- Enact the revised **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents Act (Amendment Bill)** with clear penal provisions and mandatory old-age infrastructure in institutions.
- Strengthen **social pensions** with inflation-indexed payments and universal coverage for 75+ population.
- Expand **geriatric care** through dedicated wings in PHCs and district hospitals under NPHCE.
- Promote **active ageing policies** with senior citizen clubs, digital literacy, and community engagement.
- Encourage **private and community-based models** (e.g., cooperative old-age homes) with regulatory oversight.
- Include elderly-specific indicators in urban planning, housing, and disaster preparedness frameworks.

Best Practices around the world

1. Japan – Community-Based Integrated Care System

Japan, with over 28% of its population aged 65+, has pioneered the “Community-Based Integrated Care System,” aiming to ensure that by 2025, every elderly person can access health care, nursing care, preventive services, housing, and livelihood support within their locality. It integrates medical professionals, caregivers, and social workers to enable aging-in-place. The system reduces hospitalization, fosters community bonding, and empowers local governance units in geriatric support.

2. Sweden – Universal Elderly Care Model

Sweden provides one of the most comprehensive elderly welfare systems in the world, funded largely by taxes. The state offers free or subsidized home care, nursing homes, personal assistance, and even IT training for digital inclusion of senior citizens. The Swedish

model emphasizes autonomy, dignity, and equal access, resulting in high satisfaction rates among elderly residents and reduced burden on families.

3. Singapore – Active Aging and Eldercare Ecosystem

Singapore promotes “**Successful Aging**” through its Action Plan for Successful Ageing (2015). It focuses on employment of elderly through re-employment laws till age 68, lifelong learning via SkillsFuture program, and affordable healthcare under ElderShield and Pioneer Generation packages. It also developed “Kampung Admiralty,” an integrated living complex combining housing, eldercare, and social amenities in one vertical space – a model for urban aging.

B. Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)

Legal Measures for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in India

Act / Law	Purpose
Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016	Expands the definition to 21 categories of disabilities , ensures reservation (4–5%) in jobs and education, mandates barrier-free access , and establishes State & District Disability Commissioners .
National Trust Act, 1999	Focused on the welfare of persons with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation, and multiple disabilities ; promotes guardianship and independent living.
Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992	Regulates and standardises training for rehabilitation professionals working with PwDs.
Mental Healthcare Act, 2017	Guarantees right to mental health care, decriminalises suicide, and mandates access to services for persons with psychosocial disabilities.

Key Welfare Schemes for PwDs

Scheme	Ministry	Features
Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)	Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment	Grants-in-aid to NGOs for services like special schools, vocational training, therapy centres.
Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP Scheme)	MSJE	Free assistive devices (wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc.) to PwDs from BPL households.
Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan)	MSJE	Mandates barrier-free access to buildings, transport, and ICT platforms; focus on universal design in public spaces.
Scholarship Schemes for PwDs	MSJE	Pre-matric, post-matric, and top-class education scholarships; also includes overseas studies support.
Unique Disability ID (UDID) Project	MSJE	Creation of a central database of PwDs to streamline delivery of benefits and avoid duplication.
PM Daksh Yojana (for PwDs)	MSJE	Skill training for PwDs in trades like tailoring, digital services, agriculture-related skills.

Challenges Faced by PwDs

- **Low Labour Force Participation:** Less than **23% of PwDs are employed**; most are engaged in

informal or unskilled work (Census 2011, no updated count yet).

- **Social Stigma and Exclusion:** PwDs face discrimination in education, marriage, housing, and mobility—especially in rural areas.
- **Infrastructure Deficits:** Poor implementation of **Accessible India Campaign**; less than **30% of public buildings are barrier-free** in most cities.
- **Inadequate Data & Certification:** Fragmented disability data and delays in UDID certification hinder delivery of benefits.
- **Digital Divide:** Lack of accessible digital content, websites, and apps, especially in public service delivery.

Way Forward

- Implement **RPwD Act, 2016 provisions** strictly at state and district levels through local disability commissioners.
- Make **accessibility universal** by enforcing building codes, inclusive transport design, and accessible ICT under Sugamya Bharat.
- Provide **targeted skill training and job reservation enforcement** in public and private sectors.
- Ensure **UDID coverage for 100% of eligible PwDs** and link with DBT schemes for seamless delivery.
- Integrate PwDs in **mainstream education** through trained special educators, curriculum adaptation, and assistive tech support.
- Promote **community-based rehabilitation** and inclusive social security through local government partnerships.

Best Practices around the world

1. United States – Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Model

The United States implemented the *Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990*, a landmark civil rights law prohibiting discrimination against PwDs in employment, education, transportation, and public accommodation. This law has led to widespread architectural accessibility (e.g., ramps, elevators, signage), digital inclusion mandates, and reasonable workplace accommodations. ADA's enforcement

mechanism through litigation and federal oversight makes it a global reference point for rights-based disability legislation.

2. Australia - National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Australia's *NDIS*, launched in 2013, is a pioneering personalized support system where PwDs receive funds directly to access services of their choice. It empowers over 500,000 Australians with tailored healthcare, therapy, assistive technologies, and social participation. The scheme emphasizes *individualised care planning*, long-term support, and community integration, promoting dignity and autonomy in disability care.

C. Minorities

Legal Measures for Minorities in India

Provision / Law	Purpose
Article 29 & 30	Protect the cultural and educational rights of minorities; Article 30 allows minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.
National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992	Constituted the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) to safeguard constitutional and legal rights of religious minorities.
Right to Education Act, 2009	Mandates non-discrimination in school admission ; provides exemptions for minority institutions from certain regulatory requirements.

Key Welfare Schemes for Minorities

Scheme	Ministry	Key Features
Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarships	Ministry of Minority Affairs	Financial support to minority students (Muslims, Christians, Sikhs,

		Buddhists, Jains, Parsis) to reduce dropout rates.
Merit-cum-Means Scholarship	MoMA	Scholarships for professional/technical courses; income ceiling ₹2.5 lakh per annum.
Nai Manzil	MoMA	Integrated education and skill training for school dropouts from minority communities.
Nai Roshni	MoMA	Leadership training program for minority women to promote confidence, awareness, and empowerment.
Seekho aur Kamao (Learn & Earn)	MoMA	Skill development for minority youth (18-35 years); focuses on industry-oriented training.
PM VIKAS (PM-Virasat Ka Samvardhan)	MoMA	New umbrella scheme (2023) integrating Usttad, Hamari Dharohar , and other traditional art/craft-based livelihood programs.

Challenges Faced by Minorities

- **Educational Backwardness:** Literacy among Muslims is **68.5%**, below national average (77.7% – NSO 2020); low representation in higher education.
- **Economic Exclusion:** Minorities, especially Muslims, are overrepresented in **informal, low-paying occupations** and underrepresented in formal jobs and enterprise credit.
- **Social Discrimination:** Reports of **identity-based exclusion** in housing, schools, and public services; communal tensions affect access to rights.
- **Underutilisation of Schemes:** Scholarship disbursements and scheme reach are limited by lack of awareness, digital access, and documentation hurdles.
- **Institutional Weakness:** NCM lacks **teeth to enforce recommendations**; no constitutional status; coordination with states remains weak.

Way Forward

- Enhance **targeted interventions in minority-concentrated districts** through education, health, and skilling investments.
- Ensure **full coverage and timely disbursement** of scholarships and credit-linked livelihood schemes (e.g., PM VIKAS).
- Revive or replace **higher education fellowships** with merit-linked alternatives.
- Strengthen the **National Commission for Minorities** with statutory powers and regional offices.
- Improve **awareness and grievance redressal systems** through multilingual outreach and community-based intermediaries.
- Foster **social cohesion and inclusion** through inter-faith dialogues, inclusive urban planning, and anti-discrimination audits in public services.

D. Transgender Persons

Legal Measures for transgender persons in India

Provision / Law	Purpose
Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019	Prohibits discrimination in education, employment, healthcare, and public spaces; provides for right to self-perceived identity , welfare measures, and grievance redress mechanisms.
Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020	Operationalises the 2019 Act; outlines procedure for identity certificate , and roles of government in housing, education, and healthcare.
NALSA v. Union of India (2014) – Supreme Court judgment	Recognised transgender persons as the 'third gender' ; affirmed right to equality and dignity under Articles 14, 15, 19, and 21. Directed the State to provide reservations and social welfare benefits.

Key Welfare Schemes for Transgender Persons

Scheme	Ministry	Key Features
SMILE Scheme (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise)	Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment	Umbrella scheme launched in 2022; includes rehabilitation, skill training, medical care , and support for transgender persons and beggars.
Garima Greh (Shelter Homes)	MSJE	Safe housing and skill-building centres for transgender persons; functional in several states.
National Portal for Transgender Persons	MSJE	Online application for gender identity certificate and ID cards ;

		promotes transparency and dignity.
National Council for Transgender Persons	MSJE	Statutory body for policy formulation, monitoring, and grievance redressal; includes transgender representative.
Health Insurance under Ayushman Bharat (AB-PMJAY)	Ministry of Health	Provides up to ₹5 lakh cover per year for transgender persons identified through SMILE & other databases.

- Implement **targeted education and skilling programs**, including vocational and digital training aligned with industry needs.
- Expand **gender-affirmative healthcare services** in government hospitals; train medical professionals on inclusive practices.
- Provide **horizontal reservations** in education and jobs for transgender persons, as directed in *NALSA* judgment (pending full compliance).
- Strengthen monitoring and funding for **Garima Grehs and SMILE scheme** through third-party audits and grievance redress mechanisms.
- Launch large-scale **social awareness campaigns** to challenge prejudice and promote inclusion, especially in schools and workplaces.

Value Addition for unit 4

Keywords : Participatory Planning, Rights-Based Development, Capability Enhancement, Sustainable Development, Bottom-Up Governance, Non-State Actors, Community Empowerment, Triple Partnership, Institutional Accountability, Donor Dependency, Local Capacity Building, Technical Support Mechanism, CSR-NGO Convergence, SHG Federation, Elite Capture, Financial Inclusion, Regulatory Oversight, FCRA Compliance, Section-8 Company, Community-Based Organisation, Monitoring and Evaluation, Fragmentation of Interventions, Scalability Constraints, Philanthropic Innovation, Public Private People Partnership.

Challenges Faced by Transgender Persons

- **Identity and Legal Recognition Issues:** Delays and stigma in obtaining **identity certificates** under the 2019 Act; many remain undocumented.
- **Social Stigma and Exclusion:** Persistent **discrimination in families, schools, jobs, and healthcare**; high dropout rates and poor mental health outcomes.
- **Employment and Livelihood Insecurity:** Vast majority engaged in informal sectors (e.g., begging, sex work); low access to skilling and formal employment.
- **Health Access Barriers:** Lack of gender-affirmative healthcare facilities; limited medical professional sensitivity; high HIV prevalence (~2–5%).
- **Poor Implementation of Laws/Schemes:** Limited number of **Garima Grehs**, low state-wise implementation of SMILE, and weak institutional accountability.

Way Forward

- Ensure **universal coverage of Transgender ID certificates** through simplified, stigma-free online and offline mechanisms.

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. India has moved from welfare as charity to welfare as a right. Yet, last-mile delivery remains a challenge. Discuss with reference to key welfare schemes.
2. The welfare ecosystem in India suffers from policy fragmentation and lack of convergence. How can governance reforms address this issue?
3. "Despite the RPWD Act, 2016, persons with disabilities continue to face systemic exclusion. Identify implementation gaps and suggest reforms.
4. India's demographic transition demands urgent rethinking of welfare for the elderly.

Examine existing provisions and suggest a holistic way forward.

5. Assess the effectiveness of targeted schemes like PM-AJAY, Stand-Up India, and SCSP in addressing historical injustices faced by SCs and STs.

Acronyms

1. VULNERABLE – Identifying Key Challenges

- **V** – Visibility gaps (e.g. disability, elderly)
- **U** – Underfunded schemes
- **L** – Leakages and corruption
- **N** – Non-convergence of services
- **E** – Exclusion errors (DBT, digital divide)
- **R** – Regional disparities
- **A** – Awareness deficits
- **B** – Bureaucratic delay
- **L** – Lack of last-mile delivery
- **E** – Elite capture of benefits

2. SECURE – Pillars of Welfare Delivery

- **S** – Social Justice (constitutional base)
- **E** – Entitlement-based approach (e.g. RTE, NFSA, MGNREGA)
- **C** – Community participation (PRIs, SHGs)
- **U** – Universalisation of access (e.g. PMJAY, Ujjwala)
- **R** – Rights-based laws
- **E** – Equity-focused targeting

3. EMPOWER – Strategy for Inclusive Welfare

- **E** – E-Governance platforms (e.g. DBT, JAM)
- **M** – Monitoring & grievance redress (CPGRAMS, SEVOTTAM)
- **P** – Participation (via Gram Sabhas, SHGs)
- **O** – Outreach to unreached (tribals, elderly, PwDs)
- **W** – Women & Child-centric schemes (PMMVY, POSHAN)
- **E** – Enabling infrastructure (health, edu, pensions)
- **R** – Reform in delivery (MIS, convergence, One Nation One Platform)

4.3E Model for Welfare Success

- **Entitlements** – Legal rights (MGNREGA, FRA,

RTE)

- **Execution** – Scheme design, targeting, monitoring
- **Empowerment** – Long-term capability-building, awareness

5. 5R Strategy for Inclusive Governance

- **Reach** – Geographic and social inclusion
- **Resources** – Adequate and timely funding
- **Responsiveness** – Grievance redress, citizen feedback
- **Redesign** – Technology-enabled service delivery
- **Reform** – Legal backing, accountability, convergence

Readymade Templates

Domain	Key Challenges	Way Forward
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low representation in legislative bodies • Exclusion from policy-making processes • Vote bank exploitation • Weak access to justice • Inadequate targeting in policies • Human rights violations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirmative action to enhance representation • Inclusive decision-making at all levels • Strengthen legal aid mechanisms • Rights-based policy design
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistent poverty • High unemployment • Lack of financial inclusion • Vulnerability to debt traps • Exploitative labour conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand MGNREGA, NRLM, and skill-based employment schemes • Promote SHGs and MFIs for micro-credit • Strengthen Jan Dhan, DBT, and social security nets

Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caste, gender, and community-based discrimination • Poor access to health and education • Food and nutritional insecurity • Vulnerability to disasters and displacement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforce anti-discrimination laws • Awareness and sensitization campaigns • Improve outreach of healthcare and education services • Targeted interventions under National Nutrition Mission, PM-JAY, PM POSHAN
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Navigating the Syllabus: What You Need to Know

1. Health

- Constitutional provisions related to health
- Structure of Indian healthcare system (public, private, AYUSH)
- Issues at primary, secondary, and tertiary healthcare levels
- Systemic challenges (funding, access, regulation)
- Key government health programs and schemes
- National health surveys and indicators (e.g., NFHS)
- AYUSH and traditional medicine systems
- Recent developments in healthcare policy and funding
 - Maternal and neonatal health issues
 - Global healthcare best practices

2. Education

- Constitutional and legal framework for education
- Major challenges in school and higher education
- Key government initiatives and policies
- National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 reforms
- Learning outcomes and recent reports (e.g., ASER)
- Digital and vocational education trends

3. Human Resources

- Importance of human capital development
- Skilling and employability issues
- Gender and regional disparities
- Key government skilling and apprenticeship programs
- Industry-academia linkages and digital skilling initiatives

UPSC Previous Year Questions

Question	Nature of Question	Core Demand
In a crucial domain like the public healthcare system the Indian State should play a vital role to contain the adverse impact of marketisation of the system. Suggest some measures through which the State can enhance the reach of public healthcare at the grassroots level. (2024)	Health Policy + State Responsibility	Suggest State-led measures to counter healthcare marketisation and improve grassroots public health reach
Skill development programmes have succeeded in increasing human resources supply to various sectors. In the context of the statement analyze the linkages between education, skill, and employment. (2023)	Human Resource Development + Education-Skill-Employment Nexus	Analyze interconnections between education, skilling, and employment outcomes

<p>The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 remains inadequate in promoting incentive-based system for children's education without generating awareness about the importance of schooling. Analyse. (2022)</p>	<p>Education Policy + Behavioural Awareness</p>	<p>Critically assess the RTE Act's limitations and importance of awareness generation</p>
<p>Besides being a moral imperative of a Welfare State, primary health structure is a necessary precondition for sustainable development. Analyse. (2021)</p>	<p>Primary Health + Sustainable Development</p>	<p>Analyze how primary healthcare is linked to sustainable development</p>
<p>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. (2020)</p>	<p>NEP 2020 + SDG Alignment</p>	<p>Critically examine how NEP 2020 aligns with SDG-4 and its transformative intent</p>
<p>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. (2020)</p>	<p>Social Development + Maternal & Geriatric Health</p>	<p>Discuss the role of targeted healthcare policies in improving social development</p>
<p>Despite Consistent experience of High growth, India still goes with the lowest indicators of human development. Examine the issues that make balanced and inclusive development elusive. (2019)</p>	<p>Growth vs Human Development</p>	<p>Examine challenges in translating growth into inclusive human development</p>
<p>Appropriate local community level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieve 'Health for All' in India. Explain. (2018)</p>	<p>Decentralised Health Delivery</p>	<p>Explain importance of community-level interventions in achieving universal health goals</p>
<p>Professor Amartya Sen has advocated important reforms in the realms of primary education and primary health care. What are your suggestions to improve their status and performance? (2016)</p>	<p>Sen's Model + Suggestions</p>	<p>Provide reform suggestions in line with Amartya Sen's advocacy</p>
<p>Demographic Dividend in India will remain only theoretical unless our manpower becomes more educated, aware, skilled and creative. What measures have been taken by the government to enhance the capacity of our population to be more productive</p>	<p>Demographic Dividend + Capacity Building</p>	<p>List government measures to enhance productivity through education and skilling</p>

and employable? (2016)		
The quality of higher education in India requires major improvement to make it internationally competitive. Do you think that the entry of foreign educational institutions would help improve the quality of technical and higher education in the country. Discuss. (2015)	Higher Education Quality + FDI in Education	Discuss if foreign institutions will improve India's higher education system
Public health system has limitation in providing universal health coverage. Do you think that private sector can help in bridging the gap? What other viable alternatives do you suggest? (2015)	Universal Health Coverage + PPP	Evaluate role of private sector and alternatives in achieving health coverage
Should the premier institutes like IITs/IIMs be allowed to retain premier status, allowed more academic independence in designing courses and also decide mode/criteria of selection of students. Discuss in light of the growing challenges. (2014)	Autonomy in Higher Education	Discuss rationale and implications of granting academic autonomy to premier institutes
Identify the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that are related to health. Discuss the success of the actions taken by the Government for achieving the same. (2013)	Health-related MDGs + Government Performance	List health MDGs and assess India's performance in achieving them

Introduction

Health is a fundamental human right and a key determinant of human capital. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health is “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” Ensuring equitable access to quality healthcare is thus central to India's inclusive development and constitutional vision under Article 21.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Health

Article / Schedule	Provision	Relevance to Health
Article 21	Right to Life	Interpreted by the Supreme Court to include the right to health and medical care (e.g., <i>Paschim Banga Case</i> , 1996).
Article 39(e) & (f) (DPSP)	Protection of health and strength of workers, children, and youth	Obligates the State to ensure that health is not endangered by economic necessity or exploitation.
Article 41 (DPSP)	Right to public assistance in case of old age, sickness, and disability	Basis for schemes like old-age pensions and health insurance.
Article 42 (DPSP)	Provision for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief	Supports legal mandates like Maternity Benefit Act.
Article 47 (DPSP)	Duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and standard of	Core directive guiding health-related policy-making.

	living and improve public health	
Article 243G & 243W (73rd & 74th Amendments)	Devolution of functions to Panchayats and Municipalities	Includes responsibility for health, sanitation, and primary healthcare.
Seventh Schedule - State List (Entry 6, 10, 23)	Public health, hospitals, sanitation	Health is primarily a State subject , giving states primary legislative and administrative control.
Seventh Schedule - Concurrent List (Entry 25, 26)	Education and social welfare; medical profession	Allows both Centre and States to legislate on medical education and prevention of infectious diseases.

Structure of the Indian Healthcare System

India's healthcare system follows a **three-tiered hierarchical model** comprising **primary, secondary, and tertiary levels**, with responsibilities divided between the **Union, State, and Local Governments** as per the **Seventh Schedule**.

A .Public Healthcare System (Government Sector)

Level	Institution	Scope & Services
Primary Level	Sub-Centres (SCs), Primary Health Centres (PHCs)	First point of contact; preventive, promotive, and basic curative care; immunisation, ANC/PNC, sanitation.
Secondary Level	Community Health Centres (CHCs), Sub-District Hospitals	Referral care; handles minor surgeries, deliveries, inpatient care, diagnostics.

Tertiary Level	District Hospitals, Medical Colleges, AIIMS, Specialty Institutes	Advanced and super-specialised care; research and training functions.
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B. Private Healthcare Sector

- Comprises **corporate hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, and individual practitioners.**
- Dominates in **urban areas**, with over **70% outpatient care** and **60% inpatient care** provided by private players (NSSO, 2018).
- Largely unregulated in terms of pricing, quality, and medical ethics.

C. Traditional Systems - AYUSH

- Includes **Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy.**
- Regulated by **Ministry of AYUSH**; integrated under **National Health Mission (NHM)** for pluralistic service delivery.
- 8 lakh+ registered AYUSH practitioners as of 2025

D. Role of Government Tiers

Level of Government	Key Functions
Union Government	National health policy, disease surveillance (e.g., COVID-19), medical education regulation, health financing (e.g., Ayushman Bharat).
State Governments	Operate majority of public health facilities, hire personnel, and implement health programs.
Local Bodies (PRIs/ULBs)	Handle sanitation, waste management, water supply , and run urban health centres (under 74th Amendment).

Various issues in Indian Health care system at different levels

- **Issues at the Primary Level (Sub-Centres and PHCs)**
 - **Infrastructure Gaps:** 18% PHCs operate without doctors; 28% without lab technicians (Rural Health Service 2023).
 - **Skewed Access:** Remote, tribal, and aspirational districts have **limited reach of Sub-Centres and PHCs.**
 - **Overburdened ANMs & ASHAs:** Frontline workers face poor incentives, lack of training, and multi-tasking without support.
 - **Low Utilisation:** Preference for private providers due to perceived poor quality in rural PHCs.
- **Issues at the Secondary Level (CHCs and District Hospitals)**
 - **Shortage of Specialists:** Over **80% CHCs lack the mandated four specialists** (gynaecologist, surgeon, physician, paediatrician).
 - **Referral Weakness:** Weak coordination between PHCs and CHCs leads to bypassing of primary care.
 - **Equipment Deficiency:** Inadequate labs, blood banks, and diagnostics in sub-district hospitals.
 - **Poor Management:** Lack of hospital administrators and HR oversight hampers service quality.
- **Issues at the Tertiary Level (Medical Colleges, AIIMS, Super-specialty Centres)**
 - **Urban Concentration:** Majority of AIIMS and super-specialty centres located in metro/urban clusters; rural states under-covered.
 - **Overcrowding:** Tertiary hospitals overloaded with primary-level cases due to broken referral chains.

- **Faculty Vacancies:** Significant teaching faculty and nursing staff shortages in medical colleges.
- **Limited Research & Innovation:** Weak linkages between clinical practice and medical research outputs.
- **Systemic Issues Across All Levels**
 - **Low Public Spending:** India spends ~2.1% of GDP on health (Economic Survey 2023) — far below WHO recommendation of 5%.
 - **High Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE):** Still over 48% of total health spending (NHA 2021), driving **medical poverty**.
 - **Regulatory Gaps:** Weak regulation of private healthcare—pricing, quality, ethics remain inadequately enforced.
 - **Fragmented Digital Systems:** Despite CoWIN and ABHA, many states still operate without integrated Health Information Systems.
 - **Urban–Rural Inequality:** Disproportionate distribution of doctors, beds, and facilities in favour of urban India.

Key Government Initiatives in the Health Sector

- **National Health Mission (NHM)**
 - **Launched:** 2005 (as NRHM); expanded in 2013 to include urban health under **NUHM**.
 - **Objective:** Strengthen primary and secondary healthcare systems.
 - **Key Components:**
 - **ASHA workers, Village Health & Nutrition Days, Rogi Kalyan Samitis.**
 - Focus on **maternal & child health**, communicable disease control, and health system strengthening.
 - **Achievements:** Decline in MMR, IMR; improved institutional deliveries; rise in immunisation coverage
- **Ayushman Bharat Programme (2018) :** A comprehensive initiative with **two major pillars:**
 - **Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs)**
 - Target to transform **1.5 lakh Sub-Centres and PHCs** into HWCs.
 - Deliver **comprehensive primary care:** NCD screening, mental health, palliative care, maternal-child health.
 - Emphasises **preventive, promotive, and community-based healthcare.**
 - **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)**
 - **World’s largest government-funded health insurance scheme.**
 - Provides **₹5 lakh insurance cover** per family per year to **~50 crore beneficiaries.**
 - Covers secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation in empanelled hospitals (both public and private).
 - Enabled through **Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA)** and National Health Authority (NHA).
- **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)**
 - **Launched:** 2021
 - **Aim:** Develop digital infrastructure for India’s health ecosystem.
 - **Key Tools:**
 - **ABHA ID:** Unique health ID for citizens.
 - **Health Facility Registry (HFR)** and **Healthcare Professionals Registry (HPR).**
 - **Digital Health Records** accessible across platforms and hospitals.
 - Promotes **interoperability, efficiency, and paperless healthcare.**
- **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)**
 - **Objective:** Reduce regional healthcare disparities by setting up **AIIMS-like institutions** and upgrading medical colleges.
 - Over **22 new AIIMS** established or announced as part of this initiative.
- **Mission Indradhanush**
 - **Launched:** 2014
 - **Aim:** Achieve universal immunisation against **12 vaccine-preventable diseases.**

- **Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI)** targets low-coverage districts and urban slums.
- Contributed significantly to improved child immunisation levels.
- **National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, CVD and Stroke (NPCDCS)**
- **Scope:** NCD screening at Health & Wellness Centres.
- **Target:** Early diagnosis, lifestyle counselling, and referral linkages.
- **eSanjeevani (Telemedicine Platform)**
 - Free teleconsultation platform connecting patients with doctors at primary and tertiary levels.
 - Over **14 crore consultations** completed as of 2024.
- **PM-ABHIM (Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission)**
 - **Launched:** 2021
 - Aims to build **resilient public health infrastructure** through:
 - Disease surveillance systems.
 - Block-level health labs.
 - Critical care hospital blocks in districts.

National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5)

1. What is NFHS?

- The **National Family Health Survey (NFHS)** is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted across all states and Union Territories to provide essential data on population health, fertility, family planning, reproductive health, nutrition, gender relations, and more.
- It is coordinated by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** and implemented by the **International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS)**, Mumbai.
- **NFHS-5**, conducted in **2019–21**, is the latest round and covers **707 districts** of India.

2. Key Findings from NFHS-5

- **Total Fertility Rate (TFR)**
 - TFR has **declined from 2.2 to 2.0** nationally, indicating that India has reached **below replacement level fertility**.
 - **Only five states** are still above replacement level (2.1): **Bihar, Meghalaya, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Manipur**.
 - **Urban vs Rural:**
 - Urban TFR: 1.6
 - Rural TFR: 2.1
 - **Community Trend:** Muslims recorded the **sharpest decline** in fertility rates over the past two decades.
- **Underage Marriages**
 - Female child marriage decreased to **23.3%** (from 26.8% in NFHS-4); for males: **17.7%**.
 - **States with Highest Rates:** Bihar, West Bengal, Tripura (Tripura saw a rise from 33.1% to 40.1% among females).
 - **Lowest Rates:** Kerala, J&K, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, Ladakh, Nagaland.
- **Teenage Pregnancies**
 - Reduced from **7.9% to 6.8%**, showing slight improvement in adolescent reproductive health.
- **Contraceptive Use and Family Planning**
 - Modern contraceptive use higher among **employed women (66.3%)** than **unemployed women (53.4%)**.
 - Use of modern methods rises with income— from **50.7% (lowest quintile)** to **58.7% (highest)**.
 - **Unmet need** is higher in poorer segments (11.4%) vs richer (8.6%).
- **Domestic Violence Against Women**
 - Marginal decrease from **31.2% (2015-16)** to **29.3% (2019-21)**.
 - **Highest:** Karnataka (48%), Bihar, Telangana, Manipur, Tamil Nadu.
 - **Lowest:** Lakshadweep (2.1%).
- **Institutional Births**

- Increased to **89% nationwide**, up from 79% in NFHS-4.
- **Urban areas:** 94% institutional births
- **Rural areas:** 87%
- **Child Health and Nutrition**
 - **Immunisation:** 77% of children aged 12–23 months fully immunised (up from 62% in NFHS-4).
 - **Stunting:** Declined slightly from **38% to 36%**; higher in rural areas (37%) vs urban (30%).
 - **Obesity/Overweight:**
 - Women: increased from 21% to 24%
 - Men: increased from 19% to 23%
- **Women Empowerment & Financial Inclusion**
 - **Participation in Decision-Making**
 - Ranges from **80% (Ladakh)** to **99% (Nagaland, Mizoram)**
 - Rural: 77% | Urban: 81%
 - **Bank/Savings Account Use by Women:** Increased from **53% to 79%**.

- To **promote evidence-based research** and international cooperation in traditional medicine.
- To ensure **quality control of drugs** and standardisation of AYUSH practices.

3. Key Components of AYUSH

System	Features
Ayurveda	Focuses on balancing bodily systems using diet, herbal treatment, and yogic breathing.
Yoga & Naturopathy	Emphasizes physical and mental well-being through asanas, meditation, fasting, and natural therapies.
Unani	Based on Greek-Arabic medicine; emphasizes balance of bodily humors.
Siddha	Ancient Tamil medical system focusing on herbs, minerals, and spiritual practices.
Homeopathy	Based on the principle of "like cures like" using highly diluted substances to trigger the body's healing.

AYUSH: Traditional Systems of Medicine in India

1. What is AYUSH?

- **AYUSH** stands for **Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy**. It represents India's traditional systems of healthcare and healing.
- Initially a department under the Ministry of Health (1995), AYUSH became a **full-fledged ministry in 2014**.
- It aims to mainstream **holistic, preventive, and promotive healthcare** and integrate traditional knowledge with modern systems.

2. Objectives of Ministry of AYUSH

- To develop education, research, and propagation of indigenous systems of medicine.
- To **mainstream AYUSH** systems in public health through integration with the National Health Mission (NHM).

4. Key Initiatives under AYUSH

- **National AYUSH Mission (NAM)**
 - Mainstreaming AYUSH at all health levels
 - Upgrading dispensaries and hospitals
 - Capacity building, AYUSH wellness centres under NHM
- **AYUSH Health & Wellness Centres**
 - As part of **Ayushman Bharat**, around **12,500 centres** are being operationalised by 2025.
- **International Cooperation**
 - **WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM)** set up in Jamnagar, Gujarat in collaboration with WHO (2022).
 - Bilateral MoUs with over 50 countries for AYUSH promotion.
- **AYUSH Grid**
 - Digital infrastructure to integrate AYUSH services (telemedicine, e-learning, research).

- **Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy (PCIM&H)**

- Standardises drugs and practices in traditional systems.

5. Challenges in AYUSH Sector

- **Scientific Validation:** Lack of large-scale clinical trials and evidence-based documentation.
- **Integration Issues:** Resistance from modern medical professionals and lack of standardisation.
- **Regulatory Gaps:** Quality control issues in AYUSH drugs; many products sold without rigorous testing
- **Perception Problems:** Seen as supplementary rather than primary healthcare by the public
- **Skilled Workforce Shortage:** Limited training institutes and uneven distribution across states

6. Way Forward

- **Evidence-based Integration:** Encourage **clinical research**, trials, and documentation to validate traditional therapies.
- **Regulatory Strengthening:** Enhance drug quality controls and accreditation standards.
- **AYUSH in Public Health:** Promote its use in **non-communicable diseases**, mental health, elderly care, and rehabilitation.
- **Global Outreach:** Use GCTM as a platform for expanding AYUSH-based soft power and diplomacy.
- **Interdisciplinary Curriculum:** Train future health professionals with exposure to both AYUSH and modern medicine.

Recent Development

1. Issue of Healthcare Funding in India

Health-Care Funding in India

Current Health-Care Funding Scenario

- **Total Health Expenditure (THE)** in FY 2022 was approximately ₹9.04 lakh crore, accounting for **3.8% of GDP** and about ₹6,600 per capita.

- **Public health expenditure** remains low at around **1.9% of GDP**, significantly below global averages and the national target.
- However, the **public share of health expenditure** has risen from about **29% in FY 2015** to **48% in FY 2022**, indicating a positive shift from out-of-pocket spending to public provisioning.
- **Capital expenditure** (focused on health infrastructure) has increased to over **12.7% of total health spending**, almost doubling since FY 2016.

Recent Budgetary Trends

- The **Union Budget 2025-26** allocated nearly **₹96,000 crore** to the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, a 9.5% increase over the previous year.
- Since FY 2020-21, total health sector expenditure has nearly **doubled**, growing at a **compound annual rate of 18%**.
- Flagship schemes like **PM Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana (PMASBY)** are being used to enhance primary, secondary, and tertiary health infrastructure.

Key Challenges

- **Underachievement of Targets:** India's spending is still short of the **National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 goal** of spending **2.5% of GDP on health by 2025**.
- **High Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE):** Patients often bear nearly half of India's total health expenses, leading to financial distress and poverty due to health costs.
- **State-Level Disparities:** Several states continue to allocate less than the recommended 8% of their budgets to health.
- **Private Sector Dominance:** Rising investment in private health and pharma (~\$5.5 billion in 2023) contrasts with weak public health systems.
- **Low Insurance Penetration:** Ayushman Bharat covers only a portion of the population; millions remain uncovered or underinsured.

Implications

- **Accessibility Gap:** Limited public funding constrains the expansion of services in rural and underserved areas.
- **Inequity:** Marginalised populations continue to face barriers in accessing quality care.
- **Systemic Fragility:** Low investment affects resilience against pandemics, disaster response, and non-communicable disease burden.

Way Forward

- **Raise Public Health Expenditure :** Target at least **2.5% of GDP by FY 2025**, and move towards **3% in the long term**.
- **Strengthen Primary Healthcare :** Expand the reach and capacity of Health and Wellness Centres under PMASBY, with skilled human resources and digital infrastructure.
- **Lower OOPe Burden :** Scale-up **Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY**, ensure wider drug availability under **Jan Aushadhi**, and regulate private healthcare pricing.
- **State-Level Reforms :** Incentivise states to increase health budgets and adopt health equity strategies tailored to local needs.
- **Data-Driven Planning :** Use epidemiological data and district health rankings to prioritise investment and policy interventions.
- **Improve Monitoring and Accountability :** Institutionalise third-party audits, public health dashboards, and social audits to track fund usage and outcomes.

Conclusion

- While health-care funding in India has improved in scale and direction, it remains insufficient to meet the growing and diverse needs of the population. To achieve **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** and reduce health-related poverty, India must **substantially raise public spending, strengthen primary care, and institutionalise financial protection mechanisms**.

2. Issue of maternal & Neonatal Health In India

Maternal & Neonatal Health in India

Trends in Maternal Health

- **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)** has seen a significant decline—from around 460 per 100,000 live births in 1985 to approximately **80 per 100,000** in 2023. This marks an over **86% reduction since 1990** and an **11% drop since 2022**.
- Despite progress, India still witnesses nearly **19,000 maternal deaths annually**, averaging around **52 maternal deaths per day**, making it one of the highest contributors globally.

Progress in Neonatal Health

- **Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR)** has reduced by about **70% since 1990**, a sharper decline compared to the global average.
- As of 2023, India's NMR stands at **17.3 deaths per 1,000 live births**, down from 18.1 in 2022.
- **Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)** and **Under-5 Mortality Rate (U5MR)** have declined by **71%** and **78%** respectively since 1990

Regional Progress & Disparities

- Some states have successfully reduced their **MMR to levels below the SDG target of 70 per 100,000 live births**, others still struggle with high maternal deaths. Eight states—Kerala, Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, Gujarat, and Karnataka—have already achieved this SDG target.
- **Success Stories:**
 - **Karnataka** reduced its MMR from 108 (2014–16) to 63 (2019–21), meeting SDG targets ahead of schedule.
 - **Bihar** improved its MMR from 118 to 100 between 2020 and 2022, outperforming the national average.
- **Persisting Inequities:**
 - States like **Kerala (MMR ~19)**, **Andhra Pradesh (45)**, and **Telangana (43)** continue to outperform the national average.
 - Several north-central and northeastern states lag behind due to weak health systems and poor access.

Key Drivers of Improvement

- Increase in **institutional deliveries** and **skilled birth attendance**, supported by schemes like:
 - **Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)**
 - **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)**
- Growth in **public health infrastructure**, especially in underserved areas.
- Women-centric programmes like **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)** have helped in improving antenatal care and financial support.

Persistent Challenges

- **High Absolute Deaths:** Despite falling rates, the absolute number of maternal deaths (~19,000/year) remains unacceptably high.
- **Unsafe Abortions:** Contribute to around **8% of maternal deaths**—an estimated **13 deaths per day**.
- **Regional Disparities:** Wide gaps exist between better-performing southern states and underperforming northern and northeastern regions.
- **Neglect of Social Determinants:** Malnutrition, anemia, child marriage, and poor education among women continue to affect maternal outcomes.
- **Weak Monitoring Systems:** Delayed, inconsistent data hinders targeted interventions and policy responsiveness.

Way Forward

Area	Recommended Action
Equity in Access	Launch region-specific maternal and neonatal health missions; deploy mobile health units and tribal health outreach.
Continuum of Care	Ensure seamless antenatal to postnatal care; increase access to emergency obstetric and newborn care.
Infrastructure & Workforce	Strengthen First Referral Units (FRUs); expand midwifery training and recruitment.

Safe Abortion Services	Widen access under MTP Act; create awareness and ensure availability of trained providers.
Social Determinants	Address adolescent anemia, nutrition, sanitation, and early marriage through convergence with other schemes.
Real-Time Monitoring	Use digital health platforms and maternal death audits; incentivize district-level performance.

Best Practices Around the world

1. Cuba – Preventive, Community-Based Primary Healthcare

Cuba is globally recognized for its *preventive and community-centric healthcare system*. Every neighborhood has a “consultorio” (family doctor-nurse pair) responsible for regular home visits, immunizations, and early disease detection. With a strong focus on public health and low-cost medicine, Cuba achieves high health indicators like low infant mortality (4 per 1,000 live births) despite modest GDP per capita — proving the power of **primary care and universal coverage**.

2. Japan – Universal Health Insurance Model

Japan operates a *universal health insurance system* that ensures access to affordable care without sacrificing quality. Patients can visit any hospital without referrals, while the government strictly regulates prices of drugs and services. With high life expectancy and low healthcare spending (around 10% of GDP), Japan balances cost-efficiency with health outcomes — a global model for *universal, low-cost quality care*.

3. Thailand – Universal Coverage Scheme (UCS)

Thailand launched the *UCS* in 2002 with the slogan “30 Baht Treats All Diseases.” It provides comprehensive care to all uninsured citizens at minimal cost, including hospitalization, surgery, and medicines. Funded through general taxation and managed by the National Health Security Office, this scheme significantly improved equity and reduced out-of-pocket expenditure, especially in rural areas.

4. Norway – Tax-Funded Universal Health Care

Norway offers high-quality, *publicly funded universal health care* with no direct cost at the point of service for major needs. Services are funded by general taxation, and electronic health records ensure continuity of care. High physician density, strong referral systems, and emphasis on preventive services lead to excellent health indicators — illustrating the success of the *Nordic welfare model*.

Introduction

Education is a fundamental driver of human development, social mobility, and national progress. Recognised as a **Fundamental Right under Article 21A**, it enables the realisation of other rights and underpins democratic citizenship, productivity, and equity. In India, expanding access to quality and inclusive education remains a central development priority.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Education in India

Article / Provision	Description
Article 21A (86th Amendment)	Guarantees free and compulsory education for children aged 6–14 years; forms the basis of the RTE Act, 2009.
Article 45 (DPSP)	Directs the State to provide early childhood care and education for children below 6 years.
Article 46 (DPSP)	Promotes educational and economic interests of SCs, STs, and weaker sections.
Article 15(4) & 15(5)	Allows special provisions, including reservations, for socially and educationally backward classes in educational institutions.
Article 30(1)	Grants minorities the right to establish and administer their own educational institutions.
Article 350A	Ensures primary education in the mother tongue for children of linguistic minority groups.
Article 51A(k) (Fundamental Duty)	Makes it the duty of parents to provide educational opportunities to children between 6–14 years.
Seventh Schedule – Concurrent List (Entry 25)	Empowers both Centre and States to legislate on education,

including technical and vocational training.

Major Challenges in Indian Education

- **Infrastructure Deficiencies**
 - Over **110,000 schools** operate with only **one teacher**, severely affecting learning quality.
 - **Public funding is low**, with only **0.4% of GDP allocated to public education** in the 2024–25 budget, leading to poor school facilities.
 - As per ASER data, more than **50% of Class VII rural students** cannot read Class II textbooks or perform basic division, indicating weak foundational infrastructure.
- **Quality of Learning & Teaching**
 - UNESCO's GEM report (2024–25) warns that **73% of children** in developing nations—including India—are unable to read a simple text by age 10, highlighting learning poverty despite high enrolment.
 - ASER 2024 reveals **improved basic learning skills** in rural areas, yet the shift of students to private schools signals concerns about government school quality.
- **Teacher Shortages & Skill Gaps**
 - The **pupil-teacher ratio** at the senior secondary level stands at **47:1**, far from the ideal of 26:1.
 - Factors like frequent non-teaching duties, administrative burden, and inadequate training contribute to poor teaching standards.
- **Access, Dropouts & Equity Issues**
 - Secondary school dropout rates remain high at **14.1%**, compared to **1.9% in primary** and **5.2% in upper primary**.
 - **Rural areas show stark literacy and gender gaps**—rural literacy at 73.5% vs urban 87.7%; female literacy remains lower (~65%).
 - Enrollment in government schools declines (ASER 2024), especially due to food inflation affecting school meal quality, pushing parents toward private education.
- **Mismatch with Job Market & Higher Education Crisis**

- Among adults aged 25–64, a staggering **30.4% have less than primary education**, ranking India worst among OECD countries.
- Even among graduates, the **employment rate is low** (~65.5%), while **unemployment rates** are surprisingly high (~7.9%), showcasing the education–employability mismatch.
- Concerns grow over **value erosion in elite institutes: ~1 in 6 students at IIM-Tiruchy remained unplaced**, raising questions about MBA relevance.
- Employers report that college pass-outs lack critical **soft skills, problem-solving, and practical training**.
- **Digital Divide and Disparities**
 - **Digital education advances**, yet urban–rural and caste-based disparities persist significantly.
 - The integration of digital tools is further hampered by lack of devices, connectivity, and teacher capacity in underprivileged regions.

Mid-Day Meal Scheme / PM POSHAN	Provides nutritious meals to government school children (Class I–VIII) to improve attendance, nutrition, and learning capacity.
Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA)	National digital platform offering free digital content, teacher training, and e-learning materials aligned with curriculum.
Vidyanjali 2.0	Volunteer-based initiative to boost community and private sector participation in school development.
Padhna Likhna Abhiyan	Adult education programme aimed at achieving 100% literacy among adults in the 15+ age group (revamped as New India Literacy Programme in 2022).

Key Government Initiatives in Education

India’s education policy landscape has evolved to improve **access, equity, quality, and outcomes** across all stages of learning. The following are flagship government initiatives across school and higher education:

1. School Education

Initiative	Key Features
Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)	Umbrella programme covering pre-primary to Class XII ; focuses on infrastructure, teacher training, digital education , and learning outcomes. Merged SSA, RMSA, and TE schemes.
PM SHRI Schools (2022)	Establishes 14,500 model schools across India showcasing NEP 2020 implementation; focus on holistic, inclusive, and competency-based learning .
NIPUN Bharat Mission (2021)	Aims to achieve Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) by Class 3 by 2026–27; targets children in Classes I–III.

2. Higher Education

Initiative	Key Features
Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)	Grants-based scheme to strengthen state universities and colleges , improve accreditation and governance.
National Education Policy (NEP) 2020	Vision document for transforming all education levels: 5+3+3+4 structure, multidisciplinary education, Academic Bank of Credits, and flexible entry-exit .
National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)	Annual performance-based rankings of Indian institutions to foster competition and quality improvement.
Higher Education Commission of India (proposed)	Will subsume UGC and AICTE to create a single regulatory body for all non-medical higher education.
Study in India	Initiative to attract foreign students to Indian HEIs; aims to internationalise higher education .

National Digital University (proposed under NEP)

Aims to expand access to **high-quality digital degrees** through a single national platform.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

1. What is NEP 2020?

- The **National Education Policy 2020**, approved in July 2020, is India's first education policy of the 21st century. It replaces the 1986 policy and seeks to transform India's education system into a **holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary**, and **learner-centric model** aligned with the needs of the 21st century.

2. Key Objectives

- Achieve **universal foundational literacy and numeracy** by Grade 3 by 2025.
- Increase **Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER)** in school and higher education.
- Raise **public spending on education to 6% of GDP**.
- Promote **equity, inclusion, and multilingualism** in education.
- Encourage **critical thinking, creativity, and life skills**.
- Foster **India-centric values and global competencies**.

Major Reforms in School Education

- **New Structure:** Shift from **10+2 to 5+3+3+4** system, covering ages 3–18 and integrating early childhood care.
- **Foundational Literacy Mission:** Emphasis on reading, writing, and numeracy in early years through national mission.
- **Assessment Reform:** Board exams to test **conceptual clarity** rather than rote learning. Establishment of **PARAKH** for standard setting.
- **Curriculum Overhaul:** Focus on **experiential learning**, critical thinking, and inclusion of coding and vocational education from Grade 6.
- **Multilingualism:** Emphasis on teaching in **mother tongue or regional language** at least till Grade 5, preferably till Grade 8.

- **Technology Integration:** Establishment of **National Educational Technology Forum (NETF)** and strengthening of digital platforms.

Major Reforms in Higher Education

- **Multidisciplinary Undergraduate Programmes:** 4-year degree with **multiple exit options** and credit-based structure.
- **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC):** Digital platform for storing and transferring academic credits.
- **Single Regulator:** Creation of **Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)** with four verticals—regulation, accreditation, funding, and academic standards.
- **National Research Foundation (NRF):** To boost research culture and funding in higher education institutions.
- **Internationalisation:** High-performing foreign universities permitted to set up campuses in India.
- **Teacher Education:** Minimum 4-year integrated B.Ed programme made mandatory by 2030.

Implementation Highlights

- Several states have initiated **textbook revisions, teacher training**, and curriculum alignment.
- Deployment of **nodal teachers** and **self-assessment mechanisms** in schools has shown positive outcomes.
- Digital content and **EdTech platforms** like DIKSHA are being scaled up to support blended learning.
- Some states have raised concerns over **centralisation** and **language imposition**, asserting their autonomy in education.

Challenges

- **Federal Tensions:** Education being in the Concurrent List, states have shown resistance to a one-size-fits-all approach.
- **Equity Concerns:** Risk of **elite capture**, digital divide, and marginalisation of disadvantaged groups.
- **Teacher Capacity:** Large-scale training and orientation needed for teachers to implement reforms effectively.

- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Inadequate digital infrastructure and school facilities, especially in rural and tribal areas.
- **Implementation Gaps:** Pace of policy roll-out uneven across states and institutions.

Way Forward

- Promote strong coordination between Centre and States for smooth implementation.
- Ensure inclusion of girls, rural children, and marginalised communities.
- Provide regular training and support to teachers.
- Improve school infrastructure and digital facilities.
- Give more autonomy and accountability to schools and institutions.
- Set up systems to monitor progress and address gaps.
- Create awareness among parents and communities to support reforms.
- Increase public spending on education gradually towards 6% of GDP.

Recent Development

Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)

Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)

What is ASER?

The **Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)** is a large-scale, **citizen-led household survey** that provides **nationwide estimates of children's schooling status and basic learning outcomes** in rural India.

- It is conducted by the **NGO Pratham**, starting in **2005**.
- Unlike school-based surveys, ASER is **household-based**, ensuring inclusion of all children—whether enrolled, dropped out, never attended school, or studying in government/private/religious schools.
- The 'basic' ASER survey is now conducted in **alternate years** (since 2016), covering all rural districts of India.
- In gap years, **focused surveys** are done in selected districts, exploring themes such as early childhood, digital learning, or youth skills.

- The survey primarily tracks:
 - Enrollment (ages 3–16)
 - Basic reading and arithmetic skills (ages 5–16)

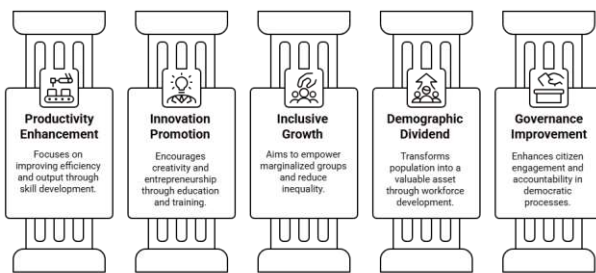
Key Findings of ASER 2024

- **Enrollment Trends**
 - **Government school enrollment (ages 6–14)** dropped to **66.8% in 2024**, after a pandemic-related spike to 72.9% in 2022.
 - **Private school enrollment** has rebounded:
 - Rose steadily from **18.7% in 2006** to **30.8% in 2014**, remained stable in 2018, and increased again in 2024.
- **Learning Recovery Post-Pandemic**
 - **Significant learning gains** have been observed in foundational arithmetic and reading:
 - **Class 3 (subtraction skills):** 33.7% in 2024 (up from 25.9% in 2022 and 28.2% in 2018). Government schools showed a **7% gain**, while private schools rose by **4%**.
 - **Class 5 (reading at Class 2 level):** 44.8% in 2024, almost recovering to the 2018 level of 44.2% (up from 38.5% in 2022). Private schools: 59.3% in 2024 (still below 65.1% in 2018).
- **Digital Literacy Among Adolescents**
 - **82% of children (age 14–16)** know how to use smartphones.
 - However, **only 57%** use them for **educational purposes**, indicating a gap in purposeful digital engagement.
- **Attendance in Government Elementary Schools**
 - **Student Attendance:** Rose from **72.4% in 2018** to **75.9% in 2024**.
 - **Teacher Attendance:** Increased from **85.1% in 2018** to **87.5% in 2024**.
- **Pre-Primary Education**
 - States like **Karnataka, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala, and Nagaland** reported **enrollment rates above 90%** among 5-year-olds in pre-primary schooling.

Introduction

Human resources constitute the most vital asset for a nation's development, productivity, and innovation. In India, leveraging its large and youthful population through effective **education, skill development, and health** is central to realising the **demographic dividend** and achieving inclusive growth.

Foundations of HRD



Key Issues in Human Resource Development & Skilling in India

- **Low Formal Skill Training Levels**
 - As per **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022-23:**
 - Only **3.5%** of persons aged 15+ have received **formal vocational training**.
 - Around **24.9%** received **informal training** (mostly hereditary or on-the-job).
 - This is **much lower** compared to countries like South Korea (~96%) and Germany (~75%).
- **High NEET Rate (Not in Education, Employment or Training)**
 - **MoSPI Labour Force Report (2022-23)** shows:
 - Over **25% of youth (15-29 years)**, particularly women, are NEET.
 - Rural female NEET rate is **nearly 45%**, indicating deep-rooted social barriers.
- **Mismatch Between Education and Employability**
 - **India Skills Report 2024** notes:
 - Only **51.3%** of Indian youth are considered **employable**.
 - Highest mismatch exists in fields like IT, electronics, and construction.
 - Employers report lack of problem-solving, communication, and digital skills.

- **Low Employer Investment in Skilling**
 - **Annual Skill Survey 2024 (by MSDE)** reveals:
 - Only **1 in 4 employers** invest in continuous skill development.
 - Most corporate training is limited to top-tier employees.
- **Weak Industry-Academia Linkage**
 - Curriculum updates remain infrequent and unresponsive.
 - **AICTE 2023 report** found:
 - Over **60% of engineering graduates** are not directly employable due to **outdated course content**.
 - Internships, apprenticeships, and practical training are still not widespread.
- **Gender Disparity in Skilling**
 - Women form less than **20%** of enrolments in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).
 - Socio-cultural barriers, mobility issues, and safety concerns hinder their participation.
- **State-wise Disparities**
 - Skill development infrastructure and performance vary widely.
 - Example: **Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat** lead in skilling outcomes.
 - Backward states like **Bihar, Jharkhand, and UP** lag in ITI coverage, trainer availability, and placement rates.
- **Poor Recognition of Informal Skills**
 - Majority of India's workforce (~**80%**) is in the **informal sector**.
 - Their skills are **unrecognized**, with no formal certification, affecting mobility and wages.

Key Initiatives for Human Resource Development & Skilling in India

- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 1.0-4.0)**
 - Launched in 2015; latest version PMKVY 4.0 emphasises on-job training, industry-linked curricula, and future-ready skills (AI, green economy, robotics).
 - Over **1.6 crore candidates trained** till 2024 across short-term training, recognition of prior learning (RPL), and entrepreneurship.
- **National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)**

- Encourages apprenticeship by reimbursing 25% of the stipend (up to ₹1,500/month).
- By March 2024, over **32 lakh apprentices** trained; female participation reached **20.8%**.
- Proposed stipend hike from ₹6,800 to ₹12,300 to make apprenticeships more attractive.
- **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) & Skill India Mission**
 - NSDC acts as a public-private facilitator for vocational training and certification.
 - Skill India Mission aims to skill **40 crore youth**, working through Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) and affiliated training partners.
- **Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH)**
 - Launched in 2023 to provide a **centralised digital ecosystem** for training, certifications, and job linkages.
 - Offers access to over **690 e-learning courses**, **1,600+ e-books**, and AI-enabled career mapping tools.
- **Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) Upgradation**
 - Over **1,000 government ITIs** are being modernised through industry partnerships.
 - Focus on updated curricula, smart classrooms, and skill hubs under the hub-and-spoke model.
- **PM Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman Yojana**
 - Launched in 2023 for **traditional artisans and craftsmen** (e.g., carpenters, blacksmiths, potters).
 - Includes free training, toolkit support, digital onboarding, and credit assistance for **30 lakh families**.

Skills, Digital Skilling Platforms.

UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. In the context of India's push for Universal Health Coverage, expanding and empowering primary healthcare is fundamental. Critically examine the systemic challenges in primary health and suggest holistic reforms.
2. While the private sector plays a significant role, strengthening public provision is key to equity. Evaluate the effectiveness of public-private partnerships in India's health system and suggest a way forward.
3. The National Education Policy 2020 sets an ambitious reform agenda, but foundational learning gaps persist. Critically assess how NEP 2020 addresses quality and inclusion in school education, noting key successes and limitations.
4. India's demographic dividend will materialise only through effective integration of education, skilling, and employment. Analyse the current disconnects and propose institutional and policy interlinkages for improved outcomes.
5. Targeted interventions in maternal and neonatal health are critical not only for survival, but also for nation's human capital development. Discuss India's progress, challenges, and the need for integrated policy responses.

Value Addition for Unit 5

Keywords : Constitutional Health Mandate, Primary Healthcare, Tertiary Care Infrastructure, Out-of-Pocket Expenditure, Ayushman Bharat, Digital Health IDs, Traditional Medicine Integration, Maternal Neonatal Outcomes, Universal Immunisation, Human Capital, Foundational Literacy, Skill-Employment Nexus, Vocational Education, Public Private Partnership, Telemedicine Expansion, ASER Learning Gaps, Teacher Training Reform, Apprenticeship Promotion, Industry-Academia Linkage, Gender Disparity in

Acronyms

A. Health Sector Acronyms

1. HEALTHY – Issues in Indian Healthcare

- **H** – Human Resource Shortage
- **E** – Equipment and Infrastructure Deficit
- **A** – Accessibility Gaps (rural-urban divide)
- **L** – Low Public Spending
- **T** – Trust Deficit in Public Facilities
- **H** – High Out-of-Pocket Expenditure
- **Y** – Yawning Regulatory Gaps

2. REFORM – Way Forward for Healthcare

- **R** – Raise Public Health Spending
- **E** – Empower Primary Healthcare (HWCs, ASHAs)
- **F** – Fund State Health Missions Adequately
- **O** – Overhaul Regulatory Mechanisms

- **R** – Reskill Health Workers
- **M** – Monitor Outcomes through Digital Health Tools

B. Education Sector Acronyms

1. SCHOOL – Problems in School Education

- **S** – Shortage of Trained Teachers
- **C** – Curriculum–Employability Mismatch
- **H** – High Dropout Rates
- **O** – Outdated Infrastructure
- **O** – Over-reliance on Rote Learning
- **L** – Learning Poverty (as per ASER)

2. LEARN – NEP 2020 Reforms

- **L** – Literacy & Numeracy Focus (NIPUN Bharat)
- **E** – Experiential Learning & Multilingualism
- **A** – Academic Bank of Credits
- **R** – Restructuring to 5+3+3+4
- **N** – National Research & Digital Universities

C. Human Resources / Skilling Acronyms

1. SKILL – Challenges in Skill Development

- **S** – Structural Gaps in Training Infrastructure
- **K** – Knowledge–Industry Disconnect
- **I** – Informal Workforce Unrecognised
- **L** – Low Employer Participation
- **L** – Limited Female Participation

2. TRAIN – Strategy for Human Resource Development

- **T** – Technology-driven Skilling (SIDH, AI)
- **R** – Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- **A** – Apprenticeship Promotion (NAPS)
- **I** – Industry–Academia Linkage
- **N** – National Skill Hubs & Credit Portability

Education

Sub-Sector	Key Issues	Government Interventions
Early Childhood / Nursery Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural–urban disparities • Poor nutrition and health affecting learning • Lack of awareness among parents • No national curriculum standard • Inadequate Anganwadi infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) • National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy • National Creche Scheme
Primary Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak foundational literacy & numeracy • High teacher absenteeism • Inadequate infrastructure • Mother tongue vs medium of instruction dilemma 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (now part of Samagra Shiksha) • Mid-Day Meal Scheme • Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat
Secondary Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High dropout rate (especially girls) • Poor learning outcomes • Infrastructure gaps (toilets, classrooms) • Rote learning culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (merged in Samagra Shiksha) • National Means-Cum-Merit Scholarship • Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (for girl education)

Readymade Templates

Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) • Outdated curriculum • Weak global ranking • Poor industry linkages • Limited research funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) • National Education Policy 2020 • SWAYAM & MOOCs • VAIBHAV scheme (for brain gain)
Education Governance & Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of digital access • Inter-state and gender disparities • Poor monitoring and teacher performance systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital India e-Learning initiatives (DIKSHA, PM eVIDYA) • Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+)

Maternal & Child Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High MMR & IMR in backward districts • Malnutrition • Low institutional deliveries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poshan Abhiyaan • LaQshya Initiative • ICDS and Anganwadi Services
Public Health Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low public health expenditure (~1.28% of GDP) • Poor health data systems • Out-of-pocket expenditure burden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) • Free Diagnostics Scheme • Health Infrastructure Mission
Disease Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rise in NCDs & mental health issues • Inadequate surveillance for epidemics • Gaps in vaccine coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Programme for NCDs • Mental Health Care Act, 2017 • Universal Immunisation Programme

Health

Sub-Sector	Issues	Government Interventions
Primary Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortage of sub-centres and PHCs • Urban-rural imbalance • Low health awareness • Inadequate health personnel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Health Mission (NHM) • Ayushman Bharat - Health & Wellness Centres • Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)
Secondary & Tertiary Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcrowded government hospitals • Shortage of specialist doctors • Poor referral systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PM-Ayushman Bharat (PM-JAY) • Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)

Human Resources

Sub-Sector	Issues	Government Interventions
Education & Skill Mismatch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curricula not aligned with market needs • Poor employability of graduates • Limited vocational training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Education Policy (NEP 2020) • Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)
Demographic Dividend Utilisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of jobs for youth • Rising educated unemployment • Gender gap in workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start-up India • MGNREGA (rural employment) • National Career Service (NCS)

Vocational & Technical Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low enrolment in it is • Inadequate infrastructure • Obsolete syllabus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill India Mission • SANKALP and STRIVE schemes for ITIs
Brain Drain & Migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skilled migration abroad • Internal rural-to-urban migration due to lack of local opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VAIBHAV Scheme (Global Indian Scientists) • One District One Product (ODOP)
Institutional Capacity & Labour Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal employment (~90% workforce) • Labour rights enforcement weak • Lack of coordination across ministries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shramev Jayate programme • Four Labour Codes • e-SHRAM Portal for unorganised workers

Navigating the Syllabus: What You Need to Know

- 1. Concepts and Classifications**
 - Definitions: absolute/relative poverty, undernutrition, malnutrition, hidden hunger
 - Poverty lines and committees (Tendulkar, Rangarajan)
 - Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)
- 2. Current Status in India**
 - Trends in poverty (income-based and multidimensional)
 - Hunger and malnutrition indicators (GHI, NFHS)
 - Inequality and food insecurity
- 3. Relationship between Poverty and Hunger**
 - How poverty causes hunger (low income, inequality, joblessness)
 - How hunger sustains poverty (malnutrition, productivity loss)
 - Structural and social factors contributing to both
- 4. Government Interventions**
 - Food Security: NFSA, PDS, ONORC, PMGKAY
 - Employment: MGNREGA, DAY-NRLM, DAY-NULM
 - Nutrition: Poshan Abhiyaan, ICDS, Mid-Day Meal
 - Agriculture: PMKSY, NFSM, PM-KISAN
 - Health & Sanitation: PMJAY, NHM, Swachh Bharat
 - Education & Skilling: Samagra Shiksha, PMKVY
 - Housing & Finance: PMAY, PMJDY
- 5. Challenges**
- 6. Way Forward**

UPSC Previous Year Questions

Question	Nature of Question	Core Demand
Poverty and malnutrition create a vicious cycle, adversely affecting human capital formation. What steps can be taken to break the cycle? (2024)	Poverty-Human Capital Link	Suggest policy and institutional steps to break the poverty-malnutrition-human capital trap
Can the vicious cycle of gender inequality, poverty and malnutrition be broken through micro financing of women SHGs? Explain with examples. (2021)	Microfinance + Gender-Poverty Nexus	Explain how microfinance via SHGs helps address gender inequality and its link to poverty and malnutrition

<p>The incidence and intensity of poverty are more important in determining poverty based on income alone. In this context analyse the latest United Nations Multidimensional Poverty Index Report. (2020)</p>	<p>Multidimensional Poverty Analysis</p>	<p>Critically analyse MPI framework and its relevance to India's poverty estimation</p>
<p>There is a growing divergence in the relationship between poverty and hunger in India. The shrinking of social expenditure by the government is forcing the poor to spend more on non-Food essential items squeezing their food-budget. Elucidate. (2019)</p>	<p>Poverty-Hunger Divergence</p>	<p>Explain how reduced social spending shifts poor household budgets and exacerbates hunger</p>
<p>How far do you agree with the view that the focus on lack of availability of food as the main cause of hunger takes the attention away from ineffective human development policies in India? (2018)</p>	<p>Food Availability vs. Policy Gaps</p>	<p>Critically evaluate the causes of hunger beyond food availability, especially policy inefficiencies</p>
<p>Poverty Alleviation Programmes in India remain mere show pieces until and unless they are backed by political will. Discuss with reference to the performance of the major poverty alleviation programmes in India. (2017)</p>	<p>Implementation of Poverty Alleviation Programmes</p>	<p>Evaluate major poverty alleviation schemes and the role of political will in effective execution</p>
<p>Though there have been several different estimates of poverty in India, all indicate reduction in poverty over time. Do you agree? Critically examine with reference to urban and rural poverty indicators. (2015)</p>	<p>Poverty Trends and Data Analysis</p>	<p>Examine trends in poverty using rural-urban disaggregated indicators and assess credibility of claims</p>

Introduction

Poverty and hunger remain persistent challenges in India, affecting millions despite sustained economic growth. They not only violate basic human dignity but also hinder inclusive development and social justice. Addressing these issues is central to fulfilling constitutional mandates under **Article 21** (Right to Life) and international commitments like the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 1 & 2)**.

Understanding Poverty and Hunger - Concepts and Classifications

A. Definitions

Concept	Description
Absolute Poverty	Inability to meet minimum subsistence needs (food, shelter, clothing); measured using a defined poverty line.
Relative Poverty	Poverty in comparison to others in society; reflects inequality rather than deprivation.
Chronic Poverty	Persistent poverty over a long period, often intergenerational.
Transient Poverty	Temporary poverty due to shocks like illness, loss of job, or disaster.
Undernutrition	Insufficient caloric intake to meet basic energy needs.
Malnutrition	Imbalance of nutrients (includes undernutrition and overnutrition).
Hidden Hunger	Deficiency of essential micronutrients (e.g., iron, iodine, vitamin A) without visible signs.
Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)	Measures poverty across multiple indicators: health, education, and living standards (UNDP & Oxford).

Poverty Lines and Methodologies

Committee	Highlights
Tendulkar Committee (2009)	Shifted from calorie-based to consumption-based poverty line; poverty line set at ₹27 (rural) & ₹33 (urban) per day (2009 prices).
Rangarajan Committee (2014)	Raised poverty line to ₹32 (rural) & ₹47 (urban); included broader consumption items. Estimated 29.5% poverty rate in 2011-12.
Critique of Income-based Lines	Ignores non-income aspects of deprivation like education, health, sanitation; underestimates real poverty. MPI considered more comprehensive.

Current Status of Poverty & Hunger in India

A. Poverty

- **Extreme Poverty Reduction:**
 - According to the **World Bank's revised International Poverty Line (IPL) of \$3.00/day (2021 PPP)**, India's extreme poverty rate has significantly declined to **5.3% in 2022-23**, down from **27.1% in 2011-12**. This translates to approximately **269 million people** lifted out of extreme poverty over this period.
 - At the previous IPL of \$2.15/day (2017 PPP), extreme poverty was estimated at **2%** in 2023, indicating near eradication of extreme poverty at this threshold.
 - The World Bank's \$3.65/day poverty line (for lower-middle-income countries) shows poverty declining from **61%** in 2015 to **44%** in 2021.
- **Multidimensional Poverty:**
 - The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2024 estimates that **11.3%** of India's population (approximately **169.5 million people**) are multidimensionally poor, based on health, education, and standard of living

indicators. This is a significant reduction from **24.85%** in 2015-16 to **14.96%** in 2019-21, with **135 million people** escaping multidimensional poverty between 2016 and 2021.

- Rural poverty remains higher, with **7.2%** of the rural population in extreme poverty in 2022-23.

- **Economic Inequality:**

- Despite poverty reduction, income inequality remains a challenge. The top **10%** of the population holds **77%** of national wealth, and the top **1%** owns **73%**, according to Oxfam.
- Rural consumer spending has declined by **10%** annually, and urban spending by **4%**, affecting food access and quality for vulnerable populations.

B. Hunger

- **Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2024:**

- India ranks **105th out of 127 countries** in the 2024 GHI, with a score of **27.3**, categorized as “serious” hunger. This is a slight improvement from the 2023 rank of **111th** (score of **28.7**).
- Key GHI indicators for India:
 - **Undernourishment: 13.7%** of the population (down from **16.6%** in 2023).
 - **Child Wasting: 18.7%**, the highest globally, reflecting acute undernutrition.
 - **Child Stunting: 35.5%**, indicating chronic undernutrition.
 - **Under-Five Mortality: 2.9%**.
- India’s GHI score has improved from **38.4** (alarming) in 2000 to **27.3** in 2024, but progress remains slow compared to neighbors like Bangladesh and Nepal, which are in the “moderate” category.

- **Food Insecurity and Malnutrition:**

- The FAO’s 2020 report estimated **189.2 million people** (14% of the population) are undernourished.

- The National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21) reports:

- **51.4%** of women aged 15-49 are anemic.
- **34.7%** of children under five are stunted.
- **20%** of children under five suffer from wasting.
- **32%** of children under five are underweight.

- A 2023 NITI Aayog report indicates that **74.1%** of India’s population (over **1 billion people**) cannot afford a healthy diet, exacerbating the nutrition crisis.
- The Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (2022-23) shows that the poorest 5% in rural areas consume only **1,564 kcal/day** (required: 2,172 kcal) and in urban areas **1,607 kcal/day** (required: 2,135 kcal).

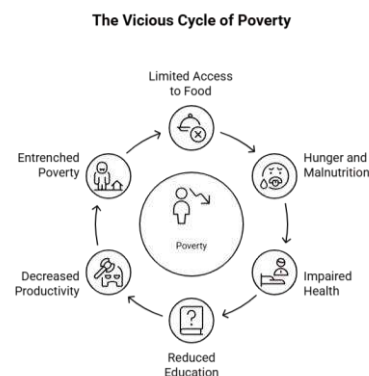
Relationship Between Poverty and Hunger in India

- Poverty and hunger in India are deeply intertwined, with poverty acting as a primary driver of hunger and food insecurity, while hunger perpetuates poverty through its impact on health, productivity, and economic potential. Below is a detailed analysis of their relationship:
- **Poverty as a Cause of Hunger**
 - **Limited Purchasing Power:** Poverty restricts access to adequate and nutritious food. The 2022-23 Household Consumption Expenditure Survey shows that the poorest 5% in rural areas consume only **1,564 kcal/day** (required: 2,172 kcal) and in urban areas **1,607 kcal/day** (required: 2,135 kcal). A 2023 NITI Aayog report indicates that **74.1%** of India’s population cannot afford a healthy diet due to low income.
 - **Economic Inequality:** The top **10%** hold **77%** of national wealth, and the top **1%** own **73%** (Oxfam). This inequality limits food access for the poor, exacerbating hunger. Rural

consumer spending has declined by **10%** annually, and urban spending by **4%**, reducing access to quality food.

- **Unemployment and Low Wages:** Poverty often stems from unemployment or low-paying jobs, particularly in rural areas where **7.2%** of the population lives in extreme poverty (2022-23). This restricts households' ability to purchase sufficient food, leading to undernourishment (**13.7%** of the population, GHI 2024).
- **Social and Regional Disparities:** Marginalized groups (e.g., Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes) and regions prone to natural disasters (e.g., Assam, Bihar) face higher poverty rates, correlating with higher hunger levels. For instance, rural areas have higher multidimensional poverty (**11.3%**, MPI 2024), contributing to worse nutritional outcomes.
- **Hunger as a Contributor to Poverty**
 - **Health and Productivity Loss:** Hunger leads to malnutrition, which impairs physical and cognitive development. The 2024 GHI reports **18.7%** child wasting and **35.5%** child stunting, the highest globally. Malnourished children are less likely to complete education or secure well-paying jobs, perpetuating the poverty cycle.
 - **Intergenerational Poverty:** Malnutrition in mothers (e.g., **51.4%** of women aged 15-49 are anemic, NFHS-5) leads to low birth weights and health issues in children, limiting their future earning potential and trapping families in poverty.
 - **Reduced Economic Productivity:** Undernourishment (**189.2 million people**, FAO 2020) reduces workforce productivity, particularly in agriculture-dependent rural areas, where low energy intake hampers physical labor, further entrenching poverty.
- **Common Structural Factors**

- **Inefficient Food Systems:** The Public Distribution System (PDS) suffers from leakages and exclusion errors, denying over **90 million eligible people** food entitlements. This disproportionately affects the poor, worsening hunger.
- **Agricultural Challenges:** Low agricultural productivity and **40% post-harvest losses** due to poor infrastructure limit food availability, impacting both poverty (through reduced income for farmers) and hunger (through reduced food supply).
- **Climate Vulnerability:** Climate change-induced events like droughts and floods disrupt agricultural output, affecting rural livelihoods and food access, particularly for the **5.3%** living below the \$3/day poverty line (2022-23).
- **Social Inequalities:** Caste, gender, and regional disparities exacerbate both poverty and hunger. For example, marginalized communities face barriers to education, employment, and food access, reinforcing the cycle.
- **Vicious Cycle**
 - Poverty limits access to nutritious food, leading to hunger and malnutrition, which impair health, education, and productivity, further entrenching poverty. For instance, **32%** of children under five are underweight (NFHS-5), reducing their future economic potential and perpetuating poverty across generations.



Government Interventions to Address Poverty and Hunger in India

Poverty and hunger in India are closely interlinked, with poverty driving food insecurity and hunger perpetuating poverty through health and productivity losses. The Indian government has implemented comprehensive programs to address both issues. Below are consolidated overview of key interventions, their impact, challenges.

1. Food Security and Subsidized Food Distribution

- **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:**
 - **Objective:** Provides subsidized food grains (rice at ₹3/kg, wheat at ₹2/kg, coarse grains at ₹1/kg) to **75%** of rural and **50%** of urban populations through the Public Distribution System (PDS).
 - **Impact:** Covers over **800 million people**, reducing undernourishment (**13.7%**, GHI 2024) and supporting the poorest 5% who consume only **1,564 kcal/day** (rural) and **1,607 kcal/day** (urban, 2022-23). Contributes to poverty reduction (**5.1%**, \$3/day, 2023-24).
 - **Challenges:** Leakages, corruption, and exclusion errors exclude over **90 million eligible beneficiaries**. Poor grain quality and irregular supply in remote areas.
- **One Nation, One Ration Card (ONORC):**
 - **Objective:** Enables migrant workers to access PDS benefits nationwide, addressing hunger among mobile, poverty-stricken populations.
 - **Impact:** Implemented in **32 states/UTs**, benefiting millions of migrants, particularly during economic disruptions like COVID-19.
 - **Challenges:** Technical glitches, incomplete portability, and low awareness among beneficiaries.

- **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY):**

- **Objective:** Provides additional free food grains (5 kg/person/month) to NFSA beneficiaries during crises.
- **Impact:** Supported over **80 crore people** (2020-23), mitigating hunger during economic shocks.
- **Challenges:** Temporary nature and logistical issues in remote areas limit long-term impact.

2. Income Generation and Employment

- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA):**
 - **Objective:** Guarantees 100 days of wage employment per year to rural households for unskilled manual work, boosting income to address poverty and hunger.
 - **Impact:** Provided employment to over **55 million households** in 2022-23, enhancing purchasing power in rural areas (**7.2%** in extreme poverty, 2022-23) and reducing food insecurity.
 - **Challenges:** Delayed wage payments, limited work availability in some regions, and administrative inefficiencies.
- **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM):**
 - **Objective:** Promotes self-employment and skill development through self-help groups (SHGs), particularly for women, to create sustainable livelihoods.
 - **Impact:** Mobilized over **8 crore women** into SHGs, increasing household incomes and reducing multidimensional poverty (**11.3%**, MPI 2024).
 - **Challenges:** Uneven implementation across states and limited market linkages for SHG products.
- **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM):**

- **Objective:** Provides skill training, microcredit, and employment opportunities to urban poor, including slum dwellers and street vendors.
- **Impact:** Supported over **10 lakh urban poor** with livelihoods, addressing urban poverty (urban spending decline of **4%** annually).
- **Challenges:** Rapid urbanization outpaces program coverage, leaving informal sector workers vulnerable.

3. Nutrition-Specific Interventions

- **Poshan Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission):**
 - **Objective:** Reduces malnutrition, stunting (**35.5%**, GHI 2024), wasting (**18.7%**), and anemia (**51.4%** in women, NFHS-5) among children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers.
 - **Impact:** Reached millions through Anganwadi centers, providing supplementary nutrition and health education, addressing health-related poverty and hunger drivers.
 - **Challenges:** Inadequate funding, uneven implementation, and lack of trained personnel.
- **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS):**
 - **Objective:** Provides supplementary nutrition, health check-ups, and pre-school education to children under 6 and pregnant/lactating women.
 - **Impact:** Covers over **10 crore beneficiaries**, reducing child underweight rates (**32%**, NFHS-5) and supporting early childhood development.
 - **Challenges:** Poor infrastructure, irregular food supply, and staffing shortages in rural areas.
- **Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDM):**

- **Objective:** Provides free meals to school children to improve nutrition and school attendance, addressing hunger and education barriers.
- **Impact:** Serves over **12 crore children** daily, reducing child wasting and boosting enrollment among the poor.
- **Challenges:** Inconsistent meal quality, hygiene issues, and disruptions during school closures.

4. Agricultural and Food Supply Enhancement

- **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY):**
 - **Objective:** Improves irrigation and agricultural productivity to ensure food availability and reduce hunger.
 - **Impact:** Enhanced irrigation for over **20 lakh hectares**, supporting food grain production (**330 million tonnes**, 2022-23).
 - **Challenges:** Slow implementation and dependence on monsoons.
- **National Food Security Mission (NFSM):**
 - **Objective:** Increases production of rice, wheat, pulses, and coarse cereals to improve food affordability for the poor.
 - **Impact:** Boosted pulse production by **20%** (2016-23), improving access to protein-rich foods.
 - **Challenges:** Post-harvest losses (**40%** for some crops) due to poor storage and infrastructure.
- **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN):**
 - **Objective:** Provides ₹6,000 annually to small and marginal farmers to support agricultural households' food security and income.
 - **Impact:** Reached over **11 crore farmers**, enhancing food access and rural incomes.
 - **Challenges:** Excludes landless agricultural laborers, a highly food-insecure group.

5. Health and Sanitation for Nutrition and Poverty Reduction

- **Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY):**
 - **Objective:** Provides up to ₹5 lakh per family annually for hospitalization to over 50 crore people, preventing health-related poverty and hunger.
 - **Impact:** Covered over **6 crore hospitalizations** by 2023, reducing out-of-pocket healthcare costs that exacerbate poverty.
 - **Challenges:** Limited outpatient care and inadequate rural healthcare infrastructure.
- **National Health Mission (NHM):**
 - **Objective:** Improves maternal and child health, addressing poverty-linked malnutrition and anemia.
 - **Impact:** Reduced under-five mortality to **2.9%** (GHI 2024), supporting economic productivity.
 - **Challenges:** Shortages of healthcare workers and uneven access in remote areas.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission:**
 - **Objective:** Ensures access to sanitation and clean water to reduce diseases that impair nutrition uptake and worsen poverty.
 - **Impact:** Achieved **100% open defecation-free status** in rural areas by 2019, improving nutrition absorption and health outcomes.
 - **Challenges:** Maintenance of facilities and water scarcity in some regions.

6. Education and Skill Development

- **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan:**
 - **Objective:** Provides free education to children aged 6-14 to break the poverty-hunger cycle through improved human capital.

- **Impact:** Increased enrollment and reduced multidimensional poverty from **24.85%** (2015-16) to **14.96%** (2019-21).

- **Challenges:** Poor infrastructure and teacher shortages in rural areas.

- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):**

- **Objective:** Offers skill training to youth to improve employability and income for food access.

- **Impact:** Trained over **1.4 crore youth** by 2023, supporting urban and rural livelihoods.

- **Challenges:** Mismatch between skills and market demands, and limited outreach to marginalized groups.

7. Housing and Financial Inclusion

- **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY):**

- **Objective:** Provides affordable housing to urban and rural poor, improving living standards.

- **Impact:** Constructed over **4 crore houses** by 2023, reducing multidimensional poverty indicators like inadequate housing.

- **Challenges:** Construction delays, land acquisition issues, and urban-rural disparities.

- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY):**

- **Objective:** Promotes financial inclusion through bank accounts, credit, and insurance for the poor.

- **Impact:** Over **50 crore accounts** opened by 2023, enabling direct benefit transfers (DBTs) worth **₹34 lakh crore**, supporting poverty and hunger alleviation.

- **Challenges:** Low financial literacy and limited credit access for the poorest.

Common Challenges in Government Interventions Addressing Poverty and Hunger in India

- **Implementation Gaps:** Bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, and poor central-state coordination reduce program effectiveness.
- **Exclusion Errors:** Marginalized groups (e.g., Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, migrants) face barriers due to documentation or discrimination.
- **Funding Constraints:** Underfunding of programs like Poshan Abhiyaan and ICDS limits scalability and impact.
- **Inefficient PDS:** Leakages, corruption, and exclusion errors exclude over 90 million eligible beneficiaries, undermining hunger alleviation.
- **Climate Vulnerability:** Droughts, floods, and erratic rainfall disrupt food production and rural livelihoods.
- **Lack of Dietary Diversity:** Over-reliance on cereals in PDS neglects protein and micronutrient-rich foods, perpetuating malnutrition.
- **Regional Disparities:** Poorer states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh lag in program implementation, worsening poverty and hunger.
- **Social Inequalities:** Caste, gender, and ethnic discrimination limit access to benefits for vulnerable groups.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Poor storage, transport, and healthcare facilities hamper program delivery and outcomes.
- **Limited Monitoring:** Weak oversight and lack of real-time data hinder timely program adjustments.

Way Forward

- **Enhance PDS Efficiency:** Use AI, blockchain, and apps like "Mera Ration" to reduce leakages and improve targeting.
- **Promote Dietary Diversity:** Include pulses, dairy, and vegetables in PDS to address

malnutrition (e.g., child wasting at **18.7%**, GHI 2024).

- **Reduce Post-Harvest Losses:** Improve storage and transport infrastructure to minimize losses (**40%** for some crops).
- **Increase Funding:** Prioritize health, nutrition, and education programs to address multidimensional poverty (**11.3%**, MPI 2024).
- **Climate-Resilient Agriculture:** Promote drought-resistant crops and sustainable farming to ensure food security and rural incomes.
- **Inclusive Targeting:** Simplify documentation and expand outreach to marginalized and migrant populations.
- **Leverage Technology:** Use data analytics and satellite imagery for real-time monitoring of poverty and hunger programs.
- **Address Inequality:** Promote equitable wealth distribution to reduce income disparities (top **1%** own **73%** of wealth, Oxfam).

Best Practice Around the world about Poverty & Hunger Alleviation

1. Brazil - Bolsa Família (Conditional Cash Transfer Program)

A key component of Fome Zero, Bolsa Família became globally recognized for its **conditional cash transfer model**. It provides monthly financial aid to poor families, contingent upon children's school attendance and regular health check-ups. It reached over 50 million Brazilians and led to a **25% decline in poverty and a 16% drop in child mortality**. It improved women's empowerment, intergenerational mobility, and was replicated in 50+ countries, becoming a benchmark in **rights-linked social protection**.

2. Ethiopia - Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP)

PSNP, Africa's largest anti-poverty program, provides food or cash in exchange for public work and direct aid to vulnerable households. It addresses chronic food insecurity and promotes asset creation through community works like water harvesting and land development. Since

2005, it has lifted **millions of rural poor from hunger**, building resilience against shocks like droughts and inflation.

3. Mexico - Prospera (formerly Progres/Oportunidades)

Started in 1997, Prospera is a **conditional cash transfer program** aimed at breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty. It ties benefits to human capital development — school attendance, maternal health, and nutrition. It led to improved **educational attainment, health outcomes, and reduced stunting**. Globally praised for its robust monitoring and impact evaluation systems, it influenced welfare design across Latin America and South Asia.

4. China - Targeted Poverty Alleviation (2013-2020)

China launched one of the most ambitious poverty programs by targeting poor households individually using **data-driven identification**. It involved relocation from ecologically fragile zones, promotion of rural industries, skill development, and direct financial aid. By 2020, over **800 million people were lifted out of extreme poverty**, making China the only country to meet SDG 1 ahead of time — a landmark in **precision poverty eradication**.

Value Addition for Unit

Keywords : Absolute Poverty, Relative Poverty, Hidden Hunger, Multidimensional Poverty Index, Poverty Line Methodology, Food Security, Nutrition Insecurity, Income-Poverty Link, Malnutrition-Poverty Trap, Structural Inequality, Public Distribution System, Anganwadi Outreach, Mid-Day Meal Programme, Rural-Urban Hunger Gap, PDS Leakages, Dietary Diversity, Post-Harvest Losses, Climate-Resilient Agriculture, Health-Sanitation Nexus, Financial Inclusion, Skill-Livelihood Linkage, Social Determinants of Poverty.

UPSC Mains Practice Questions :

1. What measures would you suggest to break the cycle of poverty and malnutrition that

undermines human capital formation in India?

2. Discuss the role of women-led self-help groups in addressing the intertwined challenges of gender inequality, poverty, and malnutrition, with suitable examples
3. Analyse how multidimensional poverty assessment offers a better understanding of India's deprivation profile compared to conventional income-based estimates.
4. Evaluate the shift in poor household spending patterns—away from food and towards non-food essentials—and its implications for hunger levels.
5. Critically discuss why mere focus on food availability is insufficient to address hunger; what human development policy gaps must be addressed

Acronyms

1. HUNGER – Causes of Hunger

- **H** – Health deficiencies
- **U** – Unemployment
- **N** – Nutritional awareness lacking
- **G** – Gender inequality
- **E** – Economic disparities
- **R** – Regional and social exclusion

2. POOR – Features of Poverty

- **P** – Persistent income deprivation
- **O** – Over-reliance on informal jobs
- **O** – Out-of-pocket expenditure (health, education)
- **R** – Resource access limited (land, credit, services)

3. FRESH MEAL – Government Nutrition Schemes

- **F** – Food Security Act (NFSA)
- **R** – Ration Card portability (ONORC)
- **E** – Education-linked MDM
- **S** – Supplementary nutrition (ICDS)
- **H** – Health Mission (NHM)
- **M** – MGNREGA for income security
- **E** – Empowerment via SHGs (DAY-NRLM)
- **A** – Ayushman Bharat
- **L** – Livelihood (PM-KISAN, PMKVY)

4. MILES – Indicators of Multidimensional Poverty

- **M** – Malnutrition
- **I** – Inadequate schooling
- **L** – Lack of basic utilities
- **E** – Employment vulnerability
- **S** – Sanitation and housing gaps

5. DIET GAP – Challenges in Nutrition Policy

- **D** – Dietary diversity missing
- **I** – Infrastructure deficits (storage, transport)
- **E** – Exclusion from entitlements
- **T** – Targeting inefficiencies
- **G** – Governance gaps
- **A** – Awareness lacking
- **P** – Poor monitoring

Readymade Templates

SDGs Related to Poverty & Hunger

Sustainable Development Goal	Focus Area	Relevant Targets/Points
SDG 1: No Poverty	End poverty in all its forms everywhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.1: Eradicate extreme poverty (people living on < \$1.90/day) • 1.3: Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems • 1.4: Ensure equal access to economic resources and basic services • 1.5: Build resilience to climate-related shocks impacting the poor

SDG 2: Zero Hunger	End hunger, achieve food security & improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.1: End hunger and ensure access to safe, nutritious food • 2.2: End all forms of malnutrition • 2.3: Double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers • 2.4: Ensure sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices
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Value-Add for Mains Answers

• **India’s Alignment:**

- National Food Security Act (NFSA), POSHAN Abhiyaan, and PM Garib Kalyan Yojana align with **SDG 2**
- MGNREGA, PM Awas Yojana, Jan Dhan Yojana support **SDG 1**

• **Quote:** “No goal can be met unless it is met for everyone.” – UN SDG motto

Poverty

Category	Details
Causes of Poverty	<p>Economic: Low capital formation, unemployment, poor infrastructure, agricultural distress, low skill development, inflation, unequal wealth distribution</p> <p>Social: Caste discrimination, illiteracy, social exclusion, overpopulation, bonded labour</p> <p>Historical: Colonial deindustrialization, zamindari system, failed land reforms</p>

	<p>Governance-related: Corruption, weak targeting, poor service delivery, lack of consensus on estimation</p> <p>Environmental: Climate change, resource depletion, extreme weather, water scarcity</p>
Government Interventions	<p>Employment: MGNREGA, National Livelihoods Mission, PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana</p> <p>Food Security: NFSA, Antyodaya Anna Yojana, Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana</p> <p>Incentives: PM Awaas Yojana, PM Jan Dhan Yojana</p> <p>Capacity Building: RTE Act, POSHAN Abhiyaan, ICDS, PM Jan Arogya Yojana</p>
Way Forward	<p>Short Term: Cash transfers, food subsidies, public works schemes, unemployment allowance, free healthcare, microcredit</p> <p>Long Term: Education, skill development, inclusive growth, universal health coverage, social protection systems, reducing inequality, equitable distribution of resources</p>

Measures Needed	<p>Individual Level: Nutrition education, income generation, basic healthcare access</p> <p>Community Level: Community kitchens, food banks, gardens</p> <p>State/National Level: Food security laws (e.g., NFSA), mid-day meals, agricultural reforms</p> <p>International Level: Global partnerships, development aid, peacebuilding efforts</p>
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Hunger

Category	Details
Causes of Hunger	<p>Economic: Poverty, unemployment (e.g., Venezuela crisis)</p> <p>Social: Remoteness, inaccessibility (e.g., Melghat, Maharashtra)</p> <p>Political: Conflict and instability (e.g., Sahel region)</p> <p>Environmental: Droughts, soil degradation, water scarcity (e.g., Ethiopia drought, 2011)</p> <p>Administrative: Leakages in PDS, ghost beneficiaries, poor monitoring</p>



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CTS NO 1262/B Plot No. 594B,
Office 301A, 301 2nd floor Starling Plaza,
J M Road, Pune, +91 7378743031