

Polity and Governance

Syllabus:

- Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure;
- Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein. Separation of powers between various organs dispute redressal mechanisms and institutions; Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries;
- Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these;
- Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity;
- Salient features of the Representation of People’s Act.
- Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies; Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies; Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.
- Development processes and the development industry- the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders;
- Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections;
- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources. Issues relating to poverty and hunger. Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures. Role of civil services in a democracy.

Year - 2013

1. Discuss Section 66A of IT Act, with reference to its alleged violation of Article 19 of the Constitution.
2. The role of individual MPs (Members of Parliament) has diminished over the years and as a result healthy constructive debates on policy issues are not usually witnessed. How far can this be attributed to the anti-defection law, which was legislated but with a different intention?
3. The Supreme Court of India keeps a check on arbitrary power of the Parliament in amending the Constitution. Discuss critically.
4. Constitutional mechanisms to resolve the inter-state water disputes have failed to address and solve the problems. Is the failure due to structural or process inadequacy or both? Discuss.
5. Many State Governments further bifurcate geographical administrative areas like Districts and Talukas for better governance. In light of the above, can it also be justified that more number of smaller States would bring in effective governance at State level? Discuss.

6. Recent directives from Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas are perceived by the 'Nagas' as a threat to override the exceptional status enjoyed by the State. Discuss in light of Article 371A of the Indian Constitution.
7. The product diversification of financial institutions and insurance companies, resulting in overlapping of products and services strengthens the case for the merger of the two regulatory agencies, namely SEBI and IRDA. Justify.
8. Discuss the recommendations of the 13th Finance Commission which have been a departure from the previous commissions for strengthening the local government finances.
9. 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.
10. Electronic cash transfer system for the welfare schemes is an ambitious project to minimize corruption, eliminate wastage and facilitate reforms. Comment.
11. The basis of providing urban amenities in rural areas (PURA) is rooted in establishing connectivity. Comment.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 'A national Lokpal, however strong it may be, cannot resolve the problems of immorality in public affairs'. Discuss.
15. Though Citizen's 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 Analyze.

Year - 2014

1. What do you understand by the concept "freedom of speech and expression"? Does it cover hate speech also? Why do the films in India stand on a slightly different plane from other forms of expression? Discuss.
2. The size of the cabinet should be as big as governmental work justifies and as big as the Prime Minister can manage as a team. How far the efficacy of a government then is inversely related to the size of the cabinet? Discuss.
3. Instances of President's delay in commuting death sentences has come under public debate as denial of justice. Should there be a time limit specified for the President to accept/reject such petitions? Analyze.
4. The 'Powers, Privileges and Immunities of Parliament and its Members' as envisaged in Article 105 of the Constitution leave room for a large number of un-codified and un-enumerated privileges to continue. Assess the reasons for the absence of legal codification of the 'parliamentary privileges'. How can this problem be addressed?
5. Starting from inventing the 'basic structure' doctrine, the judiciary has played a highly proactive role in ensuring that India develops into a thriving democracy. In light of the statement, evaluate the role played by judicial activism in achieving the ideals of democracy.
6. Though the federal principle is dominant in our Constitution and that principle is one of its basic features, but it is equally true that federalism under the Indian Constitution leans in

favour of a strong Centre, a feature that militates against the concept of strong federalism. Discuss.

7. The setting up of a Rail Tariff Authority to regulate fares will subject the cash strapped Indian Railways to demand subsidy for obligation to operate non-profitable.
8. National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in India can be most effective when its tasks are adequately supported by other mechanisms that ensure the accountability of a government. In light of the above observation assess the role of NHRC as an effective complement to the judiciary and other institutions in promoting and protecting human rights standards.
9. Two parallel run schemes of the Government viz. the Adhaar Card and NPR, one as 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 developmental benefits and equitable.
10. Do government's schemes for up-lifting vulnerable and backward communities by protecting required social resources for them, lead to their exclusion in establishing businesses in urban economics?
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. The penetration of Self Help Groups (SHGs) in rural areas in promoting participation in development programmes is facing socio-cultural hurdles. Examine.
15. Has the Cadre based Civil Services Organisation been the cause of slow change in India? Critically examine.

Year – 2015

1. Discuss the possible factors that inhibit India from enacting for its citizens a uniform civil code as provided for in the Directive Principles of State Policy.
2. Khap Panchayats have been in the news for functioning as extra-constitutional authorities, often delivering pronouncements amounting to human rights violations. Discuss critically the actions taken by the legislative, executive and the judiciary to set the things right in this regard.
3. Does the right to clean environment entail legal regulations on burning crackers during Diwali? Discuss in the light of Article 21 of the Indian Constitution and Judgement(s) of the Apex Court in this regard.
4. Resorting to ordinances has always raised concern on violation of the spirit of separation of powers doctrine. While noting the rationales justifying the power to promulgate ordinances, analyze whether the decisions of the Supreme Court on the issue have further facilitated resorting to this power. Should the power to promulgate ordinances be repealed?
5. In absence of a well-educated and organized local level government system, 'Panchayats' and 'Samitis' have remained mainly political institutions and not effective instruments of governance. Critically discuss.

6. The concept of cooperative federalism has been increasingly emphasized in recent years. Highlight the drawbacks in the existing structure and the extent to which cooperative federalism would answer the shortcomings.
7. “For achieving the desired objectives, it is necessary to ensure that the regulatory institutions remain independent and autonomous.” Discuss in the light of the experiences in recent past.
8. What are the major changes brought in the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 through the recent Ordinance promulgated by the President? How far will it improve India’s dispute resolution mechanism? Discuss.
9. Though there have been several different estimates of poverty in India, all indicate reduction in poverty levels over time. Do you agree? Critically examine with reference to urban and rural poverty indicators.
10. Public health system has limitations in providing universal health coverage. Do you think that the private sector could help in bridging the gap? What other viable alternatives would you suggest?
11. The quality of higher education in India requires major improvements to make it internationally competitive. Do you think that the entry of foreign educational institutions would help improve the quality of higher and technical education in the country? Discuss.
12. In the light of the Satyam Scandal (2009), discuss the changes brought in corporate governance to ensure transparency, accountability.
13. How can the role of NGOs be strengthened in India for development works relating to protection of the environment? Discuss throwing light on the major constraints.
14. The Self-Help Group (SHG) Bank Linkage Programme (SBLP), which is India’s own innovation, has proved to be one of the most effective poverty alleviation and women empowerment programmes. Elucidate.
15. Examine critically the recent changes in the rules governing foreign funding of NGOs under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 1976.

Year -2016

1. Discuss each adjective attached to the word ‘Republic’ in the preamble. Are they defensible in the present circumstances stances?
2. The Indian party system is passing through a phase of transition which looks to be full of contradictions and paradoxes.” Discuss.
3. What was held in the Coelho case? In this context, can you say that judicial review is of key importance amongst the basic features of the Constitution?
4. Discuss the essentials of the 69th Constitutional Amendment Act and anomalies, if any that have led to recent reported conflicts between the elected representatives and the institution of the Lieutenant Governor in the administration of Delhi. Do you think that this will give rise to a new trend in the functioning of the Indian federal politics?
5. To what extent is Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, bearing marginal note “Temporary provision with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir”, temporary? Discuss the future prospects of this provision in the context of Indian polity.
6. Did the Government of India Act, 1935 lay down a federal constitution? Discuss.
7. What is a quasi-judicial body? Explain with the help of concrete examples.
8. Exercise of CAC’s powers in relation to the accounts of the Union and the States is derived from Article 149 of the Indian Constitution. Discuss whether audit of the Government’s Policy implementation could amount to overstepping its own (CAG) jurisdiction.

9. “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 and employable?
10. Examine the main provisions of the National Child Policy and throw light on the status of its implementation.
11. 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?
12. 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?
13. In the integrity index of Transparency International, India stands very low. Discuss briefly the legal, political, economic, social and cultural factors that have caused the decline of public morality in India.
14. “Effectiveness of the government system at various levels and people’s participation in the governance system are inter-dependent.” Discuss their relationship with each other in context of India.
15. “Traditional bureaucratic structure and culture have hampered the process of socio-economic development in India.” Comment.
16. “In the Indian governance system, the role of non-state actors has been only marginal.” Critically examine this statement.

Year -2017

1. “The local self-government system in India has not proved to be effective instrument of governance”. Critically examine the statement and give your views to improve the situation. (150 words)
2. Critically examine the Supreme Court’s judgement on ‘National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014’ with reference to appointment of judges of higher judiciary in India. (150 words)
3. ‘Simultaneous election to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies will limit the amount of time and money spent in electioneering but it will reduce the government’s accountability to the people’ Discuss. (150 words)
4. How do pressure groups influence Indian political process? Do you agree with this view that informal pressure groups have emerged as powerful than formal pressure groups in recent years? (150 words)
5. Discuss the role of Public Accounts Committee in establishing accountability of the government to the people. (150 words)
6. ‘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. (150 words)
7. Does the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 ensure effective mechanism for empowerment and inclusion of the intended beneficiaries in the society? Discuss (150 words)
8. 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. (150 words)
9. Explain the salient features of the constitution(One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016. Do you think it is efficacious enough ‘to remove cascading effect of taxes and provide for common national market for goods and services’? (250 words)

10. Examine the scope of Fundamental Rights in the light of the latest judgement of the Supreme Court on Right to Privacy. (250 words)
11. The Indian Constitution has provisions for holding joint session of the two houses of the Parliament. Enumerate the occasions when this would normally happen and also the occasions when it cannot, with reasons thereof. (250 words)
12. To enhance the quality of democracy in India the Election Commission of India has proposed electoral reforms in 2016. What are the suggested reforms and how far are they significant to make democracy successful? (250 words)
13. Is the National Commission for Women able to strategize and tackle the problems that women face at both public and private spheres? Give reasons in support of your answer. (250 words)
14. 'The emergence of Self Help Groups(SHGs) in contemporary times points to the slow but steady withdrawal of the state from developmental activities'. Examine the role of the SHGs in developmental activities and the measures taken by the Government of India to promote the SHGs. (250 words)
15. 'Poverty Alleviation Programmes in India remain mere show pieces until and unless they are backed by political will'. Discuss with reference to the performance of the major poverty alleviation programmes in India. (250 words)
16. Initially Civil Services in India were designed to achieve the goals of neutrality and effectiveness, which seems to be lacking in the present context. Do you agree with the view that drastic reforms are required in Civil Services. Comment (250 words)

Year – 2018

1. India and USA are two large democracies. Examine the basic tenants on which the two political systems are based.
2. Under what circumstances can the Financial Emergency be proclaimed by the President of India? What consequences follow when such a declaration remains in force?
3. Why do you think the committees are considered to be useful for parliamentary work? Discuss, in this context, the role of the Estimates Committee.
4. In the light of recent controversy regarding the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), what are the challenges before the Election Commission of India to ensure the trustworthiness of elections in India?
5. Whether the Supreme Court Judgement (July 2018) can settle the political tussle between the Lt. Governor and elected government of Delhi? Examine.
6. How is the Finance Commission of India constituted? What do you about the terms of reference of the recently constituted Finance Commission? Discuss.
7. Assess the importance of Panchayat system in India as a part of local government. Apart from government grants, what sources the Panchayats can look out for financing developmental projects.
8. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has a very vital role to play.” Explain how this is reflected in the method and terms of his appointment as well as the range of powers he can exercise.
9. How far do you agree with the view that tribunals curtail the jurisdiction of ordinary courts? In view of the above, discuss the constitutional validity and competency of the tribunals in India.
10. Whether National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSCJ) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine.
11. Multiplicity of various commissions for the vulnerable sections or the society leads to problems or overlapping jurisdiction and duplication of functions. Is it better to merge all commissions into an umbrella Human Rights Commission? Argue your case.

12. How far do you agree with the view that the focus on lack or availability of food as the main cause of hunger takes the attention away from ineffective human development policies in India?
13. Appropriate local community-level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieve 'Health for All' in India. Explain.
14. Policy contradictions among various competing sectors and stakeholders have resulted in inadequate 'protection and prevention of degradation' to environment." " Comment with relevant illustration.
15. Policy contradictions among various competing sectors and stakeholders have resulted in inadequate 'protection and prevention of degradation' to environment." " Comment with relevant illustration.
16. 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.
17. Citizens' Charter is an ideal instrument of organizational transparency and accountability, but. It has its own limitations. Identify the limitations and suggest measures for greater effectiveness or the Citizens Charter.

Year 2019

1. "The Central Administrative Tribunal which was established for redressal of grievances and complaints by or against central government employees nowadays is exercising its powers as an independent judicial authority." Explain.
2. From the resolution of contentious issues regarding distribution of legislative powers by the courts, 'Principle of Federal Supremacy' and 'Harmonious Construction' have emerged. Explain.
3. "Parliament's power to amend the constitution is limited power and it cannot be enlarged into absolute power". In light of this statement, explain whether parliament under article 368 of the constitution can destroy the basic structure of the constitution by expanding its amending power? (15 marks)
4. "The reservation of seats for women in the institution of local self-government has had a limited impact on the patriarchal character of the Indian political process". Comment.
5. "The Attorney-General is the chief legal adviser and lawyer of the Government of India." Discuss
6. Individual parliamentarian's role as the national lawmaker is on a decline, which in turn, has adversely impacted the quality of debates and their outcome. Discuss.
7. 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.
8. Performance of welfare schemes that are implemented for vulnerable sections is not so effective due to the absence of their awareness and active involvement at all stages of policy process – Discuss
9. How is the Government of India protecting traditional knowledge of medicine from patenting by pharmaceutical companies?
10. 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
11. 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
12. 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
13. In the context of the neo-liberal paradigm of development planning, multi-level planning is expected to make operations cost-effective and remove many implementation blockages.'- Discuss

Year 2020

1. “There is a need for simplification of procedure for disqualification of persons found guilty of corrupt practices under the Representation of peoples Act” Comment
2. “Recent amendments to the Right to information Act will have profound impact on the autonomy and independence of the Information Commission”. Discuss
3. How far do you think cooperation, competition and confrontation have shaped the nature of federation in India? Cite some recent examples to validate your answer
4. “Once a speaker, Always a speaker’! Do you think the practice should be adopted to impart objectivity to the office of the Speaker of Lok Sabha? What could be its implications for the robust functioning of parliamentary business in India.
5. Rajya Sabha has been transformed from a ‘useless stepney tyre’ to the most useful supporting organ in past few decades. Highlight the factors as well as the areas in which this transformation could be visible.
6. Institutional quality is a crucial driver of economic performance”. In this context suggest reforms in Civil Service for strengthening democracy.
7. “The emergence of Fourth Industrial Revolution (Digital Revolution) has initiated e-Governance as an integral part of government”. Discuss.

Year 2021

1. To what extent, in your view, the Parliament is able to ensure accountability of the executive in India?
2. “Pressure groups play a vital role in influencing public policy in making in India.” Explain how the business associations contribute to public policies.
3. The jurisdiction of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) regarding lodging an FIR and conducting a probe within a particular state is being questioned by various States. However, the power of the States to withhold consent to the CBI is not absolute. Explain with special reference to the federal character of India.
4. Do Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committees keep the administration on its toes and inspire reverence for parliamentary control? Evaluate the working of such committees with suitable examples.
5. Can civil society and Non-Government Organisations present an alternative model of public service delivery to benefit the common citizen? Discuss the challenges of this alternative method.
6. How have the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission of India enabled the States to improve their fiscal position?
7. “Besides being a moral imperative of a Welfare State, primary health structure is a necessary precondition for sustainable development.”
8. “‘Earn while you learn’ scheme needs to be strengthened to make vocational education and skill training meaningful”
9. Though the Human Rights Commissions have contributed immensely to the protection of human rights in India, yet they have failed to assert themselves against the mighty and powerful. Analysing their structural and practical limitations, suggest remedial measures.
10. Has digital literacy, particularly in rural areas, coupled with lack of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) accessibility hindered socio-economic development? Examine with justification.