



IAS Edge

GS Mentoring (Mains) - Test 11

Topic: Polity + Governance + Social Justice + Current Affairs

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Important Instructions

Candidates should read the under mentioned instructions carefully. Violation of any of the instructions may lead to penalty.

DO'S:

1. Read the instructions on the cover page and the specific instructions to this Question Paper mentioned on the next page of this Booklet carefully and strictly follow them.
2. Write your Name and other particulars, in the space provided on the cover page of the Question-Cum-Answer-Booklet.
3. Write legibly and neatly in ink. Pencil may be used for drawing diagrams, sketches, etc.
4. For rough work, blank pages provided at the end of this booklet should be used. The rough work should be crossed through afterwards.
5. If you wish to cancel any work, draw your pen through it or write "Cancelled" across it, otherwise it may be valued.
6. Hand over your Question-Cum-Answer-Booklet personally to the supervisor/invigilator.

DONT'S:

7. Do not write your Name or Name of the subject of Question-Cum-Answer-Booklet anywhere inside this Booklet.
8. Do not write anything other than the actual answers to the questions anywhere inside your Question-Cum-Answer-Booklet.
9. Do not tear off any leaves from your Question-Cum-Answer-Booklet. If you find any page missing, do not fail to notify the Supervisor/invigilator.
10. Do not write anything on the Question Paper available in detachable form. Write answers at the specified space only.

(To be filled by Examiners only)

Total - 13 questions attempted

keep up to good work

Avoid missing - 250 words

(can get marks & questions same time)

Questions No.	Starting Page No.	Marks	Section Total	Signature of Examiner
1	2			<i>(Signature area with handwritten notes)</i>
2	5			
3	8			
4	11			
5	14			
6	17			
7	20			
8	23			
9	26			
10	29			
11	32			
12	35			
13	38			
14	41			
15	44			
Grand Total				

(Please do not write anything except the question number in this space)

1. Discuss the key recommendations of 15th finance commission of India. Also throw some light on continuity and change in allocations from 14th finance commission. (200W)

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The 15th Finance Commission ~~was~~ recently ~~constituted~~ (2020) released its recommendations on the vertical and horizontal devolution of state finances. It was headed by N.K. Singh and sought ~~to~~ address several problems and challenges in the distribution of taxes and proceeds.

Recommendations

- ① States share ~~from~~ the central divisible pool of taxes to be 41%.
- ② 1% of share from ~~divisible~~ pool to be for UT of Kashmir and UT of ~~Jadakh~~ Jammu and Kashmir with special emphasis on ~~the~~ infrastructure development.
- ③ several Disaster Related Grants (eg- 1100 crore to Orissa to deal with Cyclones) and sectoral grants.
- ④ special focus on finance to Municipalities (almost 90,000 crore) for the purpose of sanitation and supply of drinking water.
- ⑤ Agriculture Reform and development of Aspirational districts.
- ⑥ Focus on power reforms, trade and exports etc.

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Continuity and changes in allocation

14th Finance Commission

- 42% states share
- ~~Reduce~~ Population weightage (17.5%)
- Demography (10%)
- ~~Income~~ Distance (50%)
- Use of 2011 census

15th Finance Commission

- 41% states share + 1% for UT of J&K and Ladakh
- (15%) Population weightage
- ~~13%~~ 12.5% for demography (increase in its weightage by 2.5%)
- Reduction in weightage of Income distance from 50 to 45%
- New criteria of 'Tax effect' brought in
- use of 2011 census

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The 15th Finance Commission focuses on an 'outcome-based' approach based on performance in demographic and tax parameters. It encourages Reform and infrastructure development at state and regional level.

5.5 / 12.5

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2. 'One nation one election' Is this feasible option for India? Discuss. (150W)

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The Prime Minister of India recently raised concerns over frequent conduct of elections at various levels as a major setback to development works in the country.

Problems of frequent elections

- country remains in election mode in 200 out of 365 days of a year.
- Costly elections (2019 - Lok Sabha elections costed 64,000 crores making it the costliest election) to date
- Policy Paralysis due to Model code of conduct imposed by Election Commission
- Impacts Good Governance and timely delivery of services.
- Burden on smaller political parties.

Hence, the idea of One Nation and One Election was proposed as an electoral reform to the ~~the~~ problem of frequent elections.

Feasibility Option :

- ① will require multiple Amendments to the constitution (Article 324 to 329) over conduct of elections)

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- ② may disrupt Federal-power distribution relations
- ③ Difficulty in imposing Presidential Rule (Article 356)
- ④ Need for multiple deliberations with state and small parties - regional parties are unlikely to agree

Benefits

- Reduce government expenditure
- efficiency in governance
- Reduce black money and illegally generated/ unaccounted money to be used in elections

The process of bringing electoral reforms is not easy and may require bringing together various stakeholders. The concerns have to be accommodated before one ventures out into One Nation, One Election

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That religious conversion should be bonafide, that is conversion solely for legal rights of another religion is not good.

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↳ Supreme Court has held in Puttanam judgement of Right to Privacy as a fundamental right (2018) and in Hadaya case (2019) Right to marry a person as being a part of choice and dignity and intrinsic to life and liberty as a person

At the same time, communities are concerned by an alarming trend of marriage for the sole purpose of religious conversion, thus leading to loss of culture of the previous faith.

It is imperative that the rights of the parties and the concerns of the community should be tackled. New special marriage act can be enacted to prevent conversion solely on the ground of religion as it is also a deeply patriarchal practice (affecting mostly women) marrying into the other community and violates the right to equality. (Art 14).

Good

Attempt +

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4. The parliament's function of the monsoon session without 'question hour' can have serious implications for future. What do you think? Comment. (150W)

Parliament is the Temple of Democracy. The legislature is vested with a very important responsibility of keeping the check on Executive through Questions and deliberations like and parliamentary tools like QUESTION HOUR. Under Article 75, the Executive is responsible to the legislature and it is necessary to passing of laws. Question hour was recently skipped in 2020 Monsoon session due to paucity of time and safety protocols. It raised concerns among constitutional experts and political analysts as it can set a precedent to avoid Parliamentary scrutiny.

- ① Question hour, held at the very first hour of a meeting of the day ensures matters of urgent public concerns are addressed.
- ② checks popular passions and ensures deliberations over political and legislative decisions of the government.
- ③ checks brute force of majority.
- ④ Debates and dissent are healthy parts of a democratic exercise.

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- ⑤ Keeps citizens informed and brings in citizen vigilance towards government.
- ⑥ Political criticism of government puts pressure on it to maintain its goodwill and public image thus ensuring accountability.
- ⑦ Also, brings in transparency.

By doing away with question hour, a negative precedent may be set that could be used by future governments from time to time to escape legislative scrutiny. Hence, governments should refrain from such actions and be as transparent as possible to the citizens as well as other organs of the government.

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5. Discuss the laws governing the social media platforms in India. Also state the measures for better governance. (200W)

One social media platforms are a relatively newer field in terms of regulation and legislation. Some of the laws and regulations governing it are

- Indian Telegraph Act, 1885
- Indian Postal Code (1860)
- Constitutional Right to Freedom of speech and expression (19(1)(a)),
- Information and Technology act, 2000
- OTT platform, Digital Media ethics code Regulations of 2021.

These laws aim to maintain the fragile balance between state regulation and individual freedom when it comes to social media.

→ Several international organisations have already declared the Right to Internet as a Fundamental Right.

→ Social media has become a way not to change the lives of citizens in unimaginable ways like and has brought the world closer, being adequate help to those in need.
(eg- India's Twitter diplomacy to help NRI in troubled situations)

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↳ Digital ~~protests~~ for meaningful causes

But the recent, 2021 Riots that broke out on ~~Republic Day~~ and increasing cases of cybercrimes, violation of religious freedoms of many citizens has brought the Big tech in conflict with the governments all over the world.

Measures for better governance

- Balancing the unity, integrity, sovereignty of ~~state~~ with individual's freedom to express
 - Dissent and criticism of the government should not be taken as synonymous to ~~disaffection~~ towards state as a ground for section (124A)
 - Respecting rights of women, vulnerable and minorities
 - Self Regulation by Platforms to check harmful content that may provoke people.
 - Age classification of content
 - complete ~~crackdown~~ on child pornography, drugs, terror sympathizing messages or links.
 - ~~Check~~ Anti-trade and monopolistic behaviour of social media platforms
 - Protect citizens right to privacy and ensure Data ~~sovereignty~~.
- Australian PM recently remarked

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that it is true that "social media has changed the world, but they cannot be the ones who run it" highlights the essence of ensuring state sovereignty as supreme over private platforms. The National and global community must co-exist peacefully and make lives peaceful and better for all.

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6. Highlight the advantages and disadvantages of caste based census exercise in India.
(200W)

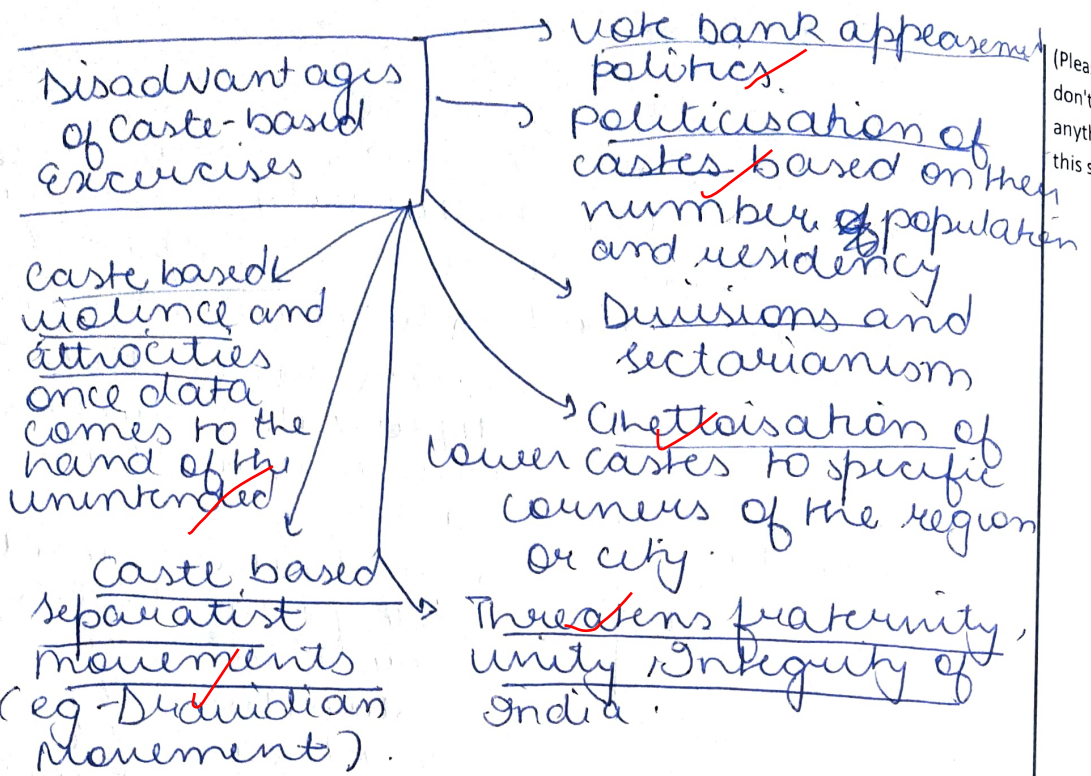
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Caste based census exercise in India dates back to 1881 when enumeration began based on community, religious and caste based lines. The impact of this however has been a mixed bag.

Advantages of Caste-based Census Exercises

- Assess the level of deprivation within a caste as well as between castes.
- Constitution provides for special provisions for socially and educationally backward classes which are usually lower caste groups (Article 330-335)
- enables to quantify deprivation based on Numbers (Art 335)
- used by states govt to give reservation in Govt colleges, jobs etc.
- Poverty line assessment of Raghuram Rajan Committee based on SECC, 2011 to come up with criteria of 'Automatically included and automatically excluded'
- Policy formulation, schemes for minorities, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes based on social-economic indicators reflected in census.

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Thus, the implications of caste based census exercise is a double edged sword. It cannot be immediately done away with as it is an invaluable tool to measure social and economic deprivations of a large section of society. A healthy and assimilating dialogue is needed and intercommunity harmony must be promoted among people

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7. What is the mission and objectives of the Poshan Abhiyan 2.0? Discuss performance of this scheme since its inception. (200W)

Poshan Abhiyan 2.0 was launched by the Government of India in its Budget for 2021-22 for a stronger outcomes in Nutritional services, delivery. It is a more OUTREACH TO OUTCOME based approach with affirmative focus on 112 Aspirational districts.

According to the Global Hunger Index of 2020, India scored 94th in its total position out of 107 countries which indicates serious hunger issues when it comes to our Nutrition programmes.

Problems → Acute stunting, child wasting, child stunting, undernutrition, child mortality ~~stunting~~ & India would also not be able to meet GHI by WHO (4 out of 6 targets by 2025).
 • least affected are children from deprived families

- GHI is Hunger Index

paucity of time

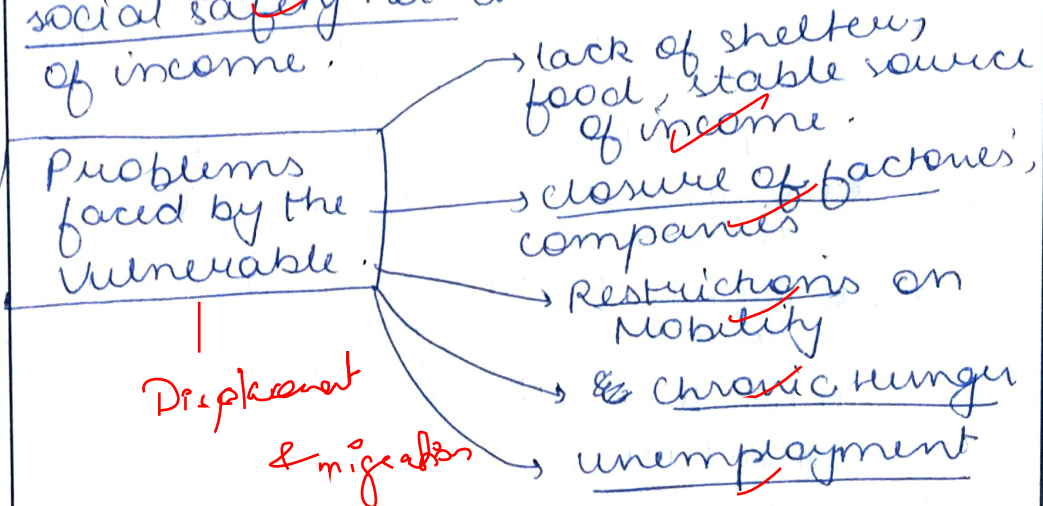
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8. 'Pandemic pushed millions into the poverty'. Analyze and suggest measures for poverty alleviation for the vulnerable sections of the society. (200W)

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The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed millions of people into poverty and unemployment, as has been highlighted by UN, World Economic Forum etc. The vulnerable sections of the society are the hardest hit especially those in unorganised sector, women, elderly, destitute with hardly any social safety net and stable source of income.



Measures for Poverty alleviation of the vulnerable sections of the society

- ↳ Through Poverty Alleviation schemes → like PM Garib Kalyan
- rajana that insured a fixed and subsidised ration of goods cereals, pulses for the poor)
- cash transfer to elderly, old under National Social Assistance Programme.

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- Ammapurina Scheme,
- National Disability Scheme → for those with 80% or more disability to receive ₹ 300 (18 to 79 years) and ₹ 500 (80 years or more).

↳ Through Employment Generation Schemes.

- Atmanubhar Bharat Interest subvention in agriculture (3%), MSMEs.
- Loan moratorium and incentives to self-employment.
- Atmanubhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana (Government to bear part of EPF contribution).
- PLI (Production Linked Incentive) to stress sectors especially identified by KV Kamath Committee (automobile, hospitality).

↳ Increasing public Infrastructure and Public Asset creation

- through MGNREGA, Jean Druze proposed DUST (for urban areas).
- labour Reforms and bringing social security to gig workers, platform workers.

The pandemic with 27% of Indian population that continues to be below poverty line, it should be the imperative of the government to provide a balance

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of income as well as Employment support- to the ~~vulnerable~~ through cash transfers, health insurance and bring back the country to a path of sustainable recovery.

Good

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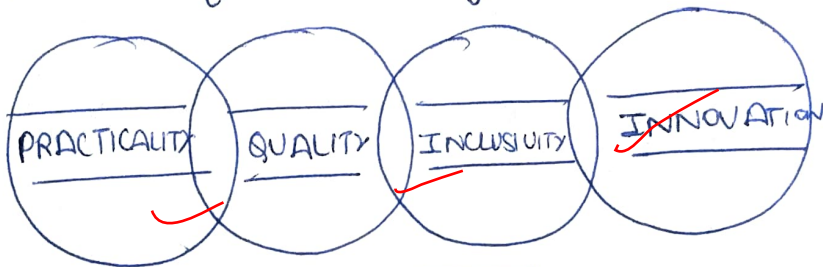
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9. Creation of vibrant knowledge society can be ensured by high quality education to all thereby empowering population to make India 'Global Knowledge Super Power'.
 Explain. (150W)

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One of the explicitly declared objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is the creation of a vibrant knowledge society and make India a Global Knowledge Super Power.

These can be ensured only by good quality of education but also to all sections of the society.



HOLISTIC
 EDUCATION for creation
 of a KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

Only these would help bring a Paradigm shift to our society and bring about transformation from mere peruse of information to knowledge creation and knowledge dissemination.

- ① Practical, skills oriented, based on needs of society as well as industry
- ② Good Quality of education through better pedagogy, infrastructure and

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focusing on knowledge assimilation over rote learning.

- ③ Inclusive education ensuring right to education to women, SC, ST, minorities on a parity basis.
- ④ Focusing on innovation → The Science Technology Innovation Policy of 2020 aims to boost research in India, improve research funding through private contribution and make India a Top 3 scientific superpower.
- ⑤ Improving access to knowledge
 - ↳ Tele-education - e-vidya, Diksha portal.
 - ↳ Knowledge Translation Hub (availability in all languages)
 - ↳ Protecting and increasing value of traditional knowledge and protect them from piracy.
- ⑥ Strong focus on Intellectual Property Rights and Patents fostering a climate of intellectualism and innovation.

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India has tremendous potential when it comes to knowledge creation. With the right support in education, our population can be empowered to truly become a knowledge superpower.

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10. 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) is set for rapid urbanization of Indian cities.
 Comment. (150W)

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Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana is a flagship scheme of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs that aims to provide "HOUSING FOR ALL by 2022". It is based on the model of central assistance to state and central Nodal Agencies that would provide low cost, affordable housing to economically weaker sections.

As of 2020, more than 70 lakh houses were already grounded. Many experts have linked the scheme to the rise of URBANIZATION of Indian cities.

- ① According to census 2011, almost 33% of Indian population lived in urban areas. But this expected to rise.
- ② Increase in Rural to Urban Migration.
- ③ PM Awas Yojana provides a social safety net to many and fulfils the "Right to Shelter" which is intrinsic to Right to life.
- ④ Encourages the construction of such houses on a large scale provides job employment to many.
- ⑤ Help in suburbanization Metropolisation of cities.

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⑥ The scheme can be synergised with Dtal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation ~~for~~ (AMRUT) ~~for retrofitting~~ retrofitting, redevelopment of several of poorly constructed areas

⑦ Jal Jeevan Mission with its aim of providing Tap water connections to all households by 2024 would also enhance living experience for city dwellers who usually have to wait in line for hours to get drinking water (especially in Mumbai)

Thus, PM Awas Yojana may usher a new 'Urban Revolution' in Indian cities and bring rapid urbanization that includes world class amenities ~~to schemes like~~ through smart cities initiative

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11. Infrastructure development and capacity building of the anganwadi remains the key to improving the implementation of government schemes. Examine. (200W)

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COVID-19 pandemic has had a debilitating impact on health and public welfare with child education and Nutrition being one of the worst sufferers due to pandemic induced lockdowns as well as INFRASTRUCTURAL gaps seen in the ANGANWADI CENTRES (13 lakhs total)

Anganwadi centres are key to implementation of several other Government schemes like Mid day meal scheme, Pradhan Mantri Awaaz Yojana, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Integrated child development scheme.

Gaps in Infrastructure Development

- Inadequate water facilities, sanitation, power supply and basic medicines.
- Absence of proper financial devolution to Panchayats.
- Technological gaps → despite Pradhan Mantri Awaaz Yojana 2.0's digital push, many of the Anganwadi workers lack training in internet, computer skills.
- Digital Divide (for which PM-WANI was recently launched, along with National Broadband mission)

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The National Family Health Survey 5 - recently pointed out stark Adult Malnutrition, stunting in more than 16 Indian states, which is a cause of utmost concern.

↳ Thus, the government has come up with SAKSHAM ANGANWADI SCHEME to revamp, overhaul and upgrade almost 2.5 lakh Anganwadi centres to fill in gaps and focus more on capacity building.

It is upto the Government to consciously collaborate with Panchayats to approach this scheme as holistically as possible. Region-specific plans should be made that focus on enhanced efficiency since outcomes of most government schemes depend on proper functioning of Anganwadi centres.

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12. 'Since its launch Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) has achieved 32.3% coverage of tap connections in rural India'. Comment. (250W)

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13. Throw some light on the causes of flash floods. What are some long term measures which can be adopted to eliminate such hazards in future? (200W)

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The recent Glacial outburst event in Chamoli, Uttarakhand that led to loss of several hundred lives have brought to light on "Flash Floods" as a New Disaster that needs adequate disaster management in the coming years.

Causes of Flash floods

- Glacial lake outburst flow event (GLOF) is a natural disaster caused when an avalanche or landslide happens at the upper levels of mountain ranges and glaciers causing the dam made by glacial moraine to be released.
- Subsequent spill over due to huge displacement of water.
- Heavy Rainfall at upper reaches of mountains due to Orographic effect.
- Climate Change Induced Thawing of ice cores. According to 2018 Himalayan Biodiversity Assessment Report, 1/3rd of Himalayan glaciers are in the threat of retreating and the lower lying areas might face brunt of such large scale melting down of glaciers.

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↳ Dams induced seismicity. Dams in mountainous areas are constantly constructed despite dangers due to high hydroelectric potential.

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Long term Measures Needed to ~~set~~ eliminate such hazards:

- ① Mitigation and Preparedness for ~~to~~ more of such disasters ahead. Aim should be to reduce loss of lives and damage to property.
- ② creating No-construction Zones and safety Net to a Range along the River banks.
- ③ Bathymetric studies of the river and monitoring of ~~lake~~ volume.
- ④ Disaster prevention engineering.
- ⑤ Early warning system and timely alert to nearby Residents.
- ⑥ Evacuation training and Medical aid, shelter points etc.



Safety Net Model

Good
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The Himalayan belt especially the lower Himalayas are increasingly falling under the risk of flash flood events (like 2013 - Kedarnath, 2014, Gyo in Ladakh) and they must be addressed through sound planning.



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strict environmental regulations and putting end to reckless anthropogenic activities like Road making in highly vulnerable areas.

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14. For better credit distribution to farmers, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) need to relook at the India's agriculture banking model. Do you agree with this view? Comment. (150W)

(Please don't write anything in this space)

RBI has played a crucial role in Agriculture and rural development since the 1980s through its AGRICULTURAL BANKING MODEL by setting up NABARD in 1982 and subsequently paving way for Regional, Rural Banks, Microfinance Institutions, cooperative Banks and even Scheduled commercial banks in the sector.

Successes of agricultural banking has been seen in RBI's ability to improve food security, nutritional outcomes, improvement in wages etc.

But the problems lie here are given in the following

- ↳ loss of momentum, declining productivity, efficiency
- ↳ loss in qualitative aspect of lending (continues to be more expenditure based rather than investment based)
- ↳ poor credit deposit ratio
- ↳ Bad culture of loan waiving for political appeasement keeps banking sector stressed
- ↳ need for long term capital for irrigation, rural infrastructure
- ↳ inter-state disparities

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Narasimhan committee recommended Revamping of the Priority sector lending (PSL) by focussing less on cherry-picked lending and more on wider coverage of population, especially marginalised sector.

Following other steps can be taken:

- ① Reducing Interstate disparities in PSL lending.
- ② Focusing loans more on Remunerative profitable returns, exports, imports.
- ③ Interest Subvention as an incentive (as in Atma Nirbhar Bharat Yojana) over loan waiving.
- ④ Address NPA crisis

The momentum in Agricultural and allied sector credit must be revived by bringing in reforms in the banking sector.

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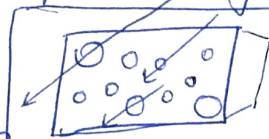
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15. Is it the right time for India to invest in defense start-ups in order to bring self-reliance in defense sector? Elucidate. (200W)

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The Indian government recently organised a DEFENCE INDIA STARTUP CHALLENGE to encourage private players and new players to come up with innovative solutions to India's defence technological needs. It is a much needed step towards SELF-RELIANCE in the Defence sector.

- 1) Possibility of outsourcing innovation in stealth technology, small scale satellites and underwater drones.
- 2) Set blueprint for indigenous design and development.
- 3) Identify and fill gaps in the Swiss chess model of defence planning and strategising to check security lapses.
- 4) As part of ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT scheme - The GOI aims to boost production to 1.4 lakh crore by 2025.



5) Reduce import dependency.

India is one of the top importers of Defence technology. The aim of the government is to curb import of non-essential technology, spare parts through a Negative import list.

6) Boost Exports to over \$ billion dollars

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as highlighted by DRAFT DEFENCE PROCUREMENT and EXPORT POLICY of 2020.

7) Multiplier effect in innovation and then India could focus its resources on the import of high-end jets, ships, vessels, technology etc.

Challenges to Startups:

- Need handholding and support from the government
- Viability and initial finance cost
- India still dependent on import of Rare earth metals, heavy metals
- scarcity of locally available material and diffusion in different parts of the country.

Though it is the right time for India to aid its defence start-ups to set up a revolution of self-reliance in technology and indigenisation, the concerns, infrastructural and financial gaps must be addressed to enable India to emerge as a hard power in the next decade ahead.

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