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VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY & STUDY CENTRE

DAILY MCQ'S

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 19/08/2026 (WEDNESDAY)

- **Static mcq's**
- **Current Affairs mcq's**
- **Mains Practice Questions**



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DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM STATIC PART

Q.1. With reference to the Industrial Revolution, consider the following statements:

1. The factory system transformed production not merely by introducing machines but also by concentrating labour, capital and supervision within a common production unit.
2. The early Industrial Revolution immediately displaced all forms of domestic and artisanal production because mechanised factory production was uniformly cheaper and more efficient across all sectors.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Statement 2 only
- (b) Both statements
- (c) Neither statement
- (d) Statement 1 only

Answer: (d) Statement 1 only

Detailed Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct.** The Industrial Revolution involved a fundamental transformation in the **organisation of production**. Factories brought together workers, machinery, raw materials and capital under centralised supervision. Thus, industrialisation cannot be understood merely as a succession of technological inventions.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect.** The transition from artisanal and domestic production to factory production was **gradual and uneven**. Handicraft production continued alongside factories, particularly where skilled labour, specialised products or small-scale production remained economically viable.

The analytical trap is the word “**immediately**” and the universal claim “**across all sectors.**”

Industrialisation was a process of structural transformation rather than an instantaneous replacement of every earlier production system.

The factory system also altered labour relations. Workers increasingly became dependent upon wages, while employers acquired greater control over working hours, production methods and workplace discipline. These developments contributed to the emergence of a distinct industrial working class and later to trade unionism and socialist thought.

Q.2. With reference to the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, as amended in 2022, which one of the following statements is most accurate?

- (a) The Act primarily regulates only hunting and has no statutory provisions relating to trade in wildlife products or conservation of habitats.
- (b) The 2022 amendment replaced the earlier six-schedule structure with a rationalised framework and also introduced provisions concerning international trade obligations and regulation of invasive alien species.
- (c) The Act provides identical legal protection to every wild species irrespective of its placement in the Schedules.
- (d) The Act completely transfers wildlife protection from the States to the Central Government and eliminates the role of State authorities.



Answer: (b)

Detailed Explanation:

The **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972** is the principal statutory framework for wildlife conservation in India. Its scope extends beyond hunting to include **protection of wild animals, management of habitats and regulation/control of trade in wildlife-derived products**.

The **Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2022** significantly rationalised the Schedule structure and strengthened India's framework in relation to international wildlife trade obligations. It also introduced provisions relating to **invasive alien species**, including the Central Government's power to regulate or prohibit their import, trade or possession under the amended framework.

- **(a) is incorrect:** The Act covers considerably more than hunting.
- **(c) is incorrect:** The level and nature of protection are linked to the statutory classification of species.
- **(d) is incorrect:** Wildlife governance involves both Union and State institutions; the Act does not simply abolish the role of State authorities.

The UPSC-level distinction is between **wildlife protection as a legal prohibition on hunting** and the much broader contemporary concept of **conservation, habitat management, regulation of trade and ecological security**.

Q.3. With reference to different measures of fiscal deficit, consider the following statements:

1. Revenue deficit indicates that the government's revenue expenditure exceeds its revenue receipts, but by itself it does not reveal the extent to which the government is borrowing to finance capital expenditure.
2. Fiscal deficit represents the government's total borrowing requirement during a financial year, after accounting for its total receipts excluding borrowings.
3. Primary deficit is obtained by subtracting interest payments from the fiscal deficit and therefore indicates the borrowing requirement attributable to current fiscal operations excluding past debt-servicing costs.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Answer: (c) All three

Detailed Explanation:

All three statements correctly distinguish important fiscal indicators.

- **Statement 1 is correct.**

Revenue Deficit = Revenue Expenditure – Revenue Receipts



It indicates that the government's recurring/revenue expenditure exceeds its recurring/revenue income. However, revenue deficit alone does not tell us whether the government is borrowing specifically for capital formation or for meeting revenue expenditure.

- **Statement 2 is correct.**

Fiscal Deficit = Total Expenditure – Total Receipts excluding Borrowings

It broadly represents the government's **total borrowing requirement** for the year. It can finance both productive capital expenditure and revenue expenditure.

- **Statement 3 is correct.**

Primary Deficit = Fiscal Deficit – Interest Payments

Interest payments largely arise from accumulated past debt. Therefore, the primary deficit provides an indication of the government's current fiscal position after excluding the burden of servicing past debt.

The conceptual hierarchy is important:

Revenue Deficit → current/revenue imbalance

Fiscal Deficit → overall borrowing requirement

Primary Deficit → fiscal deficit excluding interest burden

A government can therefore have a **fiscal deficit without a revenue deficit** if it borrows primarily to finance capital expenditure. Such a distinction is important because borrowing for productive capital formation can have different long-term implications from borrowing primarily to finance recurring consumption expenditure.

Q.4. With reference to the writ jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and High Courts, consider the following statements:

1. The Supreme Court may issue writs under Article 32 specifically for the enforcement of Fundamental Rights, whereas the High Courts under Article 226 may issue writs both for Fundamental Rights and for other legal purposes.
2. The writ of mandamus ordinarily lies to compel performance of a public duty, whereas the writ of prohibition is preventive in character and is directed against a judicial or quasi-judicial authority to prevent it from proceeding beyond its jurisdiction.
3. The writ of certiorari is essentially preventive in character because it restrains a lower court or tribunal from initiating proceedings in excess of jurisdiction.
4. The writ of quo warranto enables a court to examine the legality of a person's claim to a public office, and it is not necessary that the petitioner demonstrate a personal legal injury.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four



Answer: (c) Only three

Detailed Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct.** Article 32 empowers the Supreme Court to issue directions, orders and writs for enforcement of Fundamental Rights. Article 226 gives High Courts a wider writ jurisdiction, extending not only to Fundamental Rights but also to “any other purpose.” The Supreme Court itself explains this distinction in its description of writ jurisdiction.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** **Mandamus** is used to compel performance of a public duty. **Prohibition** is preventive: it restrains an inferior court or tribunal from continuing proceedings beyond its lawful jurisdiction.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect.** This deliberately reverses the distinction between prohibition and certiorari.

Prohibition → preventive

Certiorari → corrective

Certiorari may be used to quash an order or decision already made by an inferior court or tribunal when the circumstances warrant judicial intervention. The Supreme Court has recognised the broad constitutional availability of writs in the nature of certiorari under Articles 32 and 226.

- **Statement 4 is correct.** **Quo warrant** questions the legal authority under which a person occupies a public office. Its purpose is to prevent unlawful occupation of public office, and the petitioner need not establish the same kind of personal injury that would ordinarily be required in conventional private litigation. The writ is therefore particularly connected with maintaining legality in public appointments.

The essential UPSC memory framework is:

Habeas Corpus → personal liberty

Mandamus → command to perform public duty

Prohibition → stop proceedings before completion

Certiorari → quash/review an already-made decision

Quo Warranto → “by what authority?” is public office held

Q.5. Consider the following:

Assertion (A): Katabatic winds are generally associated with the movement of relatively cold and dense air downslope, whereas **anabatic winds** generally involve upslope movement of air during daytime heating.

Reason I: During strong surface cooling, air in contact with an elevated surface can become denser and move downslope under the influence of gravity.

Reason II: Daytime solar heating of a mountain slope can make the adjacent air relatively warmer and less dense, favouring an upslope flow.

Which one of the following is correct?

(a) Assertion is correct, and both Reason I and Reason II are correct, and both correctly explain the Assertion.



- (b) Assertion is correct, Reason I is correct but Reason II is incorrect.
- (c) Assertion is correct, Reason I is incorrect but Reason II is correct.
- (d) Assertion is incorrect, but both Reason I and Reason II are correct.

Answer: (a)

Detailed Explanation:

The **Assertion is correct**. Katabatic and anabatic winds represent opposing local mountain-slope flows associated substantially with **temperature differences and density contrasts**.

Reason I — Correct

A **katabatic wind** develops when air near an elevated surface becomes sufficiently cold and dense. Under the influence of gravity, the denser air tends to flow **downslope**.

Such winds are particularly pronounced over very cold surfaces. The classic large-scale examples include strong drainage winds associated with ice-covered regions.

Reason II — Correct

An **anabatic wind** generally occurs during daytime when solar radiation heats a mountain slope. The air adjacent to the heated slope becomes relatively warmer and rises or moves **upslope**.

The basic contrast can therefore be represented as:

Night/strong cooling → denser air → downslope flow → Katabatic

Daytime slope heating → warmer air → upslope flow → Anabatic

Both reasons therefore directly explain the Assertion.

The key UPSC trap is to confuse these winds with ordinary **valley and mountain breezes**. Although they are related to local mountain-valley circulation, the terms **katabatic and anabatic** specifically emphasise the downslope and upslope components associated with density/thermal differences along slopes.

DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q.1. With reference to DSC A24 (Yard 329), consider the following statements:

1. DSC A24 is the fifth and final vessel of the five-ship Diving Support Craft project undertaken for the Indian Navy.
2. Its catamaran-hull configuration is intended primarily to enhance underwater speed rather than stability and working-deck space during diving operations.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Statement 2 only
- (b) Both statements
- (c) Neither statement
- (d) Statement 1 only



Answer: (d) Statement 1 only

Detailed Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct.** DSC A24 (Yard 329) was launched on **1 August 2026 at Titagarh, Kolkata**, and is the **fifth and final ship** of the five-vessel Diving Support Craft project for the Indian Navy. The craft is intended to strengthen diving support, underwater inspection, salvage assistance and coastal operational capabilities.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect.** The catamaran-hull configuration is particularly relevant to **stability, sea-keeping and increased deck area**, which are important for diving operations. The vessels have an approximate displacement of **300–400 tonnes**.

Another important feature is the approximately **70% indigenous sourcing of main and auxiliary equipment**, linking the project with the broader objective of *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* in defence manufacturing.

The UPSC trap here is to confuse the **purpose of the vessel** with that of a conventional combat ship. DSC A24 is primarily a **specialised underwater-support platform**, not an offensive warship.

Q.2. The Geological Survey of India (GSI) is best described as an organisation primarily concerned with:

- (a) Regulation of all mining leases and collection of royalty on behalf of State Governments
- (b) Creation and updating of national geoscientific information and assessment of mineral resources through geological, geophysical and related investigations
- (c) Environmental clearance of all mineral and infrastructure projects in India
- (d) Exclusive exploration of petroleum and natural gas reserves in offshore areas

Answer: (b)

Detailed Explanation:

The **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** was established in **1851**, initially with a major focus on locating coal deposits for the expanding railway network. Over time, its mandate expanded substantially. It is presently an **attached office of the Ministry of Mines**, headquartered in Kolkata.

Its principal functions include:

- creation and updating of national geoscientific information;
- mineral-resource assessment;
- ground, airborne and marine surveys;
- geological and geophysical investigations;
- geotechnical and geo-environmental studies;
- natural-hazard investigations;
- glaciological and seismotectonic studies;
- fundamental geoscientific research.



Therefore, GSI should **not** be confused with a mining regulator. Mineral-resource assessment and generation of geological information are central to its mandate, whereas regulation of mining leases involves other governmental authorities.

The analytical significance of GSI extends beyond minerals. Its work contributes to understanding **earth processes, natural hazards, water resources, climate-related geological changes and India's offshore geological areas.**

Q.3. With reference to Project SARATHI, consider the following statements:

1. It is a youth-led, volunteer-driven initiative designed to improve the patient experience in public healthcare institutions through non-clinical assistance.
2. Its volunteers are intended to undertake clinical responsibilities so as to reduce the workload of doctors and nurses.
3. The initiative has been integrated with the **MY Bharat** platform for functions including volunteer registration, attendance and digital monitoring.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Answer: (b) Only two

Detailed Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct.** Project SARATHI — *Students' Alliance for Responsible Action to Transform Healthcare Institutes* — is a youth-led, volunteer-driven patient-assistance initiative. Trained volunteers provide **non-clinical navigation, guidance and mobility assistance** in public hospitals.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect.** Volunteers are specifically intended to **complement healthcare services without undertaking clinical or administrative responsibilities**. This distinction is important: SARATHI is a patient-support initiative, not a substitute for trained healthcare professionals.
- **Statement 3 is correct.** The initiative is being integrated with **MY Bharat**, including digital mechanisms for volunteer registration, attendance, patient feedback and support for ABHA-ID creation.

The initiative has already mobilised **more than 2,500 volunteers**, contributed over **1.5 lakh service hours**, and a PGIMER study reported a **26% reduction in patient-navigation time** among assisted patients.

The broader governance lesson is significant: SARATHI demonstrates how **structured youth participation + digital monitoring + community engagement** can supplement public-service delivery without transferring professional responsibilities to volunteers.



Q.4. With reference to the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA-28), consider the following statements:

1. SBSTTA is a subsidiary body under the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** that provides scientific, technical and technological advice to the Conference of the Parties.
2. SBSTTA-28 was held in Nairobi and contributed to preparations for the 2026 UN Biodiversity Conference in Yerevan.
3. The recommendations emerging from SBSTTA-28 are themselves legally binding international treaties applicable to all States irrespective of their participation in the CBD.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

Answer: (b) Only two

Detailed Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct.** SBSTTA is the **Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice** under the CBD. Its role is to provide scientific, technical and technological advice relating to implementation of the Convention and its associated biodiversity framework.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** SBSTTA-28 was held in Nairobi from 27 July to 1 August 2026. It addressed scientific and technical issues connected with implementation of the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF)** and contributed to preparations for the 2026 UN Biodiversity Conference in Yerevan, Armenia.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect.** Recommendations of a subsidiary scientific and technical body do **not automatically constitute legally binding treaties** applicable to all countries. The institutional process under the CBD involves negotiation and decision-making by the Parties.

SBSTTA-28 was significant because it advanced scientific and technical discussions ahead of **COP17**, where Parties are expected to review collective progress in implementing the KMGBF.

A particularly important conceptual distinction is:

SBSTTA → scientific/technical advice

COP → political decision-making under the Convention

Treaty obligations → arise from the applicable international legal framework and decisions/instruments adopted under it, not simply from a technical recommendation.

Q.5. With reference to Exercise ROTOR CLAP III, consider the following statements:

1. It was conducted by the Indian Air Force and focused specifically on countering threats posed by unmanned aerial systems.
2. The exercise was designed exclusively for fixed-wing fighter aircraft and did not involve rotary-wing platforms.



3. Conducting the exercise at the Pokhran Field Firing Range enabled the IAF to validate operational concepts and integrated responses in a realistic combat-training environment.
4. The exercise was a bilateral exercise conducted jointly by India and a foreign partner specifically for maritime anti-submarine warfare.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

Answer: (b) Only two

Detailed Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct.** ROTOR CLAP III was conducted by the **Indian Air Force** with the central theme of **Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (Counter-UAS)**. It focused on strengthening helicopter operations against emerging drone threats.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect.** The exercise specifically involved **rotary-wing/helicopter units**. It was designed around helicopter operational concepts rather than being an exclusive fixed-wing fighter exercise.
- **Statement 3 is correct.** The exercise was conducted at the **Pokhran Field Firing Range in Jaisalmer district, Rajasthan**, and was intended to validate mission planning, coordination, rapid response, tactics, techniques and procedures against emerging aerial threats.
- **Statement 4 is incorrect.** ROTOR CLAP III was **not a bilateral exercise** and was not focused on maritime anti-submarine warfare. It was an IAF exercise centred on **counter-UAS operations**.

The exercise is strategically significant because the increasing proliferation of inexpensive drones has altered the threat environment. The challenge is no longer simply conventional air-to-air or air-to-ground warfare; helicopters and other platforms must increasingly operate within an environment containing **low-cost, difficult-to-detect unmanned threats**.

Q.6. Consider the following statements regarding the Ural Mountains:

1. They form a conventional geographical boundary between Europe and Asia.
2. They extend broadly from the Arctic Ocean region towards the northwestern part of the Caspian Sea.
3. They lie entirely within the territory of Russia.
4. The Ural Mountains are geologically among the older mountain systems compared with the young fold mountains of the Himalayas.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three



(d) All four

Answer: (c) Only three

Detailed Explanation:

- **Statement 1 is correct.** The **Ural Mountains** are conventionally regarded as one of the major geographical boundaries separating **Europe from Asia**.
- **Statement 2 is correct.** The Urals extend approximately north–south from the Arctic region towards the area near the **Caspian Sea**, forming a long mountain chain across western Russia.
- **Statement 3 is incorrect.** The Ural mountain system is **not entirely confined to Russia**. Its southern extensions reach into **Kazakhstan**.
- **Statement 4 is correct.** The Urals are a geologically **ancient mountain system**, substantially older than relatively young fold systems such as the **Himalayas**, which formed much later through the collision of the Indian and Eurasian plates.

Map-based UPSC takeaway

The spatial relationship can be remembered as:

Arctic Ocean → Ural Mountains → Kazakhstan/Caspian region

The Urals are particularly important because they form a **longitudinal physical divide** within Russia and are conventionally used to mark the Europe–Asia boundary.

The most important trap is Statement 3: the **southern Urals extend into Kazakhstan**, so the entire mountain system cannot be described as being confined to Russia.

DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAINS ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Q.1 “The Permanent Settlement transformed the relationship between the colonial state, zamindars and peasants, but its consequences went far beyond the question of land revenue.” Examine.

NCERT Reference: *Themes in Indian History – Part III*, Class XII, Chapter 8 — **Peasants, Zamindars and the State**. NCERT's current textbook repository confirms the availability of the Class XII history texts.

Model Answer

The **Permanent Settlement of 1793**, introduced primarily in Bengal, Bihar and parts of Orissa under Lord Cornwallis, represented a fundamental restructuring of agrarian relations under colonial rule. It was not merely a mechanism for fixing land revenue; it attempted to create a new class of property holders who would become reliable intermediaries between the colonial state and the cultivating population. Its consequences were therefore economic, social and political.

Under the Permanent Settlement, the colonial state recognised **zamindars as proprietors of land**, subject to the payment of a permanently fixed land revenue. The British expected that the security of property rights would encourage zamindars to invest in agricultural improvement. At the same time, a permanently fixed state demand was expected to provide the government with a predictable revenue stream.



However, the actual consequences were considerably different.

First, the system altered the incentives of zamindars. Since the state's demand was fixed, any increase in agricultural income could potentially increase the zamindar's surplus. Yet many zamindars did not undertake substantial agricultural investment. Instead, rent extraction often became the principal mechanism for increasing income.

Second, peasants faced significant insecurity. Zamindars could impose rents and attempt to maximise collections from cultivators. The colonial legal system provided new mechanisms through which property and revenue claims could be enforced. Thus, agrarian relations increasingly became linked with formal property rights and litigation.

Third, the Permanent Settlement contributed to the development of a **landed intermediary class** whose interests were closely connected with the colonial state. The state benefited from having a relatively stable revenue-collecting intermediary, but the system also created tensions between zamindars and cultivators.

An important unintended consequence was the phenomenon of **zamindari sales**. Zamindars who failed to pay the fixed revenue on time could lose their estates, leading to auctions and the emergence of new purchasers. Thus, despite the permanent nature of the revenue demand, the ownership structure of estates was not necessarily static.

The system also had wider social implications. Land became increasingly treated as a commodity that could be bought, sold and legally transferred. This represented an important departure from many earlier customary arrangements.

Critical Assessment

The Permanent Settlement therefore produced a paradox. The British intended to create a class of **loyal, prosperous and improvement-oriented landlords**, but the system often encouraged rent extraction, agrarian insecurity and social differentiation.

Its legacy extended beyond revenue administration. It contributed to the **commercialisation of land, restructuring of rural power, emergence of new property relations and transformation of colonial state–society relations**.

Thus, the Permanent Settlement should be understood as a foundational component of colonial agrarian restructuring rather than merely a revenue settlement. Its deeper significance lay in the transformation of **property, power and production in rural India**.

Q.2 “The emergence of coalition politics in India transformed the nature of governance by making consensus-building and inter-party negotiation central to political decision-making.” Discuss.

NCERT Reference: *Politics in India Since Independence*, Class XII, Chapter 9 — **Recent Developments in Indian Politics**. NCERT's official repository lists this Class XII text and its chapters.

Model Answer

The decline of one-party dominance and the rise of **coalition politics**, particularly from the late 1980s and 1990s, represented a major transformation in India's democratic governance. Coalition politics reflected the increasing political significance of regional parties, social movements and diverse regional and caste-based aspirations. It changed not only electoral competition but also the manner in which governments were formed and policies were negotiated.



The Congress system had historically enabled relatively centralised political decision-making because one dominant party could command a parliamentary majority. However, the emergence of strong regional parties and the decline of single-party dominance resulted in fragmented electoral mandates. Governments increasingly required support from multiple parties.

Coalition politics introduced a greater premium on **consultation and negotiation**. A government dependent upon coalition partners had to consider their regional interests while formulating national policy. This enhanced the political bargaining power of states and regional parties.

One important consequence was the strengthening of **federal political dynamics**. Regional parties brought state-specific concerns into national policymaking. Issues relating to language, regional development, resource allocation, special packages and state autonomy received greater political visibility.

Coalition governments also demonstrated both advantages and limitations.

Positive dimensions

Coalition politics can:

- broaden representation;
- accommodate regional aspirations;
- strengthen federalism;
- encourage consensus-building;
- prevent excessive concentration of political power.

A coalition government may therefore reflect India's social and geographical diversity more accurately than a highly centralised political system.

However, coalition politics can also produce governance challenges. Smaller parties may exercise disproportionate bargaining power when the government's parliamentary majority is narrow. Policy decisions can sometimes become dependent upon coalition management rather than long-term public-interest considerations.

The possibility of withdrawal of support may also create political uncertainty. This was particularly visible during periods of unstable coalition governments in the 1990s.

Nevertheless, it would be simplistic to equate coalition politics with weak governance. Some coalition governments completed substantial institutional and economic reforms. The crucial determinant is therefore not the **number of parties** but the institutional capacity of the coalition to develop a common policy programme.

Broader democratic significance

Coalition politics also altered the relationship between national and regional political identities. Rather than treating regional aspirations as inherently destabilising, India's democratic system increasingly incorporated them within national political institutions.

This represents an important feature of Indian federalism: **regional diversity can be accommodated within national political structures without necessarily leading to political fragmentation.**



The evolution from one-party dominance to coalition politics therefore represents a shift from **majoritarian political control towards negotiated political governance**.

In contemporary India, even when a single party possesses a parliamentary majority, the experience of the coalition era continues to influence governance through greater attention to federal consultation, regional interests and stakeholder negotiation.

Thus, coalition politics should not be understood merely as an electoral arithmetic. It represents a deeper transformation in Indian democracy, in which **representation, federalism, negotiation and consensus-building have become integral dimensions of governance**.

Q.3 “Differences in development outcomes among developing economies cannot be explained by differences in income alone.” Discuss with reference to the comparative development experience of India and other economies.

NCERT Reference: *Indian Economic Development*, Class XI, and *Introductory Macroeconomics*, Class XII. NCERT's official textbook portal provides the current Economics texts.

Model Answer

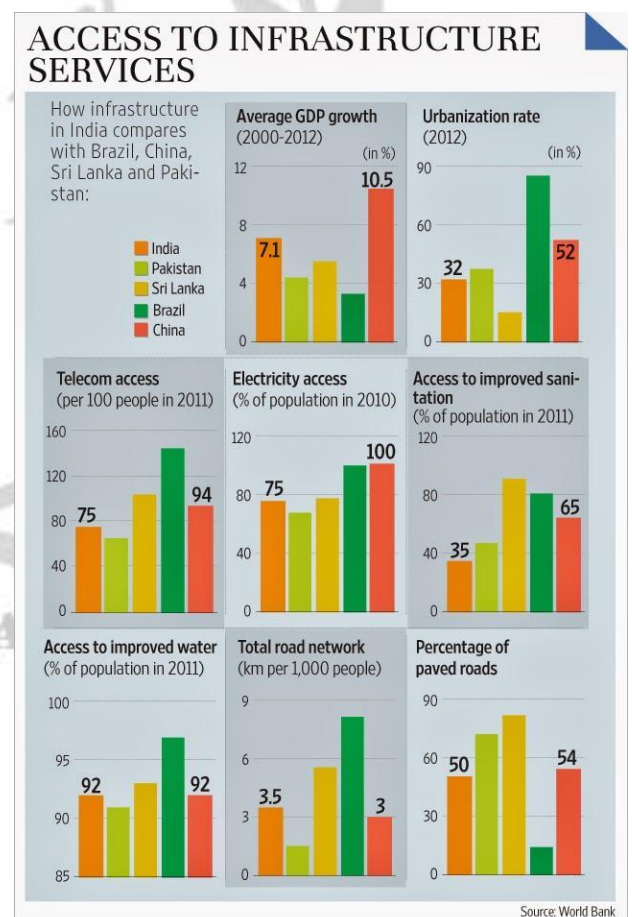
Economic development is a multidimensional process involving improvements in **income, productivity, health, education, employment, infrastructure, institutional quality and living standards**. Therefore, differences in per capita income alone cannot adequately explain why countries following different development trajectories achieve different social and economic outcomes.

India's development experience demonstrates this clearly. Since independence, India has achieved significant economic transformation, including expansion of industrial capacity, growth of services, improvements in food security and the emergence of globally competitive sectors. Yet development outcomes remain uneven across regions and social groups.

Comparative experiences of countries such as **China, South Korea and other East Asian economies** illustrate the importance of structural transformation. These economies achieved rapid growth through combinations of land reforms, human-capital investment, manufacturing expansion, export orientation, infrastructure development and strong state capacity.

Income versus human development

Per capita income provides information about average economic resources but does not reveal their distribution or the quality of public services.





Two countries with similar average incomes can differ substantially in:

- literacy;
- life expectancy;
- infant mortality;
- gender equality;
- access to healthcare;
- quality of education;
- employment opportunities;
- social protection.

Therefore, development must be evaluated through broader indicators of **human well-being**.

Structural transformation

A critical determinant of development is the movement of labour and capital from low-productivity activities towards higher-productivity sectors.

India's transition has been distinctive because the **services sector expanded rapidly**, while manufacturing's ability to absorb large numbers of semi-skilled workers has remained comparatively constrained.

This has important implications for employment. A country may experience rapid GDP growth without generating sufficient productive employment if growth is concentrated in capital-intensive or highly skilled sectors.

Role of institutions

Institutional quality also matters. Effective property rights, contract enforcement, regulatory predictability, financial institutions and administrative capacity influence investment and productivity.

Similarly, decentralised governance and accountable public institutions can improve the delivery of education, healthcare and welfare services.

Human capital

Investment in education and health produces long-term productivity gains. A healthy and educated workforce is better able to adopt technology, innovate and move into higher-productivity employment.

Therefore, public expenditure on **school education, higher education, healthcare, nutrition and skill development** should be viewed not merely as welfare expenditure but also as investment in productive capacity.

India's development challenge

India's future development requires simultaneous attention to:

Economic growth + employment + human capital + infrastructure + inclusion + environmental sustainability.



High growth without adequate job creation can produce inequality. Similarly, infrastructure expansion without environmental safeguards can impose long-term social costs.

The comparative development experience therefore demonstrates that development is not simply a race for higher GDP. It is a process of **structural transformation that improves the capabilities and opportunities of citizens.**

Consequently, India's development strategy should focus not merely on increasing the size of the economy but on improving **productivity, employment quality, human capital and institutional effectiveness.** This would make growth more inclusive, resilient and sustainable.

Q.4 “Public servants frequently encounter situations in which legal correctness and ethical correctness may appear to diverge. In such situations, constitutional morality should guide administrative discretion.” Discuss.

NCERT/Reference: UPSC GS Paper IV — **Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude**, with constitutional values from *Indian Constitution at Work*, Class XI.

Model Answer

Public administration operates within a framework of laws, rules and procedures. However, governance frequently involves situations where strict application of a rule may produce consequences that appear inconsistent with broader principles of **justice, equality, dignity and public welfare.** This creates an ethical dilemma for public servants.

The first principle is that **law cannot ordinarily be ignored in the name of personal morality.** Public officials derive their authority from the Constitution and law. Arbitrary departure from established procedures can undermine equality before law and create opportunities for favouritism.

At the same time, legality represents only the minimum institutional standard. Ethical governance requires officials to consider constitutional values while exercising legitimate discretion.

Constitutional morality refers broadly to fidelity to constitutional principles such as:

- justice;
- liberty;
- equality;
- fraternity;
- dignity;
- secularism;

Common Dilemmas

Public administration, by its very nature, is a field rife with inherent tensions that frequently manifest as ethical dilemmas. Understanding these common scenarios allows administrators to anticipate challenges and develop strategies for principled action.

Discretion vs. Rules (Flexibility vs. Uniformity):	Secrecy vs. Transparency (Security vs. Right to Know):	Public Interest vs. Personal Interest (Integrity vs. Self-Preservation)	Efficiency vs. Equity (Speed vs. Fairness):
Dilemma: Should an officer rigidly follow a rule, or use discretion to achieve a more compassionate or just outcome in a specific, unique case? Conflict: Legality/Uniformity vs. Empathy/Substantive Justice. Example: Denying a genuinely needy person a benefit because they fall just outside a rigid eligibility criterion.	Dilemma: When should information vital for national security or ongoing investigations be kept secret, and when does the public's right to know (via RTI) take precedence to ensure accountability? Conflict: National Security/Efficiency vs. Accountability/Public Trust. Example: Disclosure of details about a sensitive defense deal under RTI vs. maintaining secrecy.	Dilemma: An officer's personal financial or relational interests might conflict with their duty to act solely in the public's best interest. Conflict: Integrity/Objectivity vs. Personal Gain/Loyalty. Example: An officer on a tender committee whose relative owns a bidding company (Conflict of Interest).	Dilemma: Should a project be fast-tracked for quick results (efficiency) even if it means bypassing due process or marginalizing some sections (equity)? Conflict: Performance/Development vs. Justice/Inclusion. Example: Rapid infrastructure development that displaces tribal communities without adequate



- rule of law;
- non-discrimination.

Consider a district administrator dealing with homeless families occupying government land. The administration may have legal authority to remove an encroachment. However, immediate eviction without considering the availability of alternative shelter may create severe hardship.

The ethical response is not to ignore the law. Rather, the administrator should explore a **lawful and humane course**—verification, adequate notice, rehabilitation where applicable and phased enforcement.

This demonstrates the distinction between **rule-following and ethical administration**.

Similarly, consider disaster relief distribution. Rules may specify eligibility criteria, but an emergency situation may require rapid intervention before complete documentation can be obtained. Here, discretion may be justified when exercised transparently and consistently for public welfare.

Ethical principles in administrative discretion

A public servant should apply:

Objectivity: Decisions must be evidence-based.

Impartiality: Similar cases should receive similar treatment.

Empathy: The human consequences of decisions should be recognised.

Integrity: Personal or political interests must not influence discretion.

Accountability: Reasons for exceptional decisions should be recorded.

Proportionality: The response should not exceed what is necessary to achieve the legitimate objective.

Constitutional morality therefore prevents two opposite dangers.

The first is **rigid legalism**, where officials mechanically apply rules without considering legitimate constitutional values.

The second is **personal moralism**, where officials substitute their individual beliefs for democratically enacted law.

The ideal lies between these extremes: **law-guided discretion informed by constitutional values**.

Institutional mechanisms can strengthen such decision-making through reasoned orders, appellate review, transparency, grievance redressal and clear guidelines for discretionary powers.

Ultimately, public administration is not merely about implementing rules. It is about exercising **public power as a constitutional trust**. The ethical public servant therefore asks not only, *“Is this action legally permissible?”* but also, *“Is it fair, proportionate, non-discriminatory, transparent and consistent with constitutional values?”*

Thus, constitutional morality provides an important bridge between **legality and ethical governance**, ensuring that administrative discretion serves citizens rather than arbitrary authority.



Q.5 “India's challenge of retaining scientific talent is not merely a problem of migration; it is fundamentally a problem of creating an ecosystem in which scientific careers can compete with global opportunities.” Examine the causes of brain drain from India's scientific sector and suggest reforms.

Current Affairs Reference: *Retention Challenge in Indian Science: Brain Drain, Causes & Reforms*, August 2026.

Model Answer

The movement of highly trained scientists and researchers from India to countries offering stronger research ecosystems represents a significant **human-capital challenge**. The issue commonly described as “brain drain” should, however, be understood more broadly as a problem of **talent retention, research productivity and institutional competitiveness**.

India possesses a large pool of scientific and technical talent. Yet talented researchers may seek opportunities abroad because foreign institutions can offer better research infrastructure, greater access to advanced equipment, stronger international collaborations, higher remuneration and more predictable career pathways.

Major causes

1. Research infrastructure

Cutting-edge research increasingly requires sophisticated laboratories, computing capacity, specialised equipment and reliable research facilities. Inadequate or uneven access can reduce the productivity of researchers.

2. Career uncertainty

Young researchers often face prolonged periods of temporary fellowships, postdoctoral positions and uncertain academic careers. Lack of predictable progression can encourage migration.

3. Funding and administrative delays

Research requires timely funding. Delays in grants, procurement and approvals can reduce research efficiency and discourage ambitious projects.

4. Compensation and global opportunities

Indian scientists compete in a global labour market. International institutions may provide higher salaries, stronger research teams and access to global networks.

5. Institutional autonomy

Scientists often value intellectual freedom, flexibility in research design and merit-based institutional cultures. Excessive administrative interference can reduce scientific productivity.

6. International collaboration

Researchers may migrate because foreign institutions provide greater opportunities to participate in major international projects and interdisciplinary research networks.

Why retention matters

Loss of scientific talent creates more than a numerical reduction in manpower. Highly trained researchers represent years of public and private investment in education. Their departure can weaken:



- research capacity;
- innovation;
- technology development;
- mentorship of younger scientists;
- university-industry linkages;
- strategic scientific capabilities.

However, migration is not inherently negative. Indian scientists working abroad can contribute through **diaspora networks, collaborations, technology transfer and return programmes**. The objective should therefore be to convert brain drain into **brain circulation**.

Reform agenda

1. Predictable research funding:

Multi-year grants and faster procurement mechanisms can allow researchers to plan ambitious projects.

2. Strengthen research infrastructure:

Shared national laboratories and advanced research facilities can reduce duplication and expand access.

3. Reform scientific careers:

Transparent recruitment, tenure-track pathways and merit-based promotion can improve retention.

4. Improve research autonomy:

Scientists should receive greater operational flexibility while remaining accountable for outcomes.

5. Strengthen university research:

Research universities need stronger faculty support, doctoral programmes and international collaborations.

6. Industry–academia linkages:

Greater interaction between universities, start-ups and industry can create alternative scientific career pathways.

7. Diaspora engagement:

Visiting scientist programmes, joint laboratories, flexible return fellowships and collaborative research grants can facilitate brain circulation.

8. Support early-career researchers:

Young scientists require mentoring, competitive fellowships, access to equipment and opportunities to lead independent projects.

Way Forward

The retention challenge ultimately requires a shift from viewing scientists as merely **beneficiaries of government schemes to recognising them as strategic national assets**.

India need not prevent scientists from moving abroad. Instead, it should make domestic research institutions sufficiently attractive that migration becomes a choice rather than a necessity.

The long-term objective should therefore be an ecosystem characterised by:



Competitive funding + world-class infrastructure + institutional autonomy + predictable careers + global collaboration + industry linkages.

Such reforms would not only reduce involuntary brain drain but also strengthen India's capacity to become a **knowledge-driven, innovation-oriented economy**. The retention of scientific talent is consequently not merely an education or employment issue; it is directly connected with India's technological sovereignty, economic competitiveness and national development.

