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VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY & STUDY CENTRE

DAILY MCQ'S

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 16/09/2026 (WEDNESDAY)

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



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DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM STATIC PART

Q1. With reference to the Mahajanapadas and the rise of Magadha, consider the following statements:

1. The political expansion of Magadha was facilitated not merely by military strength but also by its access to fertile agricultural land, iron resources and important riverine routes.
2. The geographical location of Magadha made it dependent primarily on long-distance maritime trade for the accumulation of agricultural surplus.

Which one of the following is correct?

- (a) Both Statement 1 and Statement 2 are correct, and Statement 2 is the correct explanation for Statement 1.
- (b) Both Statement 1 and Statement 2 are correct, but Statement 2 is not the correct explanation for Statement 1.
- (c) Statement 1 is correct, but Statement 2 is incorrect.
- (d) Statement 1 is incorrect, but Statement 2 is correct.

Answer: (c)

Detailed Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct. The rise of **Magadha** cannot be explained solely through the personality of its rulers or military conquest. Its geographical and ecological setting provided several structural advantages.

Magadha occupied a region associated with the fertile alluvial plains of the Ganga and its tributaries. This facilitated agricultural expansion and generation of surplus. The availability of **iron ore in adjoining regions**, particularly towards the southern and southeastern areas, was significant for the production of tools and weapons. Iron technology could facilitate forest clearance as well as agricultural expansion.

The river system was another important advantage. The Ganga and its tributaries provided relatively efficient means of communication, movement and transportation. Control over riverine routes could therefore strengthen both political authority and economic integration.

Statement 2 is incorrect. Magadha did **not** depend primarily on long-distance maritime trade for agricultural surplus. Its rise was closely associated with the productive potential of the **Ganga valley and its surrounding resource zones**, rather than dependence upon maritime commerce.

The question is deliberately designed to prevent a simplistic explanation of state formation. Political power in early historic India emerged from an interaction of **ecology, agricultural surplus, technology, resource availability, trade routes and military organisation**.

Thus, the correct answer is (c).

Q2. Which one of the following most accurately distinguishes primary succession from secondary succession?

- (a) Primary succession begins where a community has been completely destroyed, whereas secondary succession begins only in aquatic ecosystems.
- (b) Primary succession begins on a substrate lacking a developed soil profile, whereas secondary succession generally occurs where soil and some biological legacies of the previous community remain.



- (c) Primary succession necessarily proceeds faster than secondary succession because pioneer species face less competition.
- (d) Secondary succession necessarily recreates exactly the same species composition that existed before the disturbance.

Answer: (b)

Detailed Explanation:

Ecological succession refers to the **directional change in the composition and structure of an ecological community over time**.

In **primary succession**, colonisation begins on a substrate where a developed soil profile is absent or essentially unavailable. Examples include newly exposed rock surfaces, newly formed volcanic substrates or surfaces exposed by retreating glaciers. Pioneer organisms gradually contribute to soil formation and modify environmental conditions, allowing subsequent communities to establish.

In **secondary succession**, a biological community has been disturbed, but important components such as **soil, nutrients, microorganisms, seeds, roots or other propagules** may remain. Consequently, recovery is generally faster than primary succession.

Option (a) is incorrect because secondary succession is not restricted to aquatic ecosystems.

Option (c) reverses the usual ecological distinction. Primary succession is generally **slower**, because soil formation and initial colonisation have to occur.

Option (d) is incorrect because secondary succession does not necessarily reproduce the exact previous species composition. The post-disturbance environment, climate, disturbance intensity and species availability may differ.

The deeper ecological principle is that **ecosystems possess biological legacies**. Soil, seed banks, surviving organisms and nutrient pools can substantially influence the trajectory of ecosystem recovery.

Hence, **(b)** is correct.

Q3. With reference to money and the banking system, consider the following statements:

1. An increase in the reserve requirement imposed on commercial banks can reduce their potential capacity for deposit expansion, other things remaining unchanged.
2. The money multiplier represents a mechanically fixed relationship between reserve money and money supply that remains unaffected by the public's currency-holding behaviour.
3. Commercial banks can create deposits through the process of extending credit, but such deposit creation does not imply that banks can create unlimited purchasing power independently of regulatory, liquidity and demand constraints.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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



Answer: (b)

Detailed Explanation:

Statements 1 and 3 are correct, while Statement 2 is incorrect.

Statement 1 is correct. The reserve requirement determines the proportion of deposits that banks must maintain as reserves. Other things remaining constant, a higher reserve requirement reduces the proportion of deposits available for lending and consequently reduces the potential deposit-expansion capacity of the banking system.

The classical simplified money-multiplier relationship is often represented as:

Money Multiplier = $1/\text{Reserve Ratio}$

However, this relationship is a simplified theoretical representation.

Statement 2 is incorrect. The money multiplier is not necessarily a mechanically fixed constant. In a more realistic monetary system, money creation is influenced by several factors, including the public's preference for holding currency, banks' excess reserves, credit demand, regulatory requirements and broader financial conditions.

This is precisely where the question becomes analytical. A simplistic application of the textbook multiplier can lead to the mistaken conclusion that every increase in base money automatically generates a proportionate and predictable increase in broad money.

Statement 3 is correct. Commercial banks create deposits when they extend loans or purchase financial assets, but this does not mean that they possess an unlimited capacity to create money. Credit creation is constrained by capital requirements, liquidity conditions, regulation, creditworthiness of borrowers, profitability and the demand for credit.

The important distinction is between **base money and broader money**. The central bank has a major role in determining monetary conditions, while commercial banks participate significantly in deposit creation through credit operations.

Therefore, **two statements are correct — (b).**

Q4. With reference to the Indian judiciary and constitutional interpretation, consider the following statements:

1. Judicial review enables courts to examine the constitutional validity of legislative and executive actions.
2. The Supreme Court's power of judicial review is confined exclusively to laws expressly declared void by Parliament.
3. The Supreme Court and High Courts can issue writs for the enforcement of Fundamental Rights, although their jurisdiction in this respect is not identical.
4. The power of judicial review has been regarded by the Supreme Court as an important element of the constitutional structure that cannot be completely eliminated through an ordinary constitutional amendment.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one



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

Answer: (c)

Detailed Explanation:

Statements 1, 3 and 4 are correct, while Statement 2 is incorrect.

Statement 1 is correct. Judicial review enables constitutional courts to examine whether legislative and executive actions conform to the Constitution. Where an action violates constitutional provisions, the judiciary may provide an appropriate remedy.

Statement 2 is incorrect. Parliament does not possess the exclusive authority to determine whether its legislation is constitutionally valid. Judicial review exists precisely because courts can independently examine constitutional validity. The Constitution is the supreme legal framework against which legislative and executive actions can be tested.

Statement 3 is correct. Both the Supreme Court under **Article 32** and High Courts under **Article 226** possess writ jurisdiction. However, their scopes differ. Article 32 is specifically associated with enforcement of Fundamental Rights, whereas Article 226 empowers High Courts to issue writs not only for Fundamental Rights but also **“for any other purpose.”**

Thus, Article 226 is wider in textual scope, although the Supreme Court occupies a distinct constitutional position.

Statement 4 is correct. The Supreme Court has treated judicial review as an important component of the constitutional scheme and has associated it with the **basic structure doctrine**. Consequently, Parliament's power to amend the Constitution cannot be interpreted as permitting the complete destruction of judicial review.

The conceptual trap lies in treating judicial review as simply another ordinary judicial power. It is deeply connected with **constitutional supremacy, rule of law and limited government**.

Hence, **three statements are correct — (c).**

Q5. Consider the following Assertion and the two Reasons given below:

Assertion:

Intensive agricultural development in a region does not necessarily result in sustainable land-resource utilisation.

Reason I:

Repeated cultivation, excessive irrigation and inappropriate agricultural practices can contribute to soil degradation, salinisation, waterlogging and depletion of soil nutrients.

Reason II:

The agricultural potential of land is determined solely by its natural fertility and is therefore unaffected by irrigation, technology, cropping practices or institutional interventions.

Which one of the following is correct?

- (a) Both Reason I and Reason II are correct, and both of them explain the Assertion.



- (b) Both Reason I and Reason II are correct, but only Reason I explains the Assertion.
- (c) Reason I is correct, but Reason II is incorrect.
- (d) Reason I is incorrect, but Reason II is correct.

Answer: (c)

Detailed Explanation:

The **Assertion is correct**. Agricultural intensification can substantially increase output from a given area, but higher agricultural productivity does not automatically imply that the underlying land-resource base is being used sustainably.

Reason I is correct and directly explains the Assertion. Intensive agriculture can generate environmental pressures when resource use exceeds the regenerative capacity of the ecosystem. Excessive irrigation may result in **waterlogging and salinisation**, while continuous cultivation without appropriate nutrient management can contribute to soil degradation and declining soil fertility.

Similarly, monocropping, excessive chemical inputs, inappropriate tillage and inadequate soil conservation can accelerate erosion and reduce soil quality.

Reason II is incorrect. Agricultural potential is not determined solely by natural fertility. Land productivity is influenced by a combination of **soil characteristics, water availability, climate, technology, irrigation, crop choice, fertiliser management, conservation practices, infrastructure and institutional arrangements**.

This distinction is central to geographical analysis. Land is not simply a fixed natural resource whose productive value remains constant. Human interventions can both **enhance and degrade** its productive capacity.

For example, irrigation can transform agricultural possibilities in an otherwise water-deficient region. However, if irrigation is poorly managed, the same intervention can eventually degrade the soil through salinity or waterlogging. Thus, a technology that initially expands productive capacity can generate ecological constraints when applied without resource-management safeguards.

The question therefore tests the distinction between **agricultural intensification and sustainable intensification**.

Sustainable land use requires maintaining the productive capacity of resources over time through measures such as soil conservation, efficient irrigation, crop diversification, balanced nutrient management, watershed management and appropriate land-use planning.

Therefore, **Reason I is correct, Reason II is incorrect, and the correct answer is (c).**



DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q1. With reference to the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Awards, consider the following statements:

1. The award is the highest national adventure-sports honour of India and is conferred in recognition of exceptional achievement in adventure activities involving land, water and air.
2. The award is constitutionally distinct from the National Sports Awards and is conferred by the Ministry of Defence because adventure activities are treated primarily as defence-related activities.

Which one of the following is correct?

- (a) Both Statement 1 and Statement 2 are correct, and Statement 2 is the correct explanation for Statement 1.
- (b) Both Statement 1 and Statement 2 are correct, but Statement 2 is not the correct explanation for Statement 1.
- (c) Statement 1 is correct, but Statement 2 is incorrect.
- (d) Statement 1 is incorrect, but Statement 2 is correct.

Answer: (c)

Detailed Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct. The **Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award (TNNAA)** is India's highest national honour for adventure sports. It recognises individuals demonstrating exceptional qualities such as endurance, courage, risk-taking ability and technical proficiency in demanding adventure activities. The award covers four categories: **Land Adventure, Water Adventure, Air Adventure and Lifetime Achievement**.

Statement 2 is incorrect. The award is administered by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**, not the Ministry of Defence. It is also treated at a level equivalent to the **Arjuna Award** among India's major sporting honours.

The award originated as the **National Adventure Awards in 1993** and was renamed in 2003 after Tenzing Norgay, commemorating his historic ascent of Mount Everest with Sir Edmund Hillary in 1953.

The conceptual trap is the association of adventure activities with military training. Although mountaineering, trekking, rafting, parachuting and similar activities may have defence applications, the TNNAA is fundamentally a **national sports/adventure recognition administered through the sports ministry**.

Hence, **(c)** is correct.

Q2. The principal advantage of placing an Earth-observation satellite such as EOS-05 in a geosynchronous/geostationary-type orbit for continuous observation of a specified region is:

- (a) It eliminates atmospheric interference from all observations because the satellite remains above the atmosphere.
- (b) It permits persistent observation of the same broad region with a high revisit frequency, making it particularly useful for monitoring rapidly evolving phenomena.
- (c) It enables the satellite to obtain uniformly higher spatial resolution than any low-Earth-orbit satellite irrespective of the size of its optical system.



(d) It allows the satellite to remain permanently above the geographic North Pole while the Earth rotates beneath it.

Answer: (b)

Detailed Explanation:

The principal advantage described in the question is **persistent regional coverage**.

EOS-05 is designed as a geo-imaging Earth-observation satellite intended to provide near-continuous observation of the Indian subcontinent and surrounding areas. According to the current-affairs material, it is planned for operation at approximately **35,786 km**, corresponding to the geosynchronous orbital regime.

A satellite in a geostationary configuration appears approximately stationary relative to a point on Earth's surface because its orbital period corresponds to Earth's rotation. This makes such satellites particularly useful for monitoring **rapidly changing phenomena** such as cyclones, severe weather systems, floods and other large-scale events.

Option (a) is incorrect because being in space does not eliminate atmospheric effects. Optical and infrared observations can still be affected by clouds, aerosols and atmospheric absorption.

Option (c) is incorrect because spatial resolution is determined by several factors, including **optical aperture, wavelength, detector characteristics and orbital altitude**. A higher orbit does not automatically provide higher spatial resolution.

Option (d) is incorrect because geostationary satellites orbit in the equatorial plane and do not remain above the North Pole.

The important UPSC distinction is between **revisit frequency and spatial resolution**. A satellite may sacrifice some spatial resolution by operating at a greater altitude while gaining a major advantage in temporal coverage.

Therefore, **(b)** is correct.

Q3. With reference to the SCO Bishkek Declaration, consider the following statements:

1. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation has reaffirmed that it is not a military-political alliance directed against any particular country.
2. The Declaration supports greater use of national currencies and alternative payment mechanisms for trade and financial cooperation among participating countries.
3. The SCO's institutional approach to connectivity places no importance on sovereignty or territorial integrity when evaluating regional infrastructure projects.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

**Detailed Explanation:**

Statements 1 and 2 are correct, while Statement 3 is incorrect.

Statement 1 is correct. The Bishkek Declaration reaffirmed that the SCO is **not a military-political alliance** and is not directed against any particular country. This distinction is important because the SCO is sometimes incorrectly compared directly with a conventional military alliance.

Statement 2 is correct. The Declaration supported greater use of **national currencies and alternative payment mechanisms** for trade and financial cooperation. It also discussed broader financial cooperation, including consideration of an SCO Development Bank.

This reflects a wider trend towards diversification of international payment mechanisms and reducing excessive dependence on a limited number of global financial channels.

Statement 3 is incorrect. The Declaration explicitly linked regional connectivity with **respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity**. Connectivity projects were discussed in relation to initiatives such as the **China–Kyrgyzstan–Uzbekistan railway (CKU)** and the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**, while emphasising sovereignty-related principles.

The trap is particularly important for UPSC because connectivity is not merely an economic concept. Major infrastructure corridors can simultaneously involve **trade, strategic geography, sovereignty, security and geopolitical interests**.

Hence, **two statements are correct — (b).**

Q4. With reference to the proposed Public Insurance Registry (PIR), consider the following statements:

1. The proposed PIR is conceived as a Digital Public Infrastructure intended to facilitate interoperable exchange and verification of insurance-related information.
2. Under its proposed architecture, primary insurance records would necessarily be transferred from all participating institutions into one centrally controlled data warehouse.
3. The architecture seeks to preserve source-system primacy while permitting authorised access to information through common standards and protocols.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Detailed Explanation:

Statements 1 and 3 are correct, while Statement 2 is incorrect.

Statement 1 is correct. The proposed **Public Insurance Registry** is conceived as a population-scale, interoperable and non-exclusionary **Digital Public Infrastructure**. Its purpose is to address information asymmetry and facilitate controlled information exchange across the insurance ecosystem.



Participants may include insurers, reinsurers, intermediaries, policyholders, financial institutions, government departments and research institutions.

Statement 2 is incorrect. One of the most important design features of the proposed PIR is precisely that it is **not intended to become a conventional centralised data silo**. The underlying records can remain with their original source institutions.

This is known as the principle of **source-system primacy**.

Statement 3 is correct. The proposed architecture seeks interoperability through common data standards, definitions and digital protocols while preserving the original institutions' ownership and custody of primary records. Authorised information access would operate subject to consent, purpose limitation and role-based permissions.

This distinction between **centralised data storage** and a **federated information-exchange architecture** is the central conceptual issue in the question.

A central database physically consolidates information in one location. A federated architecture can enable information to be discovered or verified across multiple source systems without requiring all underlying records to be moved into one database.

The PIR is therefore better understood as an **interoperability layer** rather than simply a giant insurance database.

Hence, **two statements are correct — (b)**.

Q5. With reference to India's hub-and-spoke aviation strategy, consider the following statements:

1. In the hub-and-spoke model, regional airports can function as spokes that aggregate passenger traffic towards major international gateway airports functioning as hubs.
2. Through-ticketing and baggage transfer can reduce the need for passengers to collect and re-check baggage during a qualifying domestic-to-international connection at the hub.
3. The economic rationale of the model partly arises from the possibility of consolidating passenger demand, thereby making long-haul international services more viable than operating separate direct services from every regional city.
4. The hub-and-spoke model necessarily eliminates all dependence on foreign transit hubs because every international passenger originating in India must connect through an Indian hub.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Detailed Explanation:

Statements 1, 2 and 3 are correct, while Statement 4 is incorrect.



Statement 1 is correct. In a hub-and-spoke network, smaller or regional airports operate as **spokes**, feeding passengers into a central **hub** from which they can connect to longer-distance domestic or international services. India's proposed strategy initially envisages Delhi as a major hub, with other metropolitan airports potentially serving as additional hubs.

Statement 2 is correct. The proposed model emphasises **through-ticketing and baggage handling**, so that passengers can check in at their origin airport and have baggage transferred through to the final destination in qualifying arrangements. This reduces friction during the connection process.

Statement 3 is correct. A hub allows airlines to **aggregate demand** from multiple regional cities. Instead of requiring an airline to operate separate direct international flights from every Tier-2 or Tier-3 city, passengers can be consolidated at a major gateway. This can improve aircraft utilisation and route economics.

The economic principle is therefore **network density through traffic aggregation**.

Statement 4 is incorrect. The strategy seeks to reduce dependence on foreign transit hubs, but it does not logically imply that *every* international passenger originating in India must connect through an Indian hub. Passengers may continue to use direct international services or other routing options.

The word “**necessarily**” makes Statement 4 particularly vulnerable. A hub-and-spoke strategy changes network incentives; it does not impose an absolute prohibition on alternative international connections.

Thus, **three statements are correct — (c).**

Q6. The Pichavaram Mangrove Forest, recently highlighted for its ecological and economic significance, is located in:

- (a) Odisha, along the Mahanadi delta and Chilika lagoon system
- (b) Tamil Nadu, between the Vellar and Coleroon river systems along the Coromandel Coast
- (c) Andhra Pradesh, within the Krishna–Godavari delta
- (d) Kerala, within the backwater system between the Periyar and Bharathapuzha rivers

Answer: (b)

Detailed Explanation:

The **Pichavaram Mangrove Forest** is located in **Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu**, on the **Coromandel Coast**. It forms part of the Vellar–Coleroon estuarine complex and is associated with the shallow Killai backwater system.

The mangrove ecosystem lies between the **Vellar estuary to the north and the Coleroon (Kollidam) estuary to the south**. Its extensive network of waterways and channels creates a distinctive intertidal wetland environment.

Pichavaram is ecologically important for several reasons:

- Mangroves provide **coastal protection** against waves, storm surges and erosion.
- They function as important **nursery grounds** for fish, prawns, crabs and other aquatic organisms.
- Their sediments store substantial quantities of **blue carbon**.
- They support local livelihoods, particularly fishing communities.



- The area is recognised as a **Ramsar wetland**.

The question deliberately places Pichavaram among other major Indian coastal ecosystems to test **precise geographical association rather than generic knowledge of mangroves**.

The **Mahanadi delta and Chilika** are associated with Odisha; the **Krishna–Godavari delta** lies primarily in Andhra Pradesh; and Kerala's backwaters represent a different coastal geomorphological system.

Therefore, **(b)** is correct.

DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAINS ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

GS-1

Q1. “The transformation of Indian society cannot be understood as a simple transition from tradition to modernity; instead, modern institutions have often interacted with and reshaped existing social structures.” Discuss with suitable examples.

Sample Answer

Indian society has experienced profound transformations through industrialisation, urbanisation, education, democratisation, migration, technological change and globalisation. However, these processes have rarely resulted in a complete replacement of traditional institutions by modern ones. Rather, Indian modernity has emerged through a complex process of **interaction, adaptation and contestation between traditional structures and modern institutions**.

The institution of **caste** illustrates this complexity. Modern education, urban employment and constitutional equality have weakened some traditional restrictions associated with caste. The Constitution prohibits untouchability and provides affirmative-action mechanisms. Yet caste has not disappeared. Instead, it has adapted to democratic politics through caste associations, electoral mobilisation and demands for representation.



Caste and Politics In India

- Caste and democracy are different from each other and they cannot co-exist as caste advocates fragmentation of society whereas democracy stands for the unification of society.
- Caste is based on inequality by birth. Democracy is based on principles of equality.
- Caste advocates social exclusion and democracy advocates social inclusion.
- Caste provides wealth, power and status to specific groups but democracy provides equal chances to all categories.
- The irony is yet they both caste system and democracy co-exist in Indian society.

Similarly, **family structures** have changed under the influence of urbanisation, migration and women's education. Nuclear households have expanded, particularly in urban areas. However, kinship networks remain important for marriage, inheritance, social security and economic support. Thus, modernity has modified the family without eliminating kinship.

The spread of education represents another important transformation. Modern education promotes individual achievement, scientific reasoning and occupational mobility. Yet educational opportunities remain influenced by class, caste, gender, region and access to digital infrastructure. Consequently, modern institutions may simultaneously create opportunities and reproduce inequalities.



Urbanisation further demonstrates this interaction. Cities facilitate occupational mobility, individualism and exposure to diverse cultures. At the same time, migrants frequently retain linguistic, religious and regional identities. Urban neighbourhoods may therefore become spaces where traditional identities are reproduced in new forms.

Democracy has similarly transformed social relationships. Universal adult franchise has given historically marginalised groups greater political voice. Political mobilisation around caste, ethnicity, gender and regional identity demonstrates that democratic institutions do not simply eliminate social identities; they can provide new platforms through which these identities are articulated.

Globalisation and digital technology have accelerated these processes. Social media can challenge traditional authority and expand access to information, but it can also strengthen community networks and identity-based mobilisation.

Therefore, Indian modernity is better understood through the concept of “**multiple modernities**” rather than a linear movement towards a single Western model. Traditional institutions may decline in some domains while adapting in others.

The central sociological lesson is that social change involves both **continuity and transformation**. Modern institutions introduce new values, opportunities and forms of organisation, but their operation is mediated by India's existing social structures.

Thus, Indian society represents neither an unchanged traditional order nor a complete modern rupture. It is a continuously evolving synthesis in which **tradition is often transformed by modernity, while modernity itself is shaped by tradition**.

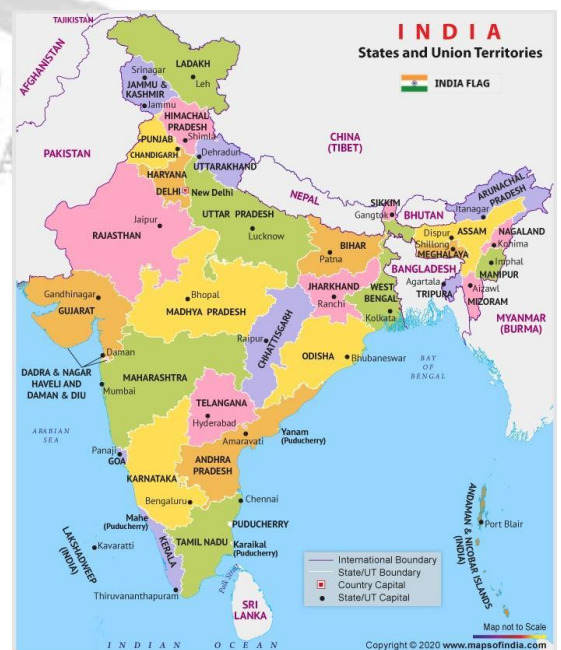
GS-2

Q2. “The reorganisation of Indian States after Independence demonstrated that accommodation of regional aspirations could strengthen rather than necessarily weaken national integration.” Examine.

Sample Answer

At Independence, India inherited an extraordinarily diverse society characterised by linguistic, cultural, ethnic and regional identities. The integration of this diversity into a democratic Union was one of the most important challenges facing the new Republic. The **reorganisation of States**, particularly on linguistic lines, demonstrated that democratic accommodation of regional aspirations could become an instrument of national integration.

Initially, there was considerable hesitation about linguistic reorganisation. The leadership feared that creating States based on linguistic identity might encourage separatism and weaken national unity. The **States Reorganisation Commission**, however, recognised the practical and democratic significance of linguistic aspirations and recommended a reorganisation of States while retaining the unity of the Indian Union.





The formation of **Andhra State in 1953**, following the prolonged agitation for a separate Telugu-speaking State, became a major turning point. The subsequent States Reorganisation Act, 1956, reorganised large parts of India on linguistic and administrative considerations.

This process illustrates an important characteristic of Indian federalism: **flexibility**. The Constitution provided Parliament with the power to alter the boundaries, areas and names of States. This enabled the political system to accommodate changing regional demands without requiring a fundamental restructuring of the Union.

Subsequent developments reinforced this flexibility. Maharashtra and Gujarat were created in 1960, while several States in the Northeast emerged in response to distinctive ethnic and geographical aspirations. Later demands resulted in the creation of States such as Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh in 2000, and Telangana in 2014.

However, State reorganisation alone cannot resolve all regional aspirations. Questions of resource distribution, political representation, cultural recognition, employment and development continue to generate regional demands.

Moreover, excessive reliance on territorial reorganisation can sometimes produce new minority-majority relationships within the newly created States. Therefore, federal accommodation must be complemented by decentralisation, constitutional safeguards, fiscal federalism and inclusive development.

The Indian experience nevertheless demonstrates an important political principle: **identity recognition need not be equivalent to political fragmentation**. When citizens perceive that their linguistic or cultural identity can receive legitimate recognition within the constitutional framework, the incentive for extra-constitutional mobilisation may decline.

Indian federalism has therefore evolved as an adaptive mechanism rather than a rigid territorial arrangement. Regional aspirations have frequently been channelled through elections, State formation, constitutional provisions and political negotiation.

Hence, the reorganisation of States demonstrates that national integration does not necessarily require uniformity. **Unity can be strengthened through institutional recognition of diversity**, provided that regional aspirations remain within the constitutional framework.

GS-3

Q3. "Governance reforms increasingly require a shift from government-centric administration towards collaborative and networked governance." Discuss in the context of India's changing developmental challenges.

Sample Answer

Governance is broader than government. While government primarily refers to formal institutions of the State, **governance encompasses the processes through which public, private and civil-society actors collectively address societal problems**. India's increasingly complex developmental challenges have made a shift towards collaborative and networked governance necessary.

Traditional government-centric administration operates through hierarchical structures. Ministries formulate policies, departments implement programmes and citizens are primarily viewed as beneficiaries. Such an

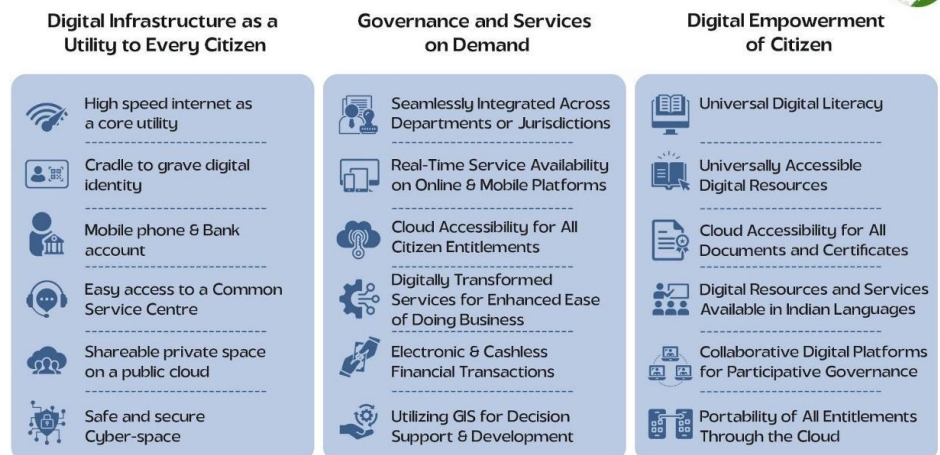


approach remains important for functions involving authority, regulation and redistribution, but many contemporary challenges cannot be addressed by government alone.

Climate change provides a clear example. Managing climate risks requires coordination among Union and State governments, municipalities, businesses, scientists, communities and international institutions. No single department possesses all the necessary resources and expertise.

Similarly, **urban governance** requires collaboration among municipal corporations, development authorities, transport agencies, utilities, private service providers and citizens. Fragmented institutional responsibilities can otherwise produce problems such as traffic congestion, poor waste management and inadequate drainage.

Key Services Under Digital India



Source: Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

Digital governance has further changed the relationship between citizens and the State. Platforms for direct benefit transfer, digital payments, online grievance redressal and open government data can reduce transaction costs and improve transparency. However, digital governance also creates concerns relating to privacy, cybersecurity and exclusion of citizens lacking digital access.

Participatory governance is particularly important in sectors involving local resources. Gram Sabhas, self-help groups, civil-society organisations and community institutions can contribute local knowledge that centralised bureaucracies may lack.

The concept of **co-production** is useful here. Citizens are not merely passive recipients of public services; they can participate in designing, monitoring and delivering them. Social audits under welfare programmes illustrate how citizens can contribute to accountability.

However, networked governance creates challenges of its own. Multiple actors can produce unclear accountability. Private participation may generate conflicts between commercial incentives and public interest. Powerful stakeholders can dominate participatory processes.

Therefore, collaborative governance requires institutional safeguards such as transparent contracts, clear division of responsibilities, independent regulation, social audits, grievance mechanisms and public disclosure.

India's developmental trajectory increasingly requires precisely such institutional coordination. From digital public infrastructure to climate adaptation, health, urbanisation and environmental management, problems are becoming more **interconnected, cross-sectoral and multi-level**.

Thus, governance reform should not imply replacing the State with networks. Rather, it requires a **capable State that can coordinate, regulate, facilitate and remain accountable while working with non-state actors**.



The emerging model is therefore neither “government versus society” nor “State versus market”, but an institutional architecture in which **State capacity and societal participation reinforce each other**.

GS-4

Q4. “The most difficult ethical decisions in public administration arise when two or more legitimate values conflict with each other.” Discuss with suitable examples.

Sample Answer

Ethical dilemmas arise when an individual must choose between competing courses of action, each of which is supported by a legitimate moral value. In public administration, such dilemmas are particularly complex because civil servants operate simultaneously under **law, institutional responsibility, constitutional values and public expectations**.

Consider the conflict between **confidentiality and transparency**. Government officials may possess sensitive information whose disclosure could harm national security or individual privacy. At the same time, citizens have a legitimate interest in transparency and accountability. Ethical decision-making requires distinguishing genuinely sensitive information from information that is merely inconvenient for the administration.

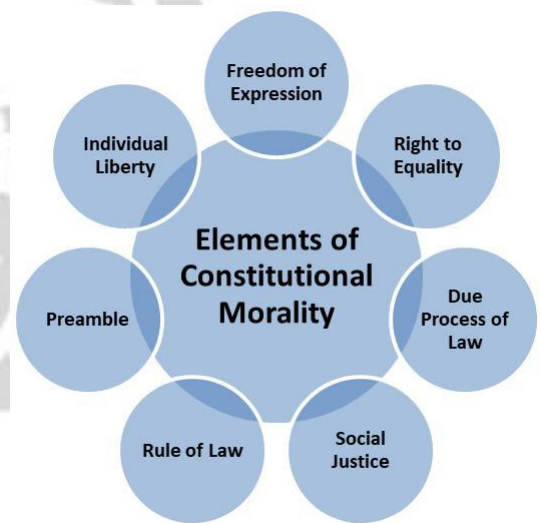
Another example is the conflict between **strict equality and substantive justice**. Treating every citizen identically may appear impartial. However, individuals facing structural disadvantages may require differential assistance to achieve meaningful equality. Affirmative action is based partly on this principle.

A district magistrate may also face a conflict between **development and environmental protection**. A major infrastructure project may generate employment and connectivity but threaten forests or the livelihoods of local communities. Rejecting every project would ignore developmental needs, while approving every project without safeguards would neglect environmental ethics. The appropriate response involves proportionality, evidence-based assessment and mitigation.

Similarly, during a disaster, an administrator may have to allocate scarce relief resources among competing groups. **Impartiality** demands objective criteria, while **compassion** may require prioritising particularly vulnerable populations. Ethical decision-making therefore requires transparent criteria rather than personal preferences.

The conflict between **loyalty and integrity** is another important dilemma. A civil servant may be expected to implement a superior's decision but may discover that the decision is unlawful or seriously harmful to public interest. Ethical courage requires raising objections through appropriate institutional channels rather than either blindly obeying or publicly disregarding authority.

Several ethical frameworks can assist decision-making. **Deontological ethics** emphasises duties and rules; **consequentialism** focuses on outcomes; **virtue ethics** examines character; and constitutional morality provides a framework of rights, justice and dignity.





However, no single framework is sufficient for every administrative dilemma. A practical approach should involve:

1. Identifying all stakeholders.
2. Establishing the applicable law and institutional duties.
3. Identifying competing ethical principles.
4. Assessing short- and long-term consequences.
5. Applying proportionality and least-harm principles.
6. Recording reasons for the decision.
7. Ensuring accountability and review.

Ethical competence therefore involves more than knowing abstract moral principles. It requires the ability to **reason under conditions of uncertainty and competing legitimate interests.**

Ultimately, good administration does not eliminate ethical dilemmas; rather, it develops institutions and officials capable of resolving them transparently, impartially and constitutionally.

Q5. Current Affairs

“India's data-centre expansion illustrates a new dimension of the development–environment dilemma: digital infrastructure, although physically less visible than conventional industry, can have substantial energy, water and spatial footprints.” Critically examine.

Sample Answer

India's rapid digitalisation and expansion of artificial intelligence are creating a significant demand for **data-centre infrastructure**. Data centres provide the physical foundation for cloud computing, digital public infrastructure, e-commerce, financial technology and AI. However, their growth increasingly raises questions concerning electricity, water, land, emissions and urban carrying capacity.

Recent analysis cited by InsightsIAS notes that India's installed data-centre capacity increased from approximately **520 MW in 2020 to around 1.5 GW in 2026**, with projections of approximately **6.5 GW by 2030**. Electricity consumption associated with data centres is projected to rise substantially as AI workloads expand.

The first major concern is **electricity consumption**. Data centres operate continuously and require highly reliable power. AI workloads can intensify this demand because high-performance computing involves energy-intensive processors and cooling systems. If incremental demand is met predominantly through carbon-intensive electricity, digital expansion can indirectly increase greenhouse-gas emissions.

The second concern is **water consumption**. Many data centres use water-based cooling systems. A 100 MW facility can consume very substantial quantities of water, particularly under certain cooling configurations. The problem becomes acute when facilities are concentrated in already water-stressed urban regions.

Third, data-centre development can create **localised infrastructure pressure**. Large facilities require substations, transmission capacity, backup systems, land, roads and telecommunications connectivity. If public infrastructure is upgraded primarily to serve private facilities without appropriate cost-sharing mechanisms, some infrastructure costs may effectively be transferred to ordinary consumers.



Fourth, there is a potential **urban heat interaction**. Cooling systems release waste heat, while rising ambient temperatures can increase cooling requirements, creating a feedback mechanism between urban heat and energy demand. Recent analysis cited by InsightsIAS has highlighted concerns regarding localised temperature effects around data-centre clusters.

Nevertheless, data centres are essential infrastructure for India's digital economy. They support digital public infrastructure, financial transactions, government services, scientific computing and emerging AI capabilities. The policy objective should therefore not be a simplistic restriction on data-centre expansion.

A more appropriate approach would be **resource-accountable digital infrastructure**. This could include:

- mandatory disclosure of energy and water consumption;
- location-specific environmental assessment;
- recycled or non-potable water for cooling wherever feasible;
- closed-loop and water-efficient cooling technologies;
- renewable energy procurement;
- battery storage and demand-response mechanisms;
- efficient transmission planning;
- waste-heat recovery where economically viable;
- stronger e-waste management;
- linking fiscal incentives to measurable sustainability outcomes.

A particularly important principle is **carrying-capacity-based location planning**. Data centres should not be concentrated automatically in major metropolitan areas simply because of existing connectivity if those locations face severe water or electricity constraints.

The challenge is therefore not to choose between **digitalisation and environmental protection**, but to redesign digital infrastructure so that its physical resource requirements remain compatible with ecological limits.

India's data-centre boom can become an important component of economic transformation, but its long-term viability will depend upon whether the country treats **energy, water, land and grid capacity as economic inputs with ecological constraints rather than as unlimited public resources**.