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VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY & STUDY CENTRE

DAILY MCQ'S

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

DATE: 22/09/2026 (TUESDAY)

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



9972258970 & 9740702455

#317/A SKB Arcade, D. Subbaiah Road,
Ramaswamy Circle, Mysuru-570004

DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM STATIC PART

Q1. With reference to the British expansion of political control in India during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, consider the following statements:

1. The Subsidiary Alliance system enabled the East India Company to exercise decisive influence over the external affairs of an Indian ruler without necessarily annexing his territory.
2. Under the system of Subsidiary Alliances, the Indian ruler was generally required to maintain an independent foreign policy so that the British could avoid direct involvement in inter-state disputes.

Which one of the following is correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (a)

Explanation:
Statement 1 is correct. Under the Subsidiary Alliance system associated particularly with Lord Wellesley, Indian rulers accepted the stationing of British troops within their territories and surrendered substantial control over external relations. The arrangement therefore allowed the Company to establish political paramountcy without immediate territorial annexation.
Statement 2 is incorrect. A fundamental feature of the system was precisely the opposite: the allied ruler surrendered independent control over foreign relations and could not freely negotiate with other powers. Thus, the alliance curtailed rather than preserved the ruler's diplomatic autonomy.
The system consequently transformed several formally independent Indian states into subordinate allies of the Company.

Q2. In the context of ecosystem functioning, which one of the following most accurately explains why biomagnification is generally more pronounced at higher trophic levels?

(a) Organisms at higher trophic levels always consume a greater absolute quantity of food than organisms at lower trophic levels.
(b) Persistent substances that are poorly metabolised or excreted can accumulate in organisms and become increasingly concentrated through successive trophic transfers.
(c) Energy transfer between trophic levels causes pollutants to be converted into chemically more toxic substances.
(d) Primary producers selectively absorb pollutants in quantities proportional to the biomass of their consumers.

Answer: (b)

Explanation:
Biomagnification refers to the increase in concentration of certain persistent contaminants at successively higher trophic levels. Substances such as certain organochlorine compounds and methylmercury may resist degradation or effective excretion and therefore accumulate within organisms.
A predator may consume numerous contaminated prey during its lifetime, resulting in a greater contaminant concentration in its tissues than in individual prey organisms.
Option (a) is not a necessary condition because biomagnification depends on contaminant properties and

trophic transfer rather than simply food quantity. Option (c) incorrectly attributes the process to energy transfer, while option (d) does not explain progressive concentration across trophic levels.

Q3. With reference to the functioning of a modern economy, consider the following statements:

1. An increase in the cash reserve ratio, other things remaining constant, can reduce the lending capacity of commercial banks.
2. An increase in the policy interest rate can influence aggregate demand by making borrowing relatively more expensive.
3. An increase in the reserve money of an economy necessarily results in an equal proportional increase in broad money.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation:
Statement 1 is correct. An increase in the Cash Reserve Ratio requires banks to maintain a larger proportion of their deposits as reserves, thereby reducing the funds potentially available for lending, other things remaining unchanged.
Statement 2 is correct. A higher policy interest rate can raise borrowing costs across the financial system and thereby moderate interest-sensitive components of consumption and investment demand.
Statement 3 is incorrect. Reserve money and broad money do not have a mechanically fixed one-to-one proportional relationship. The eventual expansion of broad money depends on factors such as banks' lending behaviour, currency preferences and reserve requirements. Therefore, only Statements 1 and 2 are correct.

Q4. With reference to the Indian constitutional framework concerning the Supreme Court of India, consider the following statements:

1. The Supreme Court may review its own judgments and orders subject to the limitations prescribed by law.
2. The law declared by the Supreme Court is binding on all courts within the territory of India.
3. The President of India may refer a question of law or fact of public importance to the Supreme Court for its advisory opinion.
4. An advisory opinion tendered by the Supreme Court under Article 143 has exactly the same binding force as a judgment delivered in an ordinary adversarial proceeding.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

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Explanation:
Statement 1 is correct. Article 137 empowers the Supreme Court to review judgments or orders made by it, subject to parliamentary legislation and rules made under Article 145.
Statement 2 is correct. Article 141 provides that the law declared by the Supreme Court is binding on all courts within the territory of India. This establishes the precedential authority of the Supreme Court's declared law.
Statement 3 is correct. Under Article 143, the President may refer certain questions to the Supreme Court for its advisory opinion, including questions of law or fact of public importance.
Statement 4 is incorrect. An advisory opinion under Article 143 is constitutionally distinct from an ordinary judgment in a contentious proceeding. It does not simply possess the identical binding character contemplated by Article 141 for "law declared" through the Court's judicial determination. Hence, three statements are correct.

Q5. Consider the following Assertion and the two Reasons:

Assertion (A): The spatial distribution of population in the world is highly uneven.

Reason 1 (R1): Areas having favourable combinations of climate, relief, soil, water availability and economic opportunities tend to attract and sustain larger concentrations of population.

Reason 2 (R2): Human population can expand only in regions where natural environmental conditions are uniformly favourable throughout the year.

Which one of the following is correct?

(a) Both R1 and R2 are correct, and both explain A
(b) Both R1 and R2 are correct, but only R1 explains A
(c) R1 is correct, but R2 is incorrect, and R1 explains A
(d) R1 is incorrect, but R2 is correct, and R2 explains A

Answer: (c)

Explanation:
The Assertion is correct: population distribution is highly uneven because physical, economic, historical and socio-cultural factors vary substantially across space.
Reason 1 is correct and directly explains the Assertion. Regions with favourable environmental conditions and accessible economic opportunities have historically supported dense settlements. However, favourable conditions need not be perfect or uniform; technological development can allow human populations to inhabit environments that are physically challenging.
Reason 2 is therefore incorrect. Human habitation is not restricted to regions having uniformly favourable natural conditions throughout the year. Examples include high-latitude regions, deserts, mountains and other environmentally demanding areas where technology and economic adaptation have enabled substantial human settlement.

DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FROM CURRENT AFFAIRS

Q1. With reference to Exercise Veer Guardian-2026, consider the following statements:

1. The exercise is a bilateral air exercise between the Indian Air Force and the Japan Air Self-Defense Force, with the 2026 edition being hosted at Jodhpur.
2. The participation of Japan's F-2A aircraft has significance beyond platform familiarisation, since the aircraft has an airframe lineage associated with the U.S. F-16, thereby providing an operational context different from exercises involving only India's Russian-origin fighter platforms.

Which one of the following is correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c)

Explanation:
Both statements are correct. Veer Guardian-2026 is a bilateral air combat exercise between the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF), conducted at Air Force Station Jodhpur from 9–22 September 2026. The IAF component includes Tejas, Su-30MKI and Rafale, while Japan has deployed F-2A fighters.

The F-2A is particularly relevant because its design has a lineage derived from the F-16 family. Thus, the exercise provides tactical exposure involving a platform lineage different from the Russian-origin Su-30MKI operated by India. The exercise also incorporates mission planning, engineering exchanges, aerospace-safety interaction and operational debriefing, making interoperability broader than mere flying together.

The trap lies in confusing **bilateral air interoperability** with a multilateral or treaty-based collective-defence exercise. Veer Guardian itself is a bilateral India-Japan exercise.

Q2. The Kalinga Ratna Award, recently in the news, is best distinguished from the Sarala Samman because:

(a) the former is a national civilian award instituted by the Government of India, whereas the latter is a state civilian award instituted by the Government of Odisha.
(b) the former is conferred by Sarala Sahitya Sansad for eminent contributions associated with Odisha, whereas the latter primarily recognises distinguished contribution to Odia literature.
(c) the former is restricted to serving constitutional authorities, whereas the latter is restricted to retired public servants.
(d) the former is awarded by the Odisha Legislative Assembly, whereas the latter is conferred by the Sahitya Akademi.

Answer: (b)

Explanation:
The Kalinga Ratna Award is a distinguished regional honour instituted and conferred by **Sarala Sahitya Sansad**, a literary and cultural organisation based in Cuttack. It recognises eminent personalities originating from or deeply associated with Odisha whose contributions have acquired national or international significance.

In 2026, former Chief Justice of India **Justice Dipak Misra** received the Kalinga Ratna Award. At the same ceremony, the **Sarala Samman** was conferred on litterateur Dr. Ramachandra Behera for his contribution to Odia literature.

The important distinction is therefore institutional and functional: Kalinga Ratna is a broader recognition of eminent achievement associated with Odisha, whereas Sarala Samman is principally associated with literary achievement.

Q3. With reference to ORV Sagar Manthan, consider the following statements:

1. It has been designed as a multidisciplinary deep-sea research vessel capable of supporting observations extending from the atmosphere to the seabed.
2. Its scientific capabilities include bathymetric mapping, seismic-reflection studies, CTD observations and deployment of remotely operated or autonomous underwater systems.
3. Its principal mandate is confined to mineral exploration within India's Exclusive Economic Zone, with climate and oceanographic research being only incidental applications.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation:
Statements 1 and 2 are correct. ORV Sagar Manthan is an all-weather, multidisciplinary deep-sea research vessel developed for operations in demanding oceanic environments, including the Southern Ocean. It is designed to support a broad range of oceanographic and atmospheric observations.

Its equipment includes dynamic positioning, swath multibeam bathymetry, multichannel seismic reflection systems, sub-bottom profilers, meteorological radar and CTD observation capability. It can also support the deployment and recovery of ROVs, AUVs and deep-sea benthic corers.

Statement 3 is incorrect because mineral exploration is only **one component** of its mandate. The vessel is also intended to contribute to climate, monsoon, tsunami and broader oceanographic research. It is associated with Vertical-4, *Deep Ocean Survey and Exploration*, under the Deep Ocean Mission.

The conceptual trap is to equate **Deep Ocean Mission** with merely deep-sea mineral extraction; the vessel's scientific role is considerably broader.

Q4. With reference to the proposed Article 371(K) concerning Ladakh, consider the following statements:

1. The proposal seeks to introduce a special constitutional arrangement under Part XXI without converting Ladakh into a State.
2. The proposed directly elected body would have legislative competence over certain matters relating to land, property transfer, culture, language, forests, environment and natural resources.
3. The proposal would automatically confer upon Ladakh the constitutional protection available under the Sixth Schedule.

4. The proposed framework, as presently described, settles the question of financial autonomy and places police and public order entirely under the proposed elected body.

How many of the above statements are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation:
Statements 1 and 2 are correct. The proposed Article 371(K) is envisaged as a **sui generis constitutional arrangement** under Part XXI for Ladakh. It seeks to establish a directly elected UT-level governing body with legislative powers over specified sensitive subjects, without granting Ladakh full statehood.

Statement 3 is incorrect. The proposal is intended to create tailored constitutional safeguards and does **not automatically confer Sixth Schedule status**. The distinction is crucial because the Sixth Schedule is a specific constitutional framework applicable to certain tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

Statement 4 is also incorrect. Financial autonomy, budgetary arrangements, executive authority and control over police and public order remain among the important areas whose precise treatment is not settled in the proposal described by the source.

The trap is between **"drawing inspiration from existing special provisions"** and **"automatically importing those provisions in their entirety."** The proposed model is described as tailored and sui generis.

Q5. Consider the following Assertion and the two Reasons:

Assertion (A): The ecological significance of orangutans extends beyond their status as an endangered primate because changes in their population can have implications for forest regeneration.

Reason 1 (R1): Orangutans are predominantly frugivorous and contribute to the dispersal of seeds across tropical forest ecosystems.

Reason 2 (R2): Orangutans are predominantly terrestrial mammals whose principal ecological role arises from grazing and suppression of herbaceous vegetation.

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Which one of the following is correct?

(a) Both R1 and R2 are correct, and both explain A
(b) Both R1 and R2 are correct, but only R1 explains A
(c) R1 is correct, but R2 is incorrect, and R1 explains A
(d) R1 is incorrect, but R2 is correct, and R2 explains A

Answer: (c)

Explanation:
The Assertion is correct. Orangutans are ecologically important components of tropical forest ecosystems, particularly because their feeding behaviour contributes to **seed dispersal and forest regeneration**.

Reason 1 is correct. Orangutans are primarily frugivorous, consuming a wide variety of forest fruits along with other food items. Their movement through forest habitats and consumption of fruits facilitate the dispersal of seeds, making them important agents in forest ecological processes.

Reason 2 is incorrect. Orangutans are highly arboreal rather than predominantly terrestrial. They spend most of their lives in the forest canopy and possess morphological adaptations such as long, powerful arms and grasping feet suited to movement through trees.

The current-affairs trigger is particularly significant because orangutans rescued in Odisha were identified as belonging to a group of species native to **Borneo and Sumatra**, rather than being naturally occurring Indian fauna. All three recognised orangutan species—Bornean, Sumatran and Tapanuli—are listed as **Critically Endangered**.

Q6. Consider the following pairs:

Mountain/Peak	**Geographical association**
1. Gasherbrum I	Karakoram
2. Gasherbrum II	Baltoro Glacier region
3. Gasherbrum Massif	India–Nepal border
4. Gasherbrum I	Also known as Hidden Peak

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation:
Pairs 1, 2 and 4 are correctly matched.

Gasherbrum I is part of the **Karakoram** and is also known as **Hidden Peak**. It rises to about 8,080 metres and is located in the China–Pakistan border region.

Gasherbrum II is also a member of the Gasherbrum massif in the Karakoram and is associated with the upper Baltoro Glacier region. It is an 8,000-metre peak and was historically designated **K4**.

Pair 3 is incorrect. The Gasherbrum massif is associated with the **Karakoram**, particularly the region around the northeastern end of the Baltoro Glacier, rather than the India–Nepal border. The massif lies in the broader China–Pakistan border region.

Map-based trap: Gasherbrum should be mentally located in the **Karakoram sector of the western Himalaya**, not along the India–Nepal Himalayan sector.

DAILY PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAINS ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Q1. GS Paper I — Art & Culture

Question:

"Indian temple architecture is better understood as a process of regional adaptation than as a rigid classification into Nagara, Dravida and Vesara styles." Discuss with suitable examples.

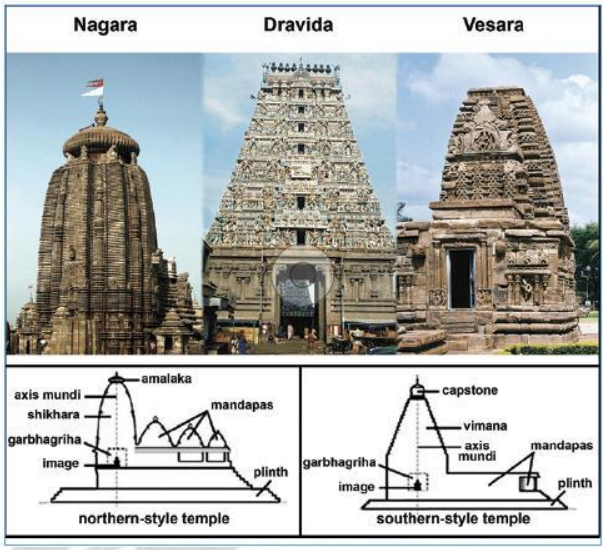
Sample Answer

Indian temple architecture represents one of the most enduring expressions of India's civilisational diversity. NCERT's *An Introduction to Indian Art Part-I*, Chapter 6, **Temple Architecture and Sculpture**, itself cautions against treating the Nagara, Dravida and Vesara categories as completely isolated architectural compartments. The evolution of temples reflects interaction among religion, geography, material availability, patronage and regional building traditions.

From classification to continuum

The conventional classification broadly identifies:

- **Nagara** — predominantly northern India, characterised by a curvilinear *shikhara* over the sanctum.
- **Dravida** — predominantly southern India, characterised by a pyramidal *vimana*, enclosure walls and prominent gateways.
- **Vesara** — often used for hybridised architectural tendencies, particularly in the Deccan.



However, these categories should be treated as **analytical frameworks rather than watertight geographical boxes**.

For instance, the **Deccan** became a zone of architectural interaction. Chalukyan and later Hoysala traditions demonstrate combinations of northern and southern architectural vocabulary. The Hoysala temples at Belur and Halebidu, with their complex plans, richly carved surfaces and distinctive platforms, cannot be adequately understood merely by assigning them to a single textbook category.

Regional adaptation

Regional geography significantly influenced architectural evolution.

In **Odisha**, temples developed distinctive features such as the *rekha deul* and *pidha deul*. The Sun Temple at Konark demonstrates the elaboration of the Nagara tradition into a highly distinctive regional form.

In **central India**, Khajuraho demonstrates the development of the Nagara tradition through clustered vertical forms, elaborate sculptural programmes and high platforms.

In the **Tamil region**, Chola temples such as Brihadeeswarar represent the monumental expansion of Dravida architecture, with enormous vimanas and increasingly elaborate temple complexes.

The **Deccan**, however, demonstrates why rigid classification becomes problematic. Political interactions among Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, Hoysalas and other powers facilitated architectural experimentation. The Kailasa temple at Ellora, although fundamentally Dravida in conception, was carved in the Deccan within a wider environment of architectural interaction.

Temple as a socio-economic institution

Temples were not merely religious structures. They became:

- centres of ritual activity;
- repositories of sculpture and painting;
- employers of artisans;
- recipients of land grants;
- centres of music and dance;
- nodes of economic redistribution;
- and, in several periods, important administrative institutions.

Thus, temple architecture also provides evidence for reconstructing the political economy and social organisation of the period.

Conclusion

Therefore, Nagara, Dravida and Vesara are useful conceptual categories, but Indian temple architecture evolved through **continuous regional experimentation and cultural interaction**. Its diversity reflects India's geographical pluralism as well as the movement of artisans, ideas, religious practices and political patronage. Understanding temples as **dynamic regional traditions rather than static stylistic compartments** provides a more historically accurate interpretation of Indian art and architecture.

GS Paper II — India and the UN Security Council

Q2. ***"India's case for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council rests not merely on its national capabilities but also on the representational deficit of the existing multilateral order." Examine. What structural and political constraints continue to impede Security Council reform?***

Sample Answer

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was designed in 1945 to reflect the distribution of power at the end of the Second World War. The contemporary international system, however, has undergone profound demographic, economic and geopolitical changes. Consequently, the debate over UNSC reform involves not merely India's aspiration for permanent membership but the larger question of **representativeness, legitimacy and effectiveness of global governance**.

India has consistently supported comprehensive reform of the Security Council, including expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories. India's official position has also emphasised the need for text-based negotiations within the Intergovernmental Negotiations process.

India's case

India's argument can be understood through several dimensions.

First, demographic representation. India represents a very large share of humanity, yet the permanent membership structure remains essentially a product of the geopolitical circumstances of 1945.

Second, contribution to the UN system. India has historically made substantial contributions to UN peacekeeping and has participated actively in multilateral diplomacy.

Third, economic and strategic significance. India's growing economic weight and expanding role in global governance strengthen its argument that contemporary institutions should reflect present realities.

Fourth, developing-world representation. India presents itself as a voice of developing countries and the Global South, arguing that the existing structure does not adequately reflect their interests.

The **G4 grouping—India, Japan, Germany and Brazil—** has jointly advocated expansion of the Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories.



Why reform remains difficult

The principal difficulty is that UNSC reform is itself dependent upon a political consensus involving states whose institutional privileges could potentially be affected.

The **veto** is especially important. Any reform involving permanent membership inevitably raises questions about:

- whether new permanent members should receive veto power;
- whether existing veto powers should be modified;
- whether veto should eventually be abolished;
- and how regional representation should be determined.

A second problem is **regional competition**. Different regions may disagree over which state should receive permanent representation.

A third issue concerns the **amendment mechanism of the UN Charter**, which makes structural reform considerably more difficult than an ordinary General Assembly decision.

A fourth obstacle is the divergence between different reform coalitions. The G4 seeks permanent seats, while the **Uniting for Consensus** grouping has historically favoured expansion primarily through non-permanent or longer-term elected seats rather than new permanent members.

Way forward

A workable reform process would require:

1. text-based negotiations;
2. greater transparency in Council working methods;
3. improved regional representation;
4. balancing effectiveness with legitimacy;
5. discussion of veto restraint;
6. greater representation of developing countries.

Conclusion

India's UNSC claim therefore has two interconnected dimensions: **national candidature and institutional reform**. The deeper issue is whether a Council created for the geopolitical structure of 1945 can retain legitimacy in a substantially transformed twenty-first-century international order. Meaningful reform would need to reconcile representativeness with decision-making effectiveness rather than treating expansion merely as redistribution of diplomatic privilege.

GS Paper III — Nanotechnology

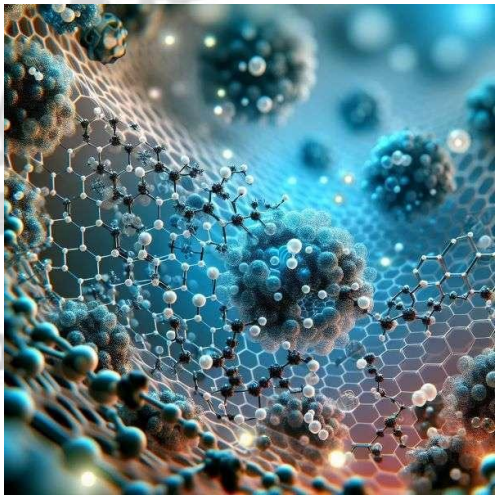
Q3. ***"Nanotechnology is an enabling technology rather than a sector-specific technology." Explain. Examine its potential to simultaneously address India's challenges relating to healthcare, agriculture, water, energy and advanced manufacturing, while highlighting the associated risks.***

Sample Answer

Nanotechnology involves the manipulation and application of matter at extremely small scales, where materials can exhibit properties substantially different from those observed at larger dimensions. Its significance lies not in constituting a single industrial sector but in its ability to **modify the performance of materials, devices and biological systems across multiple sectors**.

India's Department of Science and Technology has treated nanoscience and nanotechnology as an enabling area with applications ranging from healthcare and energy to environment and agriculture. The Nano Mission was launched in 2007 and subsequently evolved into the National Programme on Nano Science and Technology.

Why nanoscale matters



At the nanoscale, materials may exhibit altered:

- surface-area-to-volume ratios;
- electrical properties;
- optical behaviour;
- magnetic characteristics;
- catalytic activity;
- mechanical properties.

This creates opportunities to engineer materials for specific applications.

Healthcare

Nanotechnology can facilitate **targeted drug delivery**, where therapeutic molecules are transported preferentially towards particular tissues or cells.

Potential benefits include:

- controlled drug release;
- reduced systemic exposure;

- improved diagnostic sensitivity;
- nanosensors;
- imaging technologies;
- antimicrobial materials.

DST-supported research has included nano drug-delivery systems and nanomaterials for healthcare applications.

Agriculture

Nanotechnology can contribute to:

- nano-enabled fertilisers;
- controlled nutrient release;
- nanosensors for soil and crop monitoring;
- targeted agrochemical delivery;
- improved water-use efficiency.

The critical challenge is ensuring that increased efficiency does not create unforeseen ecological effects through persistent nanoparticles in soil and water.

Water security

Nanomaterials can be incorporated into membranes and filtration systems for removing contaminants. India's earlier Nano Mission explicitly identified **safe drinking water** as an area of national relevance.

This is particularly significant for India because water purification must increasingly combine technological efficiency with affordability and decentralised deployment.

Energy

Nanostructured materials have potential applications in:

- batteries;
- supercapacitors;
- solar cells;
- catalysts;
- hydrogen-related technologies;
- energy storage.

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DST research under the Nano Mission included nanostructured electrode materials for lithium rechargeable batteries and nanomaterials for renewable-energy applications.

Advanced manufacturing

Nanomaterials and engineered surfaces can improve:

- strength-to-weight ratios;
- wear resistance;
- corrosion resistance;
- catalytic efficiency;
- sensing capabilities.

Thus, nanotechnology can become a cross-cutting component of advanced manufacturing.

Risks and governance

The same properties that make nanomaterials useful can generate risks.

Important concerns include:

- uncertain toxicity;
- occupational exposure;
- environmental persistence;
- bioaccumulation;
- inadequate life-cycle assessment;
- disposal challenges;
- regulatory gaps.

A major governance challenge is therefore the **innovation–precaution balance**. Regulation should not unnecessarily suppress beneficial research, but commercial deployment should be accompanied by risk assessment, standards, labelling where appropriate and life-cycle monitoring.

Conclusion

Nanotechnology should therefore be viewed as a **platform technology** capable of transforming multiple sectors. India's challenge is to move from laboratory-scale excellence towards affordable and safe commercial applications while developing parallel regulatory and environmental safeguards. Its ultimate success will depend not merely on producing smaller materials but on converting nanoscale scientific knowledge into **socially accessible, economically viable and environmentally responsible technologies**.

GS Paper IV — Ethics, Integrity and Public Administration

Q4. ***A district administrator discovers that a welfare scheme is formally complying with every procedural requirement, yet its benefits are reaching only a small proportion of the intended beneficiaries because the application process is highly complex and inaccessible to vulnerable citizens. The implementing officials argue that "the rules are being followed".***

Identify the ethical issues involved. What should the administrator do? Discuss with reference to integrity, empathy, accountability, responsiveness and the distinction between procedural compliance and substantive justice.

Sample Answer

The case presents a fundamental ethical tension between **procedural legality and substantive justice**. Merely following prescribed procedures does not necessarily guarantee that the objectives of public policy are being achieved. Public administration ultimately exists to translate constitutional and statutory commitments into meaningful outcomes for citizens.

Ethical issues

1. Procedural compliance versus substantive justice

Officials are defending themselves on the ground that established rules have been followed. However, if the procedure itself creates exclusion, mechanical compliance may undermine the substantive objective of the welfare programme.

2. Empathy

Vulnerable citizens may lack literacy, digital access, documentation or administrative familiarity. An ethical administrator must understand these barriers rather than treating non-access as citizen failure.

3. Responsiveness

Public administration must respond to actual social conditions. If evidence shows that eligible citizens are unable to access a scheme, continuing unchanged procedures merely because they are formally valid reflects institutional rigidity.

4. Accountability

Accountability should extend beyond expenditure and paperwork to **outcomes**. An administrator should ask whether intended beneficiaries actually receive the benefits for which public resources have been allocated.

5. Integrity

Integrity requires alignment between the purpose of public office and administrative conduct. Officials cannot use procedural correctness as a shield when they know that the policy objective is being frustrated.

Course of action

The administrator should first undertake an evidence-based assessment:

- identify the proportion of eligible beneficiaries actually receiving benefits;
- analyse where applications are being rejected or abandoned;
- identify documentation and digital barriers;
- consult frontline workers and beneficiary groups;
- examine whether exclusion is intentional, structural or accidental.

The administrator should then simplify processes **within the legal framework**. Possible measures include:

- assisted application centres;
- multilingual instructions;
- offline alternatives;

- mobile service camps;
- proactive identification of eligible beneficiaries;
- convergence with local institutions;
- grievance redress mechanisms.

If rules themselves create unreasonable exclusion, the administrator should document the problem and recommend appropriate modification through competent authority rather than unilaterally violating the law.

Ethical balance

However, empathy cannot mean arbitrary relaxation of rules. There must be a balance between:

Rule of law → transparency → fairness → accessibility → accountability.

Selective relaxation benefiting politically influential groups would itself violate integrity. Reforms should therefore be **general, transparent and evidence-based**.

Constitutional perspective

The ethical approach is consistent with the broader constitutional values of:

- equality;
- dignity;
- social justice;
- fraternity;
- accountability in public institutions.

The administrator's responsibility is not merely to ensure that a file is procedurally complete but that the **public purpose underlying the file is realised**.

Conclusion

Good governance requires movement from a **"compliance culture" to an "outcome-oriented ethical culture."** Procedural rules provide safeguards against arbitrariness, but empathy and responsiveness ensure that those safeguards do not become barriers to justice. The ideal administrator therefore neither ignores rules nor hides behind them; rather, the administrator works lawfully to make the system more accessible, fair and responsive to those whom it is intended to serve.

Current Affairs — Ladakh Glacial Water Initiative

Q5. ***The Ladakh Glacial Water Initiative demonstrates that climate-resilient water governance need not always depend upon large infrastructure projects. Discuss how the initiative illustrates the principles of decentralisation, local knowledge, adaptive governance and climate resilience. Also examine the ecological and governance challenges that must be addressed if such interventions are scaled up.***

Sample Answer

Ladakh presents a paradox of **water abundance in seasonal flows but chronic water scarcity at the point of agricultural use**. In the cold-desert environment, substantial glacial meltwater may flow through

channels while cultivated areas remain water-stressed because of differences in timing, terrain and infrastructure.

The **Ladakh Glacial Water Initiative** emerged from such a local problem. At Chuchot, officials identified water flowing through the Stok village nallah, fed by the Stok Kangri Glacier. Around **90 million litres of water per day** were channelised through existing irrigation infrastructure, with approximately 80 million litres directed towards the Igoo-Phey Canal and another 10 million litres towards Chuchot. The intervention reportedly expanded irrigation access across more than 1,000 acres in 12 villages.

A subsequent larger initiative involving the **Rupsho Kharnak glacier stream** seeks to channelise an average of around **320 million litres per day** towards Tso Kar, whose water extent has substantially declined over the previous decade.

Decentralisation and local knowledge

The initiative began with a **local grievance** rather than a centrally conceived mega-project. A village-level demand brought an administrative response, demonstrating how decentralised institutions can identify problems that may remain invisible in aggregate planning data.

This reflects the principle that effective governance often requires combining:

local knowledge + administrative capacity + existing infrastructure.

Adaptive governance

Climate change is altering the hydrological characteristics of mountain regions. Glacial systems are not static reservoirs; their melt patterns can change with temperature, precipitation and glacier dynamics.

Therefore, water governance must become adaptive rather than based on fixed historical assumptions.

The initiative demonstrates adaptive governance by:

- identifying an existing water source;
- connecting it to existing canals;
- modifying water distribution;
- responding to actual local demand;
- and attempting to integrate water security with ecological restoration.



Climate resilience

The intervention can strengthen resilience by reducing dependence on highly capital-intensive infrastructure and improving access to naturally available seasonal flows.

However, **glacial melt cannot be treated as an unlimited or permanently increasing water resource**. Accelerated melting may initially increase runoff but eventually reduce long-term glacier storage. Therefore, infrastructure planning must be accompanied by glacier monitoring and watershed management.

Ecological concerns

Scaling up such projects raises several questions:

1. Will diversion alter downstream ecological flows?
2. Could wetland or lake ecosystems be affected?
3. What happens during unusually low-melt years?
4. Could excessive diversion create conflict among villages?
5. Is water allocation based on transparent and participatory rules?
6. How will climate-induced changes in glacier behaviour be incorporated into planning?

The Tso Kar intervention particularly demonstrates the need to combine **water-security objectives with ecosystem conservation**, rather than treating water bodies merely as storage reservoirs.

Governance lessons

The initiative offers a broader model of public administration based on:

- responsiveness;
- community participation;
- decentralised problem identification;
- frugal innovation;
- use of existing infrastructure;
- inter-village coordination;
- ecological monitoring;
- adaptive planning.

Yet replication should not become mechanical. What works in one watershed may not work identically elsewhere because Himalayan and trans-Himalayan hydrological systems differ considerably.

Conclusion

The Ladakh experience demonstrates that climate resilience is not synonymous with massive infrastructure. **Institutional responsiveness, local knowledge and intelligent use of existing infrastructure can sometimes generate significant outcomes at relatively low intervention intensity.** However, long-term sustainability requires hydrological monitoring, ecological safeguards, participatory allocation and recognition of the finite nature of glacial water resources. The larger lesson is that climate adaptation should combine **technology with institutions and local knowledge**, rather than treating infrastructure alone as the solution.