**INSIGHTS SECURE-2016 SYNOPSIS COMPILATION- GS PAPER-2**

*Topic:* Poverty and hunger; Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

[**2) In general, since independence, governments in India have failed to manage droughts effectively. Critically comment on the factors that have hindered effective management of droughts. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/02/2-general-since-independence-governments-india-failed-manage-droughts-effectively-critically-comment-factors-hindered-effective-management-droughts/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/parched-earth-broken-promises/article8545139.ece)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/54-cr-farmers-in-the-grip-of-drought/article8545187.ece)

**Factors hindering drought management in India:**

1. **Corruption**
* **NREGA:**
	+ The Central government had declared that the provision of work under MGNREGA would be extended from 100 to 150 days in all drought-affected areas. But this has not happened.
	+ In 2015-2016, according to the Ministry website, in five of the districts — Aurangabad, Jalna, Nanded, Osmanabad and Hingoli — the average days of work in each of the districts was just 47 days or lower. In Latur it was 72 days, and in Beed, 81.
	+ MGNREGA last year was just 70,000 people or fewer in each district. The only exception was in Beed, where 1.19 lakh individual workers got work. This month, when demand is at its peak, the average figure in each district is just 4,000.
	+ Central government’s refusal to release adequate funds for NREGA is another problem.
	+ Fake and on paper work due to bureaucratic corruption which erodes the investment without any benefit in the area.
1. **Water Mismanagement**
2. **Monsoon Dependence**

Indian agriculture is still largely dependent on monsoon which is irregular. Failure of the government to gauge this irregularity on time and hence lack of alternate source for dependence. For e.g. Extensive rain water harvesting can be promoted in areas with good rainfall and also in drought prone areas when there is good monsoon. Creating a water bank for the time of crisis would help mitigate the adverse effects of drought.

1. **Inters-state water sharing disputes**

States with surplus water do not wish to share water deficit states. For example, dispute over River Beas between Punjab and Haryana.

1. **Stalled Projects of River linking**

The river linking project have been in the pipeline for long. There is a need for funding, effective planning and time bound completion of the project.

1. Wastage of water in surplus area. For example, power subsidy in Punjab has led to extensive wastage of water through irrigation.
2. **Lack of scientific intervention**
3. No integration of Research and development with agriculture and lack of sound scientific practices**.**
4. Wrong cropping pattern- for example sugar mafias and political leaders in Maharashtra have led mushrooming of sugar cultivation in an area ill-suited to it. Similarly, growth of eucalyptus tree in eastern U.P is again ill-suited as it is a water parasite and the region is not water sufficient. Cultivation of excessive water intensive crops as a result of green revolution compounded by high minimum support price for these crops.
5. Low investment in water saving technologies, for example drip irrigation.

1. **Policy Failure**
2. Lack of planning and foresight, and criminal neglect.
3. No comprehensive drought policy.
4. It is unfortunate that four decades after the beginning of the green revolution, the country has**failed to develop modern grain storage structures** on a large scale
5. **Ineffective Food trade policy** unlike China where it imports water intensive crops like Soy.
6. No long term strategy but **Temporary solutions** like water train to Latur which yields no results.
7. **PDS problems**– corruption, no proper targeting because of improper identification of beneficiaries etc.,
8. **Bad drought assessment** as two years of consecutive drought government should have taken advanced steps.

Government was successful in formulating some government schemes and strategies like:

* Also, a semblance of social security system has emerged in rural India, with permanent income support measures such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme**(MGNREGS), the Public Distribution System (PDS), midday meals and social security pensions.**
* This reduces people’s dependence on special relief measures in drought years.
* It is arguable that the PDS is even more important than MGNREGS as a tool of drought relief. Monthly food rations under the PDS are more regular and predictable than MGNREGS work. They also cover a much larger fraction of the rural population — 75 per cent under the National Food Security Act (NFSA). A well-managed PDS is a major safeguard against hunger and starvation.
* Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana is a good policy initiative that would accelerate public investment in both micro and macro irrigation.
* Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bhima Yojana
* Organic farming is being promoted to reduce fertilizer use.
* National action plan for climate resilient agriculture is promoting drought resistant crop

*Topic: Functioning of judiciary*

[**3) Critically comment on the functioning of the Supreme Court of India. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/02/3-critically-comment-functioning-supreme-court-india/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/a-national-court-of-appeal-aye/article8545142.ece)

The primary role of the Supreme Court is to clarify substantial questions on law relating to the interpretation of the Constitution or otherwise of general importance. Apart from the disputes between States, and Public Interest Litigations, other cases come in appeal from the High Courts and Tribunals.

Over a period of time the role of the Supreme court has expanded, however this has led several issues.

Problems:

* Backlog of cases leaves the court little time for its primal functions. 59,468 cases backlog in Feb 2016
* Geographical proximity especially for litigants from South India.  For example, of all the cases filed in Supreme Court highest numbers are from high courts of Northern states. Travelling to Delhi for every hearing is not possible, especially for poor, aged and disabled. Supreme Court can increase its sitting in various parts of the country, but it fears loss of supremacy and dilution of powers.
* Problem of backlog may be a convenient reason for the other organs of the state to seek drastic curtailment of the courts powers.
* Burden in the form of civil and criminal appeals.
* Court’s inability to devote itself substantially to the determination of important public questions.
* A substantial portion of four days of the country’s senior-most judges thus goes in just deciding which cases should join the appeals docket of the Supreme Court.
* Being tasked with the filtering process is a waste of the time, experience and wisdom of a Supreme Court judge. It prevents full consideration of the substantive cases before these judges
* It provides no space for wider reading, for pause and reflection.
* Number of cases decided by constitutional benches has steadily declined from the time of the court’s inception. From 1950-1954-15% cases were handled by constitutional benches but in 2005-2009 -only 0.12% cases.
* Two judges benches are vested with enormous power of ruling on significant matters of public importance like section 66 A, Suresh Kumar Koushal vs  Naz foundation in the section 377 ban.
* Larger Benches bring more judicial thinking to an issue, a balancing of different points of view and greater authority to the ruling of the court.
* Supreme court using the pliability of its power to grant special leave  to often intervene in mundane disputes
* Appointment of judges:

o There was not one instance of all the judicial posts being filled. The average vacancy in the Supreme Court, high courts and lower courts is about 10, 30 and 20 per cent, respectively

o One argument for not filling the sanctioned positions that is proffered is that it is not possible to find good judges. If anyone says that 22,000 good and suitable people cannot be found to take up judges’ positions in India, it insults the nation.

o This is an issue for which both the judiciary and the government must take responsibility. Though there are 462 vacancies for high court judges, only 170 names have been recommended by the collegium.

* lack of transparency in the functioning of the system, the absence of a culture of openness and willingness to engage with civil society, academics and other stakeholders, and near absolute lack of quality statistics on the functioning of the system, the judiciary escapes accountability
* On the other hand, there is a liberal dose of admission of cases without ensuring their disposal. This is mainly because some want to please the Bar. Only when you control the inflow, you can increase the outflow.

 Despite the concerns Supreme court has been tremendously successful as being the harbinger of justice in the eyes of Indian Citizens because of the following judgements:-

* Golaknath case – 1967:Parliament’s prevented from taking away individual rights.
* Parliament’s overarching ambitions nipped in the bud (Keshavananda Bharti vs State of Kerala) 1973.
* Parliament limited by itself (Minerva Mills v Union of India) – 1980:the Supreme Court of India in 1980 strengthened the doctrine of the basic structure which was propounded earlier in the Keshavananda Bharti Case. Two changes which were made earlier by the 42nd Amendment Act were declared as null and void by the Supreme Court in this particular case.
* Maintenance lawsuit sets precedent (Mohd Ahmed Khan v Shah Bano Begum) – 1985:Shah Bano won the right to get alimony from her husband.Most favoured it as a secular judgment but it also invoked a strong reaction from the Muslim community, which felt that the judgment was an encroachment on Muslim Sharia law
* Power of President’s Rule curtailed (SR Bommai v Union of India) – 1994 :Persecution of state governments stalled.This landmark case had major implications on Center-State relations. Post this case the Supreme Court clearly detailed the limitations within which Article 356 has to function.
* Expanded the ambit of article 21
* Vishaka case: enforced fundamental rights for working women under Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution. This resulted in the introduction of Vishaka Guidelines. The judgment of August 1997 also provided basic definitions of sexual harassment at the workplace and provided guidelines to deal with it.
* Priyadarshini Mattoo case ,Jessica lal case:Justice was provided to the victims despite high profile being  accused
* Vodafone’s name cleared in tax battle (Vodafone-Hutchison tax case) :Landmark decision on taxability of offshore transactions.
* The Supreme Court rejected a patent plea by Swiss drugmaker Novartis AG for cancer drug Glivec, boosting the case for cheaper drugs for life-threatening diseases.
* NOTA Judgment – 2013:The right to reject candidates formalised.
* Lily Thomas case effected much needed cleansing of legislative bodies
* Nirbhaya case -Judiciary spurred into action and laws were strengthened for sex offenders.
* Third gender acknowledged as citizens with rights.
* In shreya singhal case Controversial section 66A of the Information Technology Act which allowed arrests for objectionable content posted on the internet was struck down as unconstitutional

 What needs to be done to strengthen Supreme court: –

 1.Establish national court of appeal:

* it can act as an intermediate forum between supreme court and various high courts.
* can relieve supreme court of the weight of hearing regular civil and criminal appeals allowing supreme court to only concentrate on questions of constitutional importance.
* Also regional branches of national court of appeal would allow greater access to litigants from remote areas of the country.
* But based on India’s constitutional structure there is little scope for establishing this court of appeal.

2.Strengthening lower judiciary:

* greater vigour needed to choose judges
* socially conscious and meritorious if selected as judges at lower courts and then High court, supreme court ‘s role as court of appeal can be renounced altogether and reduce the burden to correct simple errors.

3.Atleast two constitutional benches can be designated to hear cases in the week there by solving problems concerning the inability of supreme court to devote itself to its most important duty.

4.lokadalats need to be strengthened

5.creating specialised benches and greater involvement of experts like adhoc appointments of retired judges can be made.

6.To reduce experimental special leave petitions

7.E-court project of supreme court needs to be implemented soon to increase technological advancements for justice dispensation and improve accessibility

8.Transfer petitions which consume lot of court time can be handled over to a single chamber judge as it does not contain substantial question of law.

1. Zonal courts:
* To create intermediate courts of appeal where senior judges can deal with these cases, giving them the time and consideration they deserve.
* These need to be located at different parts of the country, to handle appeals coming from courts in the four compass areas.
* They can be manned by senior judges retiring from the High Courts at 62 years. These courts of appeal will signal the full stop to civil and criminal litigation at large.
1. According to 229 the law commission report establishment of cassation benches of Supreme Court in 4 regions at New Delhi, Chennai/ Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai. This model has worked very successfully in countries such as Italy, U.S, Denmark etc.

Facts:

National judicial data grid data :

* 1 judge for 73000 people in India which is 7 times worse than in USA.
* at the present rate of disposal civil cases would never be disposed of and criminal cases will take more than 30 years.

*Topic: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes*

[**4) Examine the objectives, merits and demerits of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/02/4-examine-objectives-merits-demerits-pradhan-mantri-ujjwala-yojana/)

[Business Standard](http://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/modi-launches-lpg-scheme-for-poor-116050100281_1.html)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/modi-launches-lpg-scheme-for-poor-women/article8545175.ece)

**Objective:**

* The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, aims to provide five crore LPG connections to women in Below Poverty Line (BPL) households over the next three financial years, at a cost of Rs. 8,000 crore.
* The scheme is to be partially funded from the savings accruing to the government from LPG users who gave up their subsidy as part of the Give It Up program.

**Merits:**

**Environmental:**

* Indoor air pollution caused by the use of traditional cooking methods for example, Chulha. Research shows that use of chulha`s in homes lead to 1.3 million premature deaths in India every year. The program rightly brings the focus on the developmental issue of **enabling clean cooking energy.**
* **Would check use of stubs of crops for cooking,** which can then be used for preventing soil erosion.

**Social:**

* Usually women’s health is poorly neglected in household priorities, the scheme brings to the forefront the quality of life of poor women.
* Women will be released from the stressful and energy intensive work of cutting wood. It will also give them opportunity to spend their time on other chores like economic empowerment, skill development and productive work to support their family.
* Free LPG connections would be provided in the name of women members of Below Poverty Line households.

**Economic:**

* In a survey by the Columbia university, as many as 95 per cent of LPG-deprived households cite their inability to pay as a barrier to their adopting LPG. Thus, the scheme is well-targeted to address the crucial impediment of a high cost in using LPG**.** which has limited the transition towards LPG use in poorer households for example, the rural informal markets households who buy biomass via firewood and dung cakes end up paying more than those who rely on LPG.
* It can provide **employment opportunities for the youth** especially in the rural areas as they can be part of the supply chain mechanism.
* **Can complement Jan dhan yojana** in financial inclusion as for increase in penetration of the ujjwal yojana there is a need for more bank accounts.
* The new users who receive LPG connections under the scheme will not have to pay the security deposit, while the Rs. 1,600 administrative costs, cost of pressure regulator booklet and safety hose will be borne by the government.
* Consumers will have the option to purchase gas stove and refills on EMI.

**Demerits**

* Selection of beneficiaries is using the socio-economic and caste census data which is a laborious task and would delay proper identification of beneficiaries.
* Burden on the exchequer, corruption, remoteness/delivery difficulties esp in LWE areas; LPG may be sold to rich for money draining the entire effort of government.
* No focus given towards awareness and administrative issues as 40 % of LPG deprived households cite lack of information on the process of getting a LPG connection.
* LPG demand is expected to see double digit growth over coming years hence leading to increase in imports and would cause stress on LPG resources.

**Challenges:**

* Once adopting LPG, the households **have to regularly refill cylinders which can incur high monthly expenditure to them**. NSSO data also highlights this fact as 88 per cent of LPG-deprived households in the survey cited it as a barrier and also for the poor people who adopted LPG there is a low expenditure capacity in having access to LPG. There is a gap between adoption and sustained use of the present scheme.
* **Lack of financial literacy and bank accounts for most of rural households. T**he distance they have to travel to access the account even after schemes like jan dhan yojana is a cause of concern as LPG coverage expands in rural areas, the Direct Benefits Transfer of LPG (DBTL) subsidy program could create additional barriers for economically weaker households.
* **Awareness and Administrative issues:**
	+ About 40 per cent of LPG-deprived households in rural areas cite a **lack of information about the process of getting a connection as a challenge.**
	+ For households in **urban slums, the absence of residential proof**or a lack of interest by urban dealers to serve them also pose a barrier.
	+ Government’s scheme of selling 5 kg LPG cylinders at petrol pumps and kirana stores may help, as proof of address is not required. However, its limited penetration and retail pricing still make it challenging for many poor households.
	+ Identification of beneficiaries can cause a problem too.

**Facts**

* According to WHO estimates, about 5 lakh deaths occur in India alone due to unclean cooking fuels. Experts say having an open fire in the kitchen is like burning 400 cigarettes an hour.
* Currently, India has 16.64 crore active LPG consumers with a requirement of about 21 million tonnes per annum.

*Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests*

[**2) Do you think the Paris Agreement on Climate Change is fair to India’s national interests? What are its concerns and how they can be addressed? Comment. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/03/2-think-paris-agreement-climate-change-fair-indias-national-interests-concerns-can-addressed-comment/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/a-long-and-hot-summer-ahead/article8548786.ece)

**Concerns:-**

* There is a real **risk that the Kyoto Protocol drama may be repeated with the U.S**. Congress rejecting an agreement that the U.S. administration has signed. Other countries may withhold ratification since the U.S. is the second largest emitter of GHGs after China will not happen.India should not be in a hurry to ratify the Agreement until there is clarity on the U.S. position.
* **Several major concepts and provisions were deliberately left ambiguous and open** to differing interpretations in order to reach consensus. Further negotiations are necessary to reach a common understanding to enable implementation.
	+ For example, take the concept of “transparency”.
		- Developed countries claim that transparency requires a “common and unified system” to compare climate action undertaken as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) by Parties.
		- Developing countries, on the other hand, point to the “flexibilities” available to them in recognition of the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” (the well-known CBDR principle) and insist that this should be reflected in the application of the transparency provision.
	+ Perhaps the biggest impact from a Paris agreement will come from the single outcome with the greatest remaining uncertainty, **which is whether the agreement will have a long-term goalto decarbonise the global economy** by the end of the century.
	+ **No clarity on many issues:**
		- The Paris Agreement provides for a five-yearly “stocktake” which would enable an estimation of how much progress is being made in the implementation of the various contributions pledged by Parties in respect not only of mitigation but also adaptation, finance, technology transfer and capacity building.
		- **How each of these contributions will be measured and evaluated still needs to be worked out. This will be both a political and technical challenge**.
		- **Finance:**
			* **On** finance there has been backsliding. In Paris, it was agreed that no increase will be expected over $100 billion figure until 2025, five years into the implementation of the agreement.
			* When the agreement talks of “financial flows” rather than public resources in the form of official transfers, it is not clear what would be the constituents of these flows and the value assigned to each.
		- **Technology:**
			* On technology transfer, there is already an offensive by the U.S. corporate sector to ensure that in the post-Paris negotiations there is no concession on intellectual property (IP) issues.
			* The U.S. lobby has objected to the UN High Level Panel on Access to Medicines, which is considering how the IP issue may be dealt with, balancing the interests of different stakeholders to ensure equitable access to medicines, in particular for the poor and deprived.
		- Developed countries want to make the mitigation aspect specific and measurable while keeping other aspects such as finance and technology transfer to developing countries as indeterminate as possible so as **not to be held accountable for what they have pledged in these areas**.
			* For example, the UNFCCC Secretariat has already opened what it calls a “public registry” for NDCs ahead of negotiations which may, by default, create a common reporting framework, pre-empting negotiations among Parties.
			* Developing countries should question the rationale for such a registry ahead of a negotiated outcome on this issue.
		- **Pressure on developing economies:**
			* At the insistence of the European Union, it was agreed at Paris that there would be a “Facilitation Dialogue” among Parties in 2018 focussed on the adequacy of aggregate NDCs with respect to the 2° Celsius global temperature limit and, even more ambitiously, the 1.5° Celsius limit favoured by the small island developing states. **Such a review will inevitably and rightly come to the conclusion that the aggregate mitigation pledges made so far fall far short of the above temperature limits**.
			* There will be pressure on major emerging economies, including India**, to take on more ambitious mitigation commitments** since the developed economies, though major emitters, are progressively reducing their emissions while the developing countries are still on a rising though diminishing trajectory.
		- **Only current emissions are going to be considered:**
			* With the concept of carbon budget out of the way, it is current emissions alone which will become the focus in the new climate change regime and create inevitable pressures on India for enhanced mitigation pledges .
			* India, for its energy security, will continue to rely on coal to generate power for its growing economy for the foreseeable future. This is already being projected as being contrary to the spirit of the Paris Agreement irrespective of the fact that several developed countries including the U.S. and Japan and among emerging economies, China, already use far more coal than India for their power generation.
		- **Other issues related to India**:
			* On the loss side, India’s long-standing objective in climate talksis to avoid undue limits on energy options.This dint go in India’s favour.
			* It does not include any “meaningful” targets and has discharged developed nations from their historical responsibility of Green house gas emissions
			* Paris agreement says all parties — including developing nations — must take action to cut emissions. This means makes developing nations must take on additional obligations..
			* In terms of loss and damage, the text says these will not be seen in terms for liability and compensation, so developed countries will not have no real obligation.
			* Oil and gas companies such as RIL, IOC, HPCL,BPCL, Cairn India may have to investheavily on low emission technology
			* Conglomerates like Tatas, Aditya BirlaGroup, Reliance Industries, etc would have to source more renewable power as government may enforce stricter renewable purchase obligation
			* Manufacturers may see cost pressure if concessional funds are not available to implement energy effi cient solutions
			* NTPC, Adani Power and Jindal Steel and Power, among others may have to revisit growth plans as pressure mounts on India to cut use of thermal coal
			* Tata Motors, Maruti and M&M would be under pressure to invest more on low emission technology

**Yes India benefits:**

* 5 yr review update and ratchet mechanism is essential; it is designed to stimulate a virtuous cycle of more ambitious pledges, greater investment in low emissions options, and lower costs and barriers to implementation of those options, leading to yet more ambitious pledges. **If this works, and it does result in enhanced collective action to limit climate change, then India will be a substantial gainer**
	+ the Agreement preserves space for greater energy use, And, the Paris Agreement offers the not trivial benefit of inducing India to establish a more robust domestic process for energy planning and policy.
* Managed to put back the **important principle of equity and “common but differentiated responsibilities” i**n text, which India has been pushing for. The US and developed nations wanted to dilute this plank.
* Though developed countries use fossil fuel — coal and gas — they wanted developing countries to cut emissions. It is still not clear if the developed nations will be forthcoming with funds and technology for clean energy or the modalities if they do.
* The **big challenge met was ensuring the agreement established the idea of climate justice** – acknowledging that industrialised nations have been the major emitters since 1850.
* India also **wanted a mention of sustainable lifestyle and consumption, which is there in the text.**
* Green energygenerators to benefit as concessional funds may help build transmission infrastructure
* Solar equipment makers like Jain Irrigation, Schneider ElectricIndia, ABB India, Siemens India may benefit
* Automobile and component companies like Bosch India, Mahindra Reva and Hero Electric, which work on green technology will benefit
* Energy efficiency solutions providers like the Indian arm of ABB, Alstom, Siemens, and L&T may gain from industrial demand
* Renewable energy project companies like Suzlon and other private equity-backed green energy companies like ReNew Power may gain

**What needs to be done ?**

* ensure that India’s vital interests are safeguarded and the principle of equity and equitable burden-sharing is reflected across this architecture.
* India **should make sure the ratchet mechanism sustains pressure on developed countries to ramp up their efforts.** This will require and upgrading our ability to analyse other country contributions and actively shaping the fine print of implementing language for the Paris Agreement in the coming years.
* India has to build a robust and ongoing national process to examine our energy and climate future, to replace India’s current ad hoc, disconnected, process of energy planning and policy.
	+ **This requires a more cogent system of energy information gathering and analysis.**
	+ It also requires exploring actions that bring synergies across development and climate outcomes (such as energy efficiency and public transport) and those that come with direct costs to the economy.
	+ also need answers to longer-term questions salient to future pledges, such as: how much additional coal energy do we anticipate needing and, to what extent can we urbanise while limiting high carbon lock-in.

**Fact:**

 India had in October committed to cut the rate of emissions relative to GDP by 33-35 per cent by 2030 from 2005 levels. The country is planning to boost its energy production from renewable sources to 40 percent of total by 2030. In order to achieve this target, the government has set five-fold increase in renewable energy capacity in the next five years to 175 giga watts.

*Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation*

[**3) In the light of protests by powerful communities demanding reservation in jobs, do you think reservation is the only solution to address the concerns of angry protesters? What issues does providing reservation to upper castes give rise to? Critically examine. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/03/3-light-protests-powerful-communities-demanding-reservation-jobs-think-reservation-solution-address-concerns-angry-protesters-issues-providing/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/everybody-loves-a-good-quota/article8548789.ece)

[The Indian Express](http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/gujarat-reservation-gujarat-reservation-for-economically-weak-2781248/)

**Yes:-**

* **Central government policies after globalization and economic reforms:-**
	+ The policy changes adopted by the central government which later percolated down to the state and district levels,have **generated atmosphere of uncertainty for some of these upper caste**which were engaged In trade or manufacturing process which became obsolete or some of the agriculture produce become unviable due to changing market conditions an new liberalized economic policies adopted by union government over the years.
	+ These classes of people realized during survival struggle that **if you want secure government jobs you can get it only if one belongs to the reserved category**.
* This combination of factors
	+ social forwardness with economic backwardness;
	+ extreme status anxiety;
	+ resentment about reservation-driven mobility of lower castes; and
	+ an awareness of their own electoral clout — drives poorer Jats or Patidars into movements demanding reservation.
	+ They demand reservation because they are confident that they can not only **bend the state to their will**, but also ensure that no one dares to mock them as “quota-walas”.
* The upward mobility of SC show these castes that because of reservation even they can benefit .Like because of reservation they have chances of getting into a better educational institution or so.
* Today, the backward or left-behind sections of ruling castes like Patidars or Jats find themselves faced with an **unbearable gap between their sense of caste entitlement and their actual material circumstances.** Since the past decade, this frustration is being channelled into demands for reservation.
* ruling caste demands for reservation **are actually an expression of repressed impotent rage against an economic system that has stoked expectations** but done little to enable fulfilment. Perhaps these state-centric agitations **point to a deeper global crisis in political language** that disables us by treating the economy as though it is a force of nature rather than a human creation.

**No,reservation is not the solution because of the following reasons:**

* **Unemployment problem:**
	+ protests are manifestations of India’s slow, inadequate job-creation and a failing education system creating thousands of “unemployable” graduates
	+ India needs 23 million jobs annually, according to a Kotak Securities report, but over the last 30 years, the country has created about 7 million jobs every year.
* One of the ways of dismantling the quota raj is to ensure that the reserved category certificate is not a currency that is hoarded by groups who no longer need it. This involves **periodic recertification** into the reserved category.
* Appeasement tactics used by the Gujarat government are mostly ineffective; they will **neither reduce options** for middle-income Indians **nor will they really expand benefits** for the poor among forward castes.
* Moreover, **the demands for expansion of reservation have little to do with the poor among the so-called “general” category**. Most of these demands are emerging from angry young men — many of them with college education — among agriculturalist communities that have historically held considerable political clout

**Issues that arise because of reservation for upper castes are:-**

* This poses a problem for the state as well **as it creates lot of bad blood among communities affecting peace and harmony**
* **Under the Constitution**, the government can only provide reservations for socially and educationally backward groups, not use it as an instrument for economic uplift
* There will be **very few who will be excluded which makes no sense** like the Gujarat parodies quota of 10 % with income limit of 6 lakh only 5% ppl will be excluded..
* patchwork implementation, particularly for the OBC classification that is currently in place, makes little sense and leaves room for **powerful lobbies to unite** around demands for inclusion.
* Below Poverty Line (BPL) cards gives us reason to be wary. The IHDS survey found that in 2011-12, only 50 per cent of the poor had a BPL card while nearly a third of the non-poor had BPL cards. Almost all observers agree that identifying the poor is a difficult task resulting in errors of both inclusion and exclusion. This is particularly the case when incomes are growing rapidly and a household that is poor in one year may well climb out of poverty the following year. So **focussing on just the poor among the general category may be more difficult than we anticipate.**

*Topic: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes*

[**3) Critically evaluate the performance of the Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY). (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/04/3-critically-evaluate-performance-pradhan-mantri-jan-dhan-yojana-pmjdy/)

[Business Standard](http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/sumita-kale-don-t-undermine-the-strides-made-by-jan-dhan-116050301402_1.html)

**Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)**

* is National Mission for Financial Inclusion to ensure access to financial services, namely, Banking/ Savings & Deposit Accounts, Remittance, Credit, Insurance, Pension in an affordable manner

**Success:**

* The PMJDY has **dramatically changed the basic framework of financial inclusion** in India. For long, progress in inclusion has been measured by the number of no-frills or basic savings bank accounts and the number of branchless outlets in villages. This has been changed.
* Now has moved beyond the provision of simple no-frills accounts to meeting overall financial needs of the poor, linking government benefits, overdraft facility and insurance and pension to these savings accounts.
* PMJDY Mission Directorate has progressed from **monitoring only the number of accounts to tracking a number of indicators s**uch as Aadhaar seeding, provision of RuPay cards, usage of overdraft facility, payment of Bank Mitra remuneration, etc, and transaction readiness of Bank Mitras.
* There is**transparency** With state- and district-level data available on the PMJDY website and with a geographic information system (GIS) locator available online for banking services, it is much easier for any independent analyst to cross-verify the basic existence of a BC agent.
* The massive campaign around PMJDY led to a **surge in awareness**, and for the first time in decades, **bank officials**, who would pursue people to open accounts to meet their mandated targets, **reported being pushed by customers themselves**.
* The scheme entered the Guinness Book of Records by setting a new record for “Highest Number of bank accounts opened in a week”
* will rescue **villagers from the clutches of evil money lenders**.
* **Could boost household savings rate** similar to Bank Nationalization in 1960s.
* Direct Benefit transfer (DBT) money will flow into those accounts .Thus **savings will turn into capital. Subsidy leakage will decline.**
* Will increase **Insurance penetration.**
* Overdraft only after monitoring performance is a win win situation.Rare chances of NPA/defaults.

**Concerns:**

* The scheme was actually intended to encourage the unbanked sector of the country to use bank accounts for cash transactions. This objective has completely failed.
	+ Based on the records from PMJDY website, out of 7.5 Crore accounts opened so far around **48 crore accounts have zero balance**. This amounts to around 75% of the total accounts opened.
	+ Given the fact that banks have to incur costs to maintain accounts, more than 75% inoperative or zero balance accounts are a **huge liability for the banks**. It will further add up to the already existing problem of dormant accounts.
	+ the drive is being used to gain **political advantage by using PSU banks**.
	+ Regional rural banks have opened around 1.2 crore and private banks have achieved just around 20 lakh accounts. Of the PSUs, SBI has opened 1.2 Crore accounts followed by Bank of Baroda with around 39 Lakh. The irony is that 91% of these accounts are devoid of any cash balance.
* The banks were pressed to meet the target, thereby making them offer accounts to anyone **no matter whether they fulfil the minimum KYC requirements**.
* Most of the features of the scheme **are ambiguous**. The **promised overdraft facility has been left to the decision of the banks concerned.**Banks will avoid getting into this fearing NPAs.
* **Though a lot more remains to be monitored** – for example, the number of transactions at the agent and account level, connectivity issues at the BC outlet, customer care and grievance redressal
* **Multiple accounts to get more insurance**
	+ Jan Dhan scheme gives Rs. 1 lakh insurance on each account.
	+ To get large insurance or overdraft facility, same person might open multiple accounts in multiple banks- one with Aadhar card, one with PAN card, one with voters card.
	+ Public sector banks may also overlook nuisance, in order to meet their ‘targets’.
* **Money laundering:**
	+ **Smurfing**: Hawala Operators can spilt the whole amount (say 1 crore) into several small units into several JDY accounts.Then send money overseas without coming under the watchful eyes of Income tax or Enforcement directorate.
	+ **Money mules:** individuals with JDY accounts, who facilitate Hawala operators to send money via their account.
* **Insurance problems:**
	+ Jan Dhan gives you free accident insurance cover worth Rs.1 lakh.
	+ But there is a secret condition- you must use RuPay debit card atleast once every 45 days.
	+ This is not be possible for poor families in remote tribal areas. So, they’ll lose the benefit due to inactivity.
	+ The insurance schemes announced **have no any kind of documentation available with the account holders.**
* **Banking Correspondence Agent epic fail:**
	+ Jan Dhan aims to divide entry country into sub-service areas (SSA)
	+ Within those SSA, each household will have a banking outlet within 5 km distance.
	+ Since banks cannot open branches everywhere, Government aims to achieve this target via Banking Business Correspondence Agents (BCA) or Bank Mitra.
* **DBT failure:**
	+ PMJDY aims to make all scheme-subsidy payments directly to Jan-Dhan bank accounts. But this Direct benefit transfer (DBT) itself is a failure because:
		- Aadhaar project is yet to cover all residents.
		- Aadhar project facing court cases, because UIDAI is not a statutory body, backed by any law.
		- AT BCA level, Biometric authentication (finger scan) = showing 25-30% errors. So citizens will have difficulty in withdrawing money even if they’ve Aadhar card.

**What is needed?**

Systematic and well planned reforms necessary- as recommended by Nachiket Mor Committee- payment banks, wholesale banks, UEBA etc. But Government is in haste to capture media attention.

*Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations.*

[**2) In the light of present geopolitical realities, provide compelling arguments why India should deepen its ties with Afghanistan. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/05/2-light-present-geopolitical-realities-provide-compelling-arguments-india-deepen-ties-afghanistan/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/do-not-ignore-the-taliban/article8557923.ece)

**India should deepen its ties with Afghanistan because of the following reasons:**

**1.Geopolitical location of Afghanistan:-**

* Afghanistan is at the heart of Asia with a very important strategic location which connects India to central Asia and to Chabahar port.
* Heart of Asia conference saw participation by 14 states—Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and the United Arab Emirates shows the importance of it
* especially in light of the rising presence of ISIS in Afghanistan, India has to be careful against any threats that undermine the security and stability of the region

**2.Pakistan factor:**

* A Pakistan-supported Taliban takeover of Afghanistan could have serious repercussions on India’s strategic interests, not only in Afghanistan but on the western borders in the future.
* The CASA 1000 is a parallel initiative, linking Central Asia and South Asia, especially Afghanistan and Pakistan, with the electricity grid in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

**3.Economic reasons:**

* Indian investors remain deeply interested in the many “virgin markets” of Afghanistan, including mining, agriculture and agribusiness, information and technology, telecommunications, and others.
* India has also funded the construction of other projects, including a Rs 1,500- crore dam in the Herat province in western Afghanistan.
* The parliament building – part of a $2 billion (Rs 12,800 crore) aid package – is symbolic of India’s support for strife-torn Afghanistan.
* Afghanistan is crucial to India’s energy security, as a pipeline from Turkmenistan to India, the TAPI project, will pass through the country (and Pakistan). Afghanistan also represents investment potential for Indian companies in several sectors.
1. **Afghan internal dynamics threaten security to Indian establishments as well :**
* The government of President Ghani is struggling to hold key districts in Helmand province in the south amid a renewed Taliban offensive there. The government in Kabul
* is also struggling to hold overdue parliamentary elections this fall amid the worsening security situation
* deadly attacks in Afghanistan have increased as the Taliban carries out its spring offensive.
* an Afghan Taliban-claimed attack against a security agency responsible for protecting senior government officials
* The attack on the Indian consulate in Jalalabad
* No one is fully committed to Afghanistan’s dysfunctional government. Beijing is unwilling to use its leverage over Pakistan, Washington is distracted, while Moscow and Tehran are hedging their bets.So India has to extend its role.
* New Delhi has an opportunity to build on November’s historic agreement to transfer attack helicopters to Kabul. It should seize it.

**5.China Factor:**

* China is stepping up its military role as well. Beijing is making it clear that it wants to have deeper security ties with Afghanistan and there are plans to strengthen counter- terror and intelligence cooperation along with enhancing China’s role in the training of Afghan military and civilian personnel

**6.US and NATO** withdrawing their soldiers with only around 9000 US soldiers present in Afghanistan increases the importance of regional players role which India should take advantage of as well

**7.Strengthening SAARC Afghanistan is needed**

*Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health*

[**3) The Dr. Ranjit Roy Chaudhury expert committee and the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare in the Rajya Sabha have both recommended structural change through amendments to the Indian Medical Council Act. What are these structural changes? Why are they needed? Examine. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/05/3-dr-ranjit-roy-chaudhury-expert-committee-parliamentary-standing-committee-health-family-welfare-rajya-sabha-recommended-structural-change-amendments/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/bitter-medicine-for-the-centre/article8557916.ece)

**Structural changes in Medical council of India and why these changes are needed:**

**1.No effective curriculum:**

* Medical council failed to create a curriculum that produces doctors suited to working in Indian context especially in the rural health services and poor urban areas.This has created disconnect between medical education system and health system.
* Failure to oversee and guide the Continuing Medical Education in the country, leaving this important task in the hands of the commercial private industry.
* Failure to maintain uniform standards of medical education, both at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels.
* Failed to reduce the cost of medical education and increase access in different parts of the country.

**2.commercialisation of medical education:**

* There is a devaluation of merit in the medical colleges especially private due to prevalence of excessive capitation fees  which make medical education accessible to rich and not the most deserving.
* The development of health facilities has long been affected by a sharp asymmetry between undergraduate and postgraduate seats in medicine. There are only about 25,000 PG seats, against a capacity of 55,000 graduate seats

3.**Failure in evaluation of doctors:**

* Non-involvement of the MCI in any standardized summative evaluation of the medical graduates and post-graduates.
* even those MBBS students who pass out from colleges that have been declared unfit to impart medical education are certified.
* Failure to put in place a robust quality assurance mechanism when a fresh graduate enters the system and starts practicing so competency of doctors is not checked.

**4.suspicious system of granting recognition:**

* Failure to create a transparent system of medical college inspections and grant of recognition or de-recognition.
* newly-opened institute is granted recognition after it has been inspected by MCI for the fourth time and its facilities are found up to the mark even if it failed in the first three inspections.
* Heavy focus on nitty-gritty of infrastructure and human staff during inspections but no substantial evaluation of quality of teaching, training and imparting of skills.

**5.Disparities in college establishment:**

* Failure to guide setting up of medical colleges in the country as per need, resulting in geographical mal-distribution of medical colleges with clustering in some states and absence in several other states leading to disparity in healthcare services across states.
* More than 40 to 50 batches of students are studying medicine in colleges which have failed to get the MCI nod for admitting students for the second, third and fourth batches.

**6.Medical ethics:**

* Failure to instill respect for a professional code of ethics in the medical professionals and take disciplinary action against doctors found violating the code of Ethics.
* the MCI has been completely passive on the ethics dimension which is evident from the fact that between 1963-2009, just 109 doctors have been blacklisted by the Ethics Committee of the MCI.

**7.Issue of NEET:**

* Although the Supreme Court has allowed the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test, some States are raising genuine concerns about equity and access.

**8.Other reasons:**

* Acute shortage of medical teachers.
* abysmal doctor-population ratio.

**Measures needed to revamp the MCI:**

**1.Ranjit Roy chaudhary committee Recommendations:**

* creation of a National Medical Commission to oversee education and policy ,separate boards for undergraduate and postgraduate training ,assessment of institutions and medical ethics.

**2.Parliamentary standing committee on health and family planning recommendations:**

1. **composition of regulatory bodies and MCI:**
	* Inducting non-medical professionals of integrity and community health experts to regulatory bodies would help advance public interest.
	* Even medical professionals appointed to these bodies need to be selected by an independent and rigorous selection process and reasons for selecting them need to be made public.
2. **importance of Doctor – Population ratio:**
	* In India it is 1:1674 as against the WHO norm of 1:1000, so a policy in great detail to augment the capacity of production of doctors including specialists and super-specialists required to meet India’s health needs is necessary.
	* State level doctor-population ratio should guide the setting up of new medical colleges and also the increase in UG and PG seats.
3. **converting district hospitals into medical colleges:**
	* it will not only be equipped with specialists of all disciplines, providing the healthcare services across the whole spectrum but will also produce some doctors in its area of operation and will thus help reduce geographical mal-distribution of doctors.
4. **checks for graduates:**
	* an exit test for medical graduates at the end of their course and before they start practising, as a measure of standardisation across States
	* The PG entrance exam should be held immediately after the final MBBS examination so that the graduate doctor could concentrate on practical skills during his internship.
5. **medical education:**
	* The MBBS syllabus has remained unchanged for 14 years, but requires to be revised every four to five years to be in step with developments in the medical profession.
	* Soft skills (including ethics) should be made one of the cornerstones of the syllabus of medical education.
6. **Physical infrastructure requirement should be pruned down**in such a way that it should have just about 30 to 40 percent standing value in the total assessment of a medical college.
7. **clear guidelines for a time bound probe and selection of evaluators**as so far large number of inspectors in 2014 were from gujarat and Bihar
8. The Supreme Court has given the Centre a deserved rebuke by using its extraordinary powers and setting up a three-member committee headed by former Chief Justice of India R.M. Lodha to perform the statutory functions of the Medical Council of India.It can help the Centre expand the system, especially through not-for-profit initiatives. A reform agenda for the MCI must include an admission procedure that eliminates multiplicity of entrance examinations and addresses issues such as the urban-rural divide and language barriers.

*Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

[**4) Has introduction of “none of the above”, or NOTA in Indian elections served its purpose? Discuss its significance. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/05/4-introduction-none-nota-indian-elections-served-purpose-discuss-significance/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/nota-on-my-ballot/article8557918.ece)

The Supreme Court, in 2013, upheld the right of voters to reject all candidates contesting the elections, saying it would go a long way in cleansing the political system of the country. The apex court directed the Election Commission to have an option of ‘None Of The Above’ (NOTA) on the electronic voting machines (EVMs) and ballot papers in a major electoral reform.

**Significance of NOTA:**

* The voter essentially got a **method to register discontent**, a protest that became unavailable to the voter with the shift to EVMs. Earlier, voters could deface the ballot paper or leave it unmarked to cast an invalid vote. With EVMs, a vote is deemed to have been cast only when a button is pressed.
* Case study:
* **Case study:**
	+ In the 2013 Assembly elections in Chhattisgarh, for example, it was more than 3 per cent of total votes cast — Indicating **possibly coercion** (whereby a voter forced to cast her ballot beats the effort by invalidating it) **or relatively higher alienation**.
	+ consider an analysis that found NOTA votes are disproportionately higher in reserved constituencies, at the Lok Sabha and Assembly levels, revealing an undercurrent of social prejudice.
* The SC said negative voting would **even encourage people who are not satisfied with any of the candidates to turn up to express their opinion and reject all contestants.**
	+ Negative voting will **lead to a systemic change in polls**
	+ If the right to vote is a statutory right, then the **right to reject a candidate is a fundamental right of speech and expression under the Constitution**
* The judges themselves pointed out that it can **widen participation and curb impersonation.**
* This introduction will **draw in new voters**. The overall voter percentage shall definitely improve in the next elections.
* This **move puts common man on top and shall also give rise to a consciousness among the political parties** of being scrutinized for not nominating honest candidates. The **main purpose of decriminalization of politics would be served to an extent.**

**Concerns with NOTA:**

* **No utility:**
	+ Should the number of NOTA votes in a constituency of candidates top even those of the highest-polling contestant, he will still get elected.
* When the court ordered the option to be made available here on, **it did not provide any solution to the outcomes that it would lead to.**
* The apex court wants to give people greater choice but it is **unlikely to make much of a difference to the electoral process**. In fact, the electoral process would be in a shambles because of this verdict.
* If the rule of probability plays out and no candidate gets an adequate number of votes to win an election, **the election commission or the aggrieved party will go to the court and seek necessary permission to conduct a re-election. So, doors of litigation will open again and pendency of cases will increase.**

*Topic: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability*

[**5) What problems does whistleblowers face around the world? Comment on India’s Whistleblower’s Protection Bill amended in 2015. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/05/5-problems-whistleblowers-face-around-world-comment-indias-whistleblowers-protection-bill-amended-2015/)

[Livemint](http://www.livemint.com/Home-Page/osP4KDI9GHjuCTn7osKs8J/Whistleblowers-world-over-are-making-a-difference-Martin-Wo.html)

A **Whistleblower** (**whistle-blower** or **whistle blower**)is a person who exposes any kind of information or activity that is deemed illegal, unethical, or not correct within an organization that is either private or public.

**Problems faced by Whistleblowers:**

* The world, government, corporates and even society to an extent **do not like whistleblowers**and some countries go so far as to call them **‘traitors’**
	+ **The case of Edward Snowden and Julian Assange of Wikileaks proves the point**
* **Whistleblowers face legal action, criminal charges, social stigma, and termination from any position, office, or job.**
* vindictive tactics to make the individual’s work more difficult and/or insignificant, assassination of character, formal reprimand, and difficult court proceedings
* Unemployment
* Despite the soaring penalties, whistleblowers are still in a legally fragile situation because whistleblower cases often involve very complex set of facts and employment history.
* when one decides to become a whistleblower, isolation is the biggest problem

**Whistle blowers protection bill 2015:**

**Positives :**

* **The Act provides a mechanism for receiving and inquiring into public interest disclosures against acts of corruption**, wilful misuse of power or discretion, or criminal offences by public servants.
* The **Bill prohibits the reporting of a corruption related disclosure if it falls under any 10 categories of information.**These categories include information related to: (i) economic, scientific interests and the security of India; (ii) Cabinet proceedings, (iii) intellectual property; (iv) that received in a fiduciary capacity, etc.
* **The Act permits disclosures that are prohibited under the Official Secrets Act (OSA), 1923.** The Bill reverses this to disallow disclosures that are covered by the OSA.
* Any public interest disclosure received by a Competent Authority will be referred to a government authorised authority if it falls under any of the above 10 prohibited categories**. This authority will take a decision on the matter, which will be binding.**

**Negatives:**

* The bill in its current format provides a mechanism for receiving and inquiring into public interest disclosures against acts of corruption or criminal offences by public servants. Thus, **it excludes private companies and private persons from the applicability of the provisions of the act.**
	+ Currently, it is the corporates and private individuals that are indulging in the practices of money laundering and tax evasion and they need to be held accountable whether in terms of corporate governance practices or through law which the act neglects.
	+ The Indian government by framing such a law has perhaps inadvertently skewed the rules in**favour of private companies and individuals** by keeping only public servants under the purview of the Whistleblower Protection Bill.
* The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill states that the 10 prohibited categories are modelled on those under the RTI Act, 2005. **However, this comparison may not be appropriate.** Unlike the RTI Act, disclosures under the Bill are not made public but in confidence to a high level constitutional or statutory authority.
* With regard to the 10 prohibited categories, the RTI Act allows (i) the public authority to disclose information if he considers it to be in public interest; and (ii) a two stage appeal process if information is not made available. **The Bill does not contain such provisions.**
* A Competent Authority is required to refer a prohibited disclosure to a government authority for a final decision. However**, the Bill does not specify the minimum qualifications required or the process of appointment of this authority**.
	+ The independence of this authority may be at risk if the authority is junior in rank to the public servant against whom the disclosure is made.
* Whistleblower laws in other countries also prohibit the disclosure of certain types of information. These include information related to national security and intelligence, received in a fiduciary capacity, and any disclosure specifically prohibited by a law.
* **Prohibited categories in the Bill exceed those in the 2013 proposed amendments**The 2013 proposed amendments prohibited only two categories of information from being disclosed under the Act: (i) that related to sovereignty, strategic, scientific or economic interests of India, foreign relations, or the incitement of an offence; and (ii) proceedings of the Council of Ministers.**However, the 2015 Bill prohibits the disclosure of 10 categories of information.**

*Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health,*

[**2) It is said that India’s pharmaceutical sector which makes the finest medicine in the world, sells sub-standard stuff to Indians. Discuss the reasons and measures taken by government to address this problem. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/06/2-said-indias-pharmaceutical-sector-makes-finest-medicine-world-sells-sub-standard-stuff-indians-discuss-reasons-measures-taken-government-address/)

[Business Standard](http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/bhupesh-bhandari-listen-to-dinesh-thakur-116050501549_1.html)

**Why does India produce and distribute substandard drugs:-**

* **European companies**were selling medicines in India that had not been approved in their home countries, or in any developed country and failure of health ministry  to investigate the officials who granted such ‘illegal’ approvals.
* consistent pattern of the **government ignoring recommendations**by its own experts is mirrored in the enforcement of India’s existing, already weak, drug regulations
* **bigger players often blame the smaller ones** – the long tail of pharmaceutical companies – for the mess. The smaller companies cannot have production units of a high standard and they resist all demand for stricter regulation because it will put them out of business.
* pharmaceutical companies argue that India has become an impossible place to work in, because the ever-expanding price controls, which leaves them with no money to upgrade their processes and machines.
* **Weak punishments:**
	+ judiciary wilfully ignored the mandatory sentencing provisions of at least one year of imprisonment This allowed the convicted person to walk free as soon as the judge rose for the day.
	+ Monetary fines were in a lenient five-digit range for products worth lakhs or crores.
* **Investigations conducted by drug inspectors**in individual States were mostly a sham since they **lacked the necessary resources** to coordinate their activities across different States.
* **No centralised licensing system:**
	+ only the governments in the respective States can cancel the licences of the erring drug manufacturers located there.
	+ Further, two legislative efforts in 2007 and 2013 to centralise such regulations failed because of sabotage by the Indian pharmaceutical industry.
	+ **Indian regulation is lax:**Indian companies regularly do drug recalls in the United States and the European Union but never in India.Indian drug regulatory law does not have a legal framework mandating such recalls.
* **Easy available of these drugs at the counter:**
	+ the effects of such substandard drugs include growing antibiotic resistance and the birth of deathly superbugs like **New Delhi Metallo-beta-lactamase-1**(**NDM-1**) which made bacteria resistant to antibiotics.
* To make the grade, a tablet must contain between 90% and 110% of the active ingredient named on the label However, **the Central Drug Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)offers a 5% grace marginon that lower limit**.CDSCO is still ill-equipped
* There **is no consolidated national list of manufacturers or total number of licenses granted**, which makes it difficult to devise any concrete national or state policy for the regulation of this sector.This makes annual sampling,inspections by the CDSCO too limited and unstructured.
* In a tropical country like India, **even high-quality medicines will become sub-standard if a chemist doesn’t take proper care**. Inappropriate storage after the tablet leaves the factory caused the lack of uniformity of weight of the sample.
* India is **home to the biggest fake-drug market**.In some reports, more than 25% of medicines available in India have been declared spurious or fake.
* Often, the manufacturer would be located in Himachal Pradesh or Uttarakhand and the substandard drug would be sold in States like Karnataka or Maharashtra. **Only a minority of such cases resulted in a prosecution**.

**Government’s efforts:**

* **Amendment of Drug and Cosmetic act, 1940** in 2008 for making penal provisions and reset certain offences as perceptible and non bailable. When adulterated or spurious drug cause death then imprisonment imposed for not less than ten years or for lifetime.
* ***Jan Aushdhi*’ generic drug stores** in the Government hospitals and supply of generic medicine through Central Pharma Public Sector Undertaking.
* Since 2008, on various levels 216 additional posts generated to strengthen the regulatory mechanism. In 2008, there were 111 sanctioned posts and 64 officers in position while in 2012 there were 310 posts and 121 officers in position, **which included 65 drug inspectors.**
* For trial of offences related to adulterated and spurious drugs product, Drug and Cosmetic (Amendment) Act, 2008 accredited establishment of **special designated courts**, and nationally 14 states/Union territories already introduced such courts.
* For effective regulatory surveillance throughout the country, Hyderabad and Ahmadabad have upgraded from sub zone to full zone while Bangalore, Chandigarh and Jammu have established as**new sub zones under the direction of CDSCO**.
* CDSCO publishes **monthly a list of drugs, medical devices and cosmetics that are evaluated and declared as not of standard quality/spurious/adulterated/misbranded**.
* **Enhancement of Central Drug Laboratories** with new sophisticated testing equipment set up and creation of a new testing laboratory at Hyderabad.
* **To ensure proper traceability of those manufacturing units**, which are situated abroad, from where drugs product are imported in India, new scheme for regular overseas inspection has been introduced. For instance, two such inspections have formerly done in China.
* **Banning Fixed Drug Combination (FDC)**
* To encourage attentive public participation in exploring the detection of spurious drug product, **a ‘Whistle Blower’ scheme is initiated**. Under this scheme, if accurate information on the movement of spurious drugs product provided to the regulatory authorities, **informers is suitably rewarded** and
* At state level, Tamil Nadu and Kerala Government undertake drug quality evaluation services by Tamil Nadu Medical Service Corporation Limited and Kerala Medical Service Corporation Limited.

**Need for better regulation:**

* Implementation of **recommendations Ranjit Roy Choudary committee**to have mandatory basic quality testing such as bioequivalence studies for all generic drugs.
* A **centralised licensing system**is very much needed
* Easy availibility of drugs need to be restricted and people need to be aware about the consequences of increase antibiotics.
* The **CDSCO need to be equipped**and recently in a bid to access quality it has upped  the ante to scan drug samples across the country.
* **Storage and tracking**has to be improved with the first step being anti-counterfeit primary level packaging in the drug industry and Every tertiary and secondary product has a 2D barcode, to allow for easy storage and tracking
* India need to l**earn from American experience**to take strong measures against the most egregious offenders like Ranbaxy.
* Fostering access to good quality pharmaceuticals is critical to attain India’s goal of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and thus, **coordinated action is needed by the policy makers**, relevant actors in health systems and other agencies, including WHO
* **Good-quality Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs)**-( refers to a substance or substance combination used in manufacturinga drug product.) need to be encouraged for the production of good-quality medicines. Ensuring the quality of the API greatly contributes to achieving the objective of building the quality, safety and efficacy into the product.

**Facts:**

* The CAG’s audit report of the Armed forces medical stores Depots(AFMSD), which serves our Armed Forces Personnel and their families, showed the percentage of locally procured substandard drugs at a high 32 per cent in one year.
* About 4.5% of the drugs in the Indian market are substandard, according to surveys by the  (CDSCO), the official regulatory authority.

*Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to education*

[**3) In India’s education sector, it is said that it is important for state administrations to realize that improving infrastructure and resources should be accompanied by commensurate learning levels of students. Why such suggestion is made? How state can help improve learning levels of children in schools? Examine. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/06/3-indias-education-sector-said-important-state-administrations-realize-improving-infrastructure-resources-accompanied-commensurate-learning-levels-o/)

[Livemint](http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/5De0NZEOAgwHV5zOYCtWNP/How-efficient-is-Indian-education.html)

For the past six years now, enrolment in the country has been around 96%, which may seem a great feat. However, an assessment of the actual learning levels reveals the flip side of the coin

**Reasons why learning levels of students are bad :**

* The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2014 indicates how this linear approach hasn’t reaped the benefits it should have; learning levels of students are still a huge concern.
	+ **According to the survey, almost 50% of Class V students were not able to read basic sentences, and more than 70% were unable to perform simple division.**
	+ According to **Pratham’s Annual Status of Education 2013 report,** close to 78 percent of children in Standard III and about 50 percent of children in Standard V cannot yet read Standard II texts.
* **Teacher attendance** is just 85 percent in primary and middle schools and raising the amount of time teachers spend on-task and increasing their responsibility for student learning also needs improvement.
* The vast expansion of the number of elementary schools in the country in the past decade, with **no concurrent expansion in school management systems**.
	+ The **XV Joint Review Mission** conducted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (2012) highlighted that there were 25% vacancies in programme management personnel for elementary education at the state level, and this figure was 46% at the block level.
	+ The focus of Indian government schemes has largely been on improving school facilities, infrastructure and teacher recruitment, while effective school monitoring and mentoring have remained sorely neglected.
* Despite increasing pupil-to-teacher ratios and teacher recruitment, 8.3 percent of elementary schools are reported to be **single teacher schools** in 2013-14.
* Furthermore, the ‘**no detention’ policy** adopted by Indian government that prohibits failing children in elementary grades has, in the absence of robust regulatory frameworks, led in many cases to ‘*no learning’*.
* ***Inadequate Teacher Qualification and Support*:**
	+ Teachers working in primary schools across rural India have a difficult job. the average school teacher in India does not get adequate pre-service or in-service education.
* ***Low Teacher Motivation and High Absenteeism*:**
	+ A key factor affecting the quality of primary education appears to be low levels of teacher motivation.
	+ In 2002-2003, 25% of primary-school teachers in rural India were absent on any given day.
* **Remuneration** — does not appear to be a driver.
* primary school teachers employed by the government, particularly in rural India, are required to**perform a wide range of duties completely unrelated to imparting education**.
	+ One study found that less than one-third of the teachers’ time in classroom was spent on student-centred activities, and students’ time spent on active learning gradually declined from 26.4% in Class II to 22% in Class VI. Conventional ‘chalk and talk’ methods of teaching continue to prevail in Indian classrooms.
* Another disheartening factor has been a **highly bureaucratic administrative system that discourages bold decision making** and makes implementation difficult
* Primary school teachers in rural India often try to educate students by making them **repeat sections of text over and over again**. They do not explain the meaning of the text, which results in stunted reading comprehension skills over the course of the children’s education
* ***Linguistic Diversity****:*
	+ Finally, India’s linguistic diversity creates unique challenges for the nation’s education system.
	+ The country’s 22 official languages and hundreds of spoken dialects often differ considerably from the official language of the state or region.
	+ the teacher not only has to account for varying learning abilities within the classroom, but also dialectic nuances which affect students’ comprehension of the subject matter.

How state can help improve learning levels of children in schools ?

* A more officially driven effort is required to evaluate digital content
* even more importantly to develop cost effective methods of making these available to teachers and students in areas where resources are scarce. Government has been mentioning the need for ‘**digital classrooms’** several times
* **Teacher education**:
	+ The lack of learning in India’s schools call for changes to teacher education.
	+ Need for availability of qualified and trained teachers who have acquired the knowledge and pedagogical skills to improve student retention, attainment and achievement is necessary.
* **Building good assessment systems**:
	+ Good assessments are useful at the classroom level for teachers to gauge their students’ understanding and also to inform policy. The need for regular and useful assessments in India is something that Indian departments of education are focusing on at the central and state level.
* **Gender studies education**:-
	+ The state of women in India has recently drawn a lot of attention and promoting gender equality through education has an important role to play.
* **Resources**: Currently spending on education is low in India, and stands at 3.4 percent of the GDP.
* Real progress in education requires **a meaningful curriculum, human resource management systems**
* Educational inputs need to be converted into outputs. This can help provide an objective way for states to get feedback on their education delivery process and do away with the practice of judging the performance of states based solely on their inputs, or outputs.
* The objective therefore, is to **develop a methodology to measure the relative efficiency of the education delivery process**and provide insights on what states can learn from peer-to-peer exchanges

*Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

[**4) The government plans to limit airfares for hour-long flights to Rs 2,500.  Should such administered fares be imposed? Discuss. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/06/4-government-plans-limit-airfares-hour-long-flights-rs-2500-administered-fares-imposed-discuss/)

[Business Standard](http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/flying-against-the-wind-116050501513_1.html)

**No:**

* The logic of an administered price for short-haul flights is not immediately clear.
* For one, the assumption that it is only fares of flights of less than one hour that jump during emergencies is flawed.
* For another, the logic of such government intervention is unclear as air fares can be kept under check on a case-by-case basis when crises demand it — especially when airlines have shown themselves willing to cooperate in the past.
* Capping air fares as a market-building tool betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of the price-demand equation. dynamic fares offers consumers a wide choice and promotes healthy competition.
* a fare cap is unlikely to encourage private airlines, which dominate the aviation business now, to ply these routes.
* Administered fares also have a discriminatory impact in two respects:
	+ it diminishes business for the railways, which should arguably be the transport solution of choice
	+ ends up subsidising classes of consumers – the rich and middle class – who don’t need price protection in ;the first place.
* This proposal underlines a general philosophical shift in the political discourse away from market principles and back to the kind of policy that yields selective benefits.The proposal to fix some tariffs for the airline industry, which has manifestly been a beneficiary of economic liberalisation and a job creator too, is part of this trend.

**Yes:**

* would help strengthen regional air connectivity. This is an unexceptionable objective but achieving it demands enhancing aviation infrastructure and safety standards.
* Has the potential to spread traffic beyond the metros to smaller towns and cities
* During emergencies like the recent Chennai floods the airlines charged exorbitantly.These kind of malpractices can be checked. As of now, last minute fares can sometimes be over 10 times the lowest average.
* India can emerge as the world’s third-largest aviation market if the country enables its 300 million middle class people to travel by plane “at least once a year” by initiating the above measures
* It will lessen congestion on roads and railways

**Suggestions for reforms in aviation sector:**

* bringing jet fuel prices down to international levels
* abolishing the route dispersal guidelines (RDG), the 5/20 Rule.
* An Essential Air Services Fund (EASF) needs to be set up to provide direct subsidies for loss making routes and taxes for aircraft maintenance need to be zero-rated.
* Dwell time for cargo handling has to be reduced from three days to three hours and helicopters and small aircraft have to be promoted for last mile regional connectivity

*Topic: Functioning of judiciary; Bilateral relations; International institutions*

[**5) It is said that an unfortunate impression has been created that India’s legal and judicial system is under-equipped to handle cases such as the Italian Marines case. Examine why such an impression has been created and what lessons India should learn from handling of this case. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/06/5-said-unfortunate-impression-created-indias-legal-judicial-system-equipped-handle-cases-italian-marines-case-examine-imp/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/back-home-to-italy/article8562729.ece)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/no-longer-at-sea/article8562733.ece)

**Why such an impression created ?**

* **Delay:**In 2013 the Supreme Court held that it was the Centre that had the jurisdiction. The National Investigation Agency took over the probe, but its insistence on invoking an anti-piracy law — the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation and Fixed Platforms on Continental Shelf Act, 2002 — led to further delay.
* Given this basic divergence over **which jurisdiction would be applicable in prosecuting the marines, an anomalous situation developed**, wherein the marines were moved from detention in Kerala to the premises of the Italian Embassy in Delhi — and the already extended legal stasis continued.
	+ Over the years there were further unprecedented interim provisions that allowed the marines to return to Italy .
* Given that rank **political opportunism and stoking ‘nationalist’** sentiment has become the higher Delhi priority — the objective pursuit of justice and a restoration of normalcy in India-Italy bilateral relations will remain elusive over the short term.
* UN **arbitration tribunal decision** to release the Italian marine as Interim order has been a set back to Govt and made the case more complex.
* including most Indians, and the only people who say they do are the accused who have no option.

**What lessons India can learn ?**

* The **process should have been sustainable and credible from the beginning,** instead of being marked by doubt and uncertainty.
* **Nationalist sentiment and the constraints of domestic politics played an excessive role in influencing the manner the case was dealt with.**India and Italy should cooperate, without further delay or diplomatic wrangling, in the interests of justice.
* The case must be settled on **purely legal grounds**, and without the kind of political one-upmanship that has contributed to the delay over the past four years.

*Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

[**4) How realistic is the objective of the Government of India to double the income of farmers by 2022? Examine what it takes to achieve this objective. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/07/4-realistic-objective-government-india-double-income-farmers-2022-examine-takes-achieve-objective/)

[EPW](http://www.epw.in/journal/2016/18/commentary/doubling-farmers-incomes-2022.html)

**Objective is realistic:**

* NSSO data-the average monthly total income of agricultural households in the full sample increased in nominal terms by over three times from ₹2,115 in 2003 to ₹6,426 in 2013 . But what we are interested in is the change in real terms
* If anything is to be doubled by the year 2022-23, it will require annual growth of 10.4 per cent, and not 14.8 per cent, as reported in the media which according to Indian government is achievable
* It is important to point out that what is sought to be doubled is the income of farmers, not output or value added or the GDP of the agriculture sector.
* If technology, input prices, wages and labour use could result in per-unit cost savings, then farmers’ incomes would rise at a much higher rate than the rate of increase in output.
* Another very important source of an increase in farmers’ income is the relative increase in prices of farm products compared to non-agricultural commodities.A doubling of farmers’ income should not be viewed as the same as a doubling of farm output.

**No doesn’t:**

* All India, there is no evidence of doubling of real incomes. The average monthly **income increased by a factor of 1.34** . Only in Odisha there is a doubling of income. Of particular concern is the fact that the average monthly income in real terms has declined in Bihar and in West Bengal
* **growth in farm income after 2011–12 has plummeted to around 1%**, and this is an important reason for the sudden rise in agrarian distress in recent years.
* The evidence from NSSO data does not seem to suggest that the **doubling of aggregate credit flows had any sizeable impact at the household level in terms of a substantial increase in investments.**
* Casual empiricism would suggest that increase in **minimum support price** and decentralised procurement would have contributed to increase in income of agricultural households.but this is not the case.
* Some commentators have produced calculations that agriculture will require an annual growth of 14.86 per cent per year for the next five years to double the income of farmers, and pointed out **that this growth level hasn’t been achieved even for a single year in Indian agriculture.**
* **increasing input costs,** such as seeds, fertilisers and irrigation
* **irrelevance of minimum support price**, which the government pays farmers when it buys their crops
* **absence of market infrastructure**, such as warehouses and cold storages
* the fact that 85% of farmers **do not benefit from insurance.**

**Measures needed:-**

* **The five issues need to be handled:**
	+ increasing agricultural productivity
	+ remunerative prices for farmers
	+ focus on land leasing and land titles
	+ risk adaptation and mitigation, and
	+ a geographical focus on the eastern region
* There are a **sizeable proportion of households who undertake cultivation, livestock activities and also have individuals engaged in wage/salaried employment.**The key takeaway is that in addition to cultivation there are other income sources that can contribute to doubling of income of agricultural households.
* it is important to understand the extent to which legalising and liberalising land leasing can improve “agricultural efficiency, equity, occupational diversification, and rapid rural transformation and thereby increase the income of agricultural households
* **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)** attempted to incentivize agricultural planning and investment at the state and district level while decentralising and untying the fund flow.It has been argued that the RKVY did contribute to improving agricultural growth and needs to be concentrated further.
* National-level data reveals that shifting to high-value crops can more than quadruple income from the same piece of land.
* **Better price realisation for farmers** through competitive markets, value chains and improved linkage between field and fork.
* Improvement in the terms of trade for agriculture like **strict implementation of NAM portal.**
* **Technology upgradation.**
* Channel funds to the small and marginal landholders, and rework the mix of short-term and long-term credit in order to **incentivise flow of long-term credit** relative to short-term credit
* Measures **like prior registration of farmers and monitoring actual procurement using an online procurement system** could have a salutary effect.
* The idea behind formation of **Farmer Producer Organisations (FPO)** can increase the probability of farmers getting remunerative prices.
* State governments did **undertake investments in irrigation**. They have borrowed large sums of money under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) administered by NABARD specifically for irrigation projects. Till date, over 50% of projects funded under RIDF are for irrigation and 30% of the funds were for irrigation
* Focusing only on income from cultivation for facilitating doubling of income will prove to be inadequate. **Policy measures aimed at increasing net income of households from animal farming** will be the key driver of incomes in agricultural households.
* Need to improve our understanding of what constrains income growth from non-farm business at the household level.
* India has to learn from China which started off reforms with agriculture in 1978, and during 1978-84, agriculture GDP (gross domestic product) increased by more than 7% per year and farm incomes by more than 14% per year due to deregulation of prices, halving poverty in just six years

*Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to education*

[**5) Is public funded higher education in a developing country meant to produce thinking citizens or employable youth? Should taxes fund scholarship that has no impact, nor is market friendly, at least, in the short term? Discuss. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/07/5-public-funded-higher-education-developing-country-meant-produce-thinking-citizens-employable-youth-taxes-fund-scholarship-no-impact-market-friendly-least/)

[EPW](http://www.epw.in/journal/2016/18/web-exclusives/great-education-divide.html)

**Public funded higher education in developing countries is meant for:**

* The public funding given to institutions such as IIT’s ,IIM’s gives the students leverage to take risks in life by starting startups,**generating employment**.
* When they are employed it adds revenue to the economy and reduces the unemployment problem too.
* Any alternative for employment they can find out when thinking is developed in the students where they have attitude of deciding what is moral and what is not.
* **Just employment without thinking will lead to stagnation** . But just as higher education cannot be reduced to a market enterprise guided by corporate interests, it also cannot remain a rarefied realm of higher thinking unconcerned with employability and innovation.
* Protests in colleges and by the youth in general in demanding good governance,fighting against sectarian divides,using their values in fighting the evils in the country and the world show the increase in awareness which is instigated by the exposure they get through these institutions .
* India’s university students can be **powerful agents for widening democratic participation**. In reminding the political class of the founding values of the Indian republic, they have also situated the debates on public education
* **Without employment just thinking doesn’t help .**Further, a slew of low quality technical institutes churn out unemployable graduates aspiring to join the information technology (IT)-enabled services (ITES) sector, which accounts for nearly a quarter of the organised workforce in the private sector. This has grave consequences for other sectors of the economy such as manufacturing and public works, which benefit little from the surfeit of engineers in the country. The shrinking manufacturing sector fails to provide employment while inadequate public services deepen the problems of access and equity.
* The **disconnect of many educated youth with India’s indigenous problems is then located,** at least in part, in the uncritical reproduction of engineering education in the country.
* If a university is a site for building the values of citizenship and raising the stakes for participation in the country’s future, **it has to nurture critical thinking, employable skills and creative entrepreneurship all at the same time.**

**Yes,scholarships are needed:**

* Gives an opportunity for the access to education of socio economic backward people
* Giving scholarships to the students will ease the financial burden on the family.
* Gives students access to premium institutes like IIT’s,IIM’s instilling confidence in them
* Recognition of merit

**No,Scholarships don’t help much:**

* Strong societal divide developed because students of especially unreserved categories feel they are being deprived of the scholarship even when they have same merit of the socio economic backward classes leading to differences among students.
* Tonnes of scholarships do not change anything as students from premium institutes go abroad and settle there serving other countries.
* advent of information technology and related sectors have meant that technical education now has closer ties to the research and market imperatives of advanced industrialised nations than to India’s own developmental needs
* Waste of public funds that cannot be used for social sector spending

*Topic: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests*

[**6) “The government’s plans to strengthen military ties with the U.S. will sound the death knell for India’s foreign policy independence and strategic autonomy.” Critically comment. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/07/6-governments-plans-strengthen-military-ties-u-s-will-sound-death-knell-indias-foreign-policy-independence-strategic-autonomy-critically-comment/)

[Frontline](http://www.frontline.in/world-affairs/military-nexus/article8523913.ece?homepage=true)

**Yes:**

* The New agreement will in theory allow the U.S. Army to access Indian military bases.Agreed to finalise a logistics exchange memorandum of agreement (LEMOA) in the coming months.
* In 2012, India also signed a Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) agreement with the U.S. aimed at co-producing advanced weapons systems.U.S wanted to make the Indian military interoperable with the American military and dependent on U.S. technology and supplies. The U.S. is likely to emerge as India’s top defence partner in a few years. It now holds the most number of annual military exercises with India.
* The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which has over a hundred members, will have reason to question India’s credentials as a leader of the movement.
* signing these agreements would mean the end of the “strategic autonomy” that the Indian government has in foreign affairs and defence matters.
* Russia, with which the U.S. has a tense and adversarial relationship these days, will also not take kindly to these new developments in the Indian subcontinent.
* The U.S. has only signed LSA-type agreements with close allies like Japan, South Korea and the Philippines. It is commented that the terms of the LSA would see the stationing of American troops on Indian soil on a regular basis.

**No:**

* The deal only reaffirmed the importance of maritime security and ensuring the freedom of navigation and overflight throughout the region, including the South China Sea
* LSA:
	+ The LSA will not allow US troops to operate from Indian bases without the consent of New Delhi. The possibility of India being ensnared into effecting regime changes in the war zones of the Middle East is out of the question.The signing of these agreements should be strictly made contingent on US assurance on transfer of technology..
* Government clarified that the LEMOA by saying that it was different from the LSAs the U.S. had signed with its other close military allies. India would have the right to refuse assistance to U.S. troops on a case-by-case basis
* **Pakistan factor:**
	+ The Americans have made it clear through their actions that they value Islamabad as a military ally.
	+ Handing over f16 to Pakistan ensures that
* **Indias foreign policy doesnt**support it forming military alliances with any country.As a country dedicated to non alignment movement India and us being military alliances is only a farce .
* **China factor –**
	+ India hedges by deepening relations with the US and status quo middle powers such as Australia.
	+ Both sides feel that they have much to gain from each other than from the others. Even as India is irritated by the US-Pakistan ties, so is it by the China Pakistan relations.
	+ But India, China and the US know that they have to deal with each other and that it is the economic equations among themselves that are crucial, more even than the military calculations.
* **Russia factor:**
	+ India has one true strategic partner – Russia. That relationship is deep,PM recently called Russia is a pillar of strength and India’s most important defence partner.
* India may not be able to let itself be drawn into the US-led global military c
* It is for the simple reason that India is much too large a country to play second fiddle to the Americans
* The **rejection by India of the offer of US to participate in joint patrols in the South China**Sea also shows that they r not a military alliance
* bilateral relations between India and the US. Protection of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), which remains a concern with US pharma companies, has the potential to become a headache

*Topic: Important aspects of governance*

[**3) Analyse the systemic challenges facing India’s foreign policy. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/09/3-analyse-systemic-challenges-facing-indias-foreign-policy/)

[Livemint](http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/GbrCaa2izXp3h1uso1Y7VI/Indias-underpowered-foreign-policy.html)

**Systemic challenges are:**

**Shortage of Manpower:**

* The number of diplomats, despite the recent expansion and re-designation of some officials, remains not only the smallest among the G-20 countries but also the smallest among the BRICS.
* For instance, in Africa over two dozen Indian embassies remain headless for want of diplomats.
* Similarly at the United Nations, where India is seeking permanent membership of the coveted Security Council, the Indian mission is the smallest among the G-4 (Brazil, Germany, India and Japan) aspirants to the Council.
* Unless that is addressed both quantitatively and qualitatively, the government’s bold initiatives might come to naught

**No inter agency process:**

* The inter-agency process becomes vital for foreign policy effective implementation. However, inter-agency coordination in India is virtually non-existent, especially when compared to other countries that India is engaging with leading to foreign policy initiatives often getting bogged down in bureaucratic wrangles.
* The only foreign policy initiatives that have been implemented are those that are coordinated by the all-powerful prime minister’s office.

**Tax base problems:**

* As the world’s 10th largest economy, India is becoming a rich country. But it remains a poor state primarily on account of its extremely small tax base.
* This in turn affects India’s ability to have a more proactive foreign policy. Thus, while India merely negotiates, China (with a huge trade surplus) invests in countries of strategic importance.

**No strategic vision in foreign policy:**

* Presently, there are a series of catchy but vacuous foreign policy initiatives, such as Neighbourhood First, Act East, Think West and SAGAR. Sadly, these parts still do not add up to the sum of India’s foreign policy.

**Deficiencies on Government’s side:**

* Government alone is not well-equipped to evaluate the challenges and opportunities that the unfolding geopolitical landscape presents.

**Lack of institutionalised process of policy planning and making**:

* India’s foreign ministry also lacks an institutionalized process of policy planning and making.
* This was evidenced when Foreign Secretary, queried senior officers as to who does the thinking about overall foreign policy in the government and was met with embarrassed silence.

**Ineffective engagement of state governments:**

* The inability of centre to effectively engage key state governments as stakeholders in the foreign policy process can also scuttle bold initiatives.
* For instance the West Bengal government’s opposition to the Teesta River Agreement with Bangladesh left India’s previous prime minister embarrassed in talks with Dhaka.

**Other challenges:**

* Making a **war free scenario in the SAARC neighborhood,** which would make India an attractive destination for foreign investment
* developing the ability to shape the rules in global institutions, which will have a direct bearing on the country’s economic well-being.
* India faces an economically **rising China to the east,** staking a claim on disputed territories in the Asia-Pacific region and spreading its influence to the littoral states of the Indian Ocean.
* To the west, **the relationship with Pakistan** continues to be fraught with difficulties with no solutions in sight in the near future
* **Islamic terrorism** remains a major threat to global security with long-established states – home to large number of Indians – fracturing across West Asia and Africa.
* The sum of the investments which India gained through foreign policy is still only a fraction of the one trillion dollars that India estimates it needs for infrastructure alone.

Despite systemic challenges government has done a brilliant work:

* the implementation and operationalization of some of the New Panchsheel in a more meaningful way to deepen and widen India’s foreign policy engagement.
* foreign trips and bilateral engagements so far has been to attract investment and technology by reviving stalled ties
	+ with strategically important countries, such as the United States and France
	+ energizing decades-old neglected relationships with Japan, Australia, Germany and Canada.
	+ robust engagement led to Japan and France promising to invest 35 billion dollars and 2 billion euros respectively and the U.S-India Business Council estimating 41 billion dollars investment in coming years.
* Encouraged the influential **Indian diaspora** in the developed world to perform two roles:
	+ first as ambassadors garnering support for India’s global rise in their host nations
	+ second, as a source for foreign direct investment as well as remittances, given that India is the world’s leading recipient of foreign remittances constituting about 3.7 per cent of its GDP.
* The new government has established a new division within the foreign ministry to increase engagement between the Centre and state governments. Senior foreign service officers have been asked to work closely with at least two states so as to ensure their engagement in the foreign policy process
* Along with resolving these systemic factors, India also needs to articulate a strategic vision for its foreign policy.

*Topic: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests*

[**4) It is said that since independence, successive governments have appeased China only to be disappointed in turn by China’s policies towards India’s interests. Do you agree? Critically examine. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/09/4-said-since-independence-successive-governments-appeased-china-disappointed-turn-chinas-policies-towards-indias-interests-agree-critically-examine/)

[Livemint](http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/8mRtIIZMAEQiaanZTCx0jM/Indias-China-appeasement-itch.html)

**Yes:**

* India driven by post-colonial solidarity considerations, continued to court the china even when the Chinese military began eliminating India’s outer line of defence by invading the then independent Tibet. As Tibet pleaded for help against the aggression**, India opposed even a UN General Assembly discussion.**
* **Panchsheel Agreement-** Nehru surrendered India’s British-inherited extra-territorial rights in Tibet and recognized the “Tibet region of China” without any quid pro quo. Such was the courtship that he even rejected US and Soviet suggestions in the 1950s that India take China’s place in the UN Security Council.
	+ Nehru’s sustained appeasement resulted in China gobbling up Tibet, covertly encroaching on Indian territories and, eventually, invading India itself.
* Since the late 1980s, successive Indian governments have propitiated China. The government in 2000’s used the legal term “recognize” to accept what China deceptively calls the Tibet Autonomous Region as “part of the territory of the PRC”. This opened the way for **China to claim Arunachal Pradesh as “South Tibet**”, a term it coined only in 2006.
* The present Indian government concessions have ranged from **removing China from India’s list of “countries of concern” to granting Chinese tourists e-visas on arrival**. Indian policy has enabled Beijing to **significantly ramp up its already large trade surplus with India**. Racking up a whopping $60-billion annual surplus, **China has heavily skewed the trade relationship against India**, treating it as a raw-material appendage of its economy and a dumping ground for manufactured goods.
	+ In 2015-16, Chinese exports to India were almost seven times greater in value than imports.
	+ Make in India initiative will not succeed when China blithely undercuts Indian manufacturing to reap a fast-growing trade surplus
* Inviting China to be a major partner in India’s infrastructure expansion, were intended to encourage Beijing to be more cooperative.
* **China has become more hardline on security issues**, including the border. Moreover, it has not only shielded Pakistan-based terrorists like **Masood Azhar** from UN action, but also stepped up covert strategic assistance to Islamabad, including providing the launcher for Pakistan’s India-specific **Shaheen-3 ballistic missile**.
* Indian appeasement has also allowed China to **narrow the focus of border disputes to what it claims**. The spotlight thus is on China’s Tibet-linked claims to Indian territories, not on Tibet’s status. **China will not settle the border issue because an unsettled frontier allows it to keep India under intense pressure.**
* India lost face in China’s eyes when it issued a visa to the Germany-based World Uyghur Congress chief Dolkun Isa and **then cancelled it,** after Beijing strongly protested against the action
* **water is the resource that has become the subject of tension**—specifically Chinese dam construction on its side of the Brahmaputra River.

**No,India and china have cooperated well in many issues like:**

* Chinese statement- world is big enough for both India and China to grow.
* India talks with China over the **land boundary issue** and both the countries accept that they should be moving [**toward a boundary settlement**](http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/border-issue-must-stay-in-focus-says-chinese-official/article4712414.ece).
* China and India both understand the**need for connectivity**. In this context, both countries seem to have made some progress on the**Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar (BCIM) Corridor**, an important component of China’s One Belt, One Road project.
* India is seekingto reach out to Chinese provinces with whom it did not have links previously. Increasing ties between Indian states and Chinese provinces enriches and supports high-level diplomatic ties. **Already, a number of Indian chief ministers have visited China.**
* The association in BRICS, Asian infrastructure investment bank and new development bank help both the countries
* On Climate change issues both countries are striving for better deals for developing countries.

*Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education, Human Resources.*

[**5) Education has for long been the key to moving up the economic and social ladder. There can be no equality of opportunity without access to quality education. Have inequalities in educational access in India diminished in recent times? Examine. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/09/5-education-long-key-moving-economic-social-ladder-can-no-equality-opportunity-without-access-quality-education-inequalities-educational-access/)

[Livemint](http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/t1QNCalLHTDkt8iun03jdK/How-unequal-is-access-to-education.html)

**No,the inequalities still persist :-**

* Net attendance ratio drops(NAR) sharply when it comes to secondary school and becomes worse at the higher secondary level.
* **Class Basis :-**
	+ the difference between the richest fifth and the poorest fifth in enrolment **widens sharply from the primary section to the secondary and higher educational levels.**
	+ Only 6% of young people from the bottom fifth of the population attend educational levels above higher secondary in urban India, but that proportion is five times higher, at 31%, for young people from the richest fifth of the population.
	+ So the real middle class is also substantially disadvantaged when it comes to higher education.
* **Rural Vs Urban :-**
	+ The situation is substantially worse in rural India.
	+ The well-off kids have much better opportunities for higher education, essential for getting good jobs in the cities and, increasingly, abroad as well, while their poorer cousins are doomed to scratch out a precarious living in the informal sector.
* **Gender :-**
	+ Several states have wide gender differences in NAR at the secondary levels.
	+ For instance, NAR at the secondary level in Gujarat is 63% for boys and 43% for girls.
* **Caste Basis :-**
	+ The difference in enrolment at the primary levels is not much.
	+ But the difference between scheduled castes and tribes and other categories widens at higher levels of education.
	+ It is particularly large for urban girls belonging to scheduled tribes at the secondary and higher secondary levels
* **Religion :-**
	+ Among religious identities, **enrolment of Muslims is lower compared to those of other religions at every level**, both for males and females.
	+ In urban India, while enrolment for Muslim boys in primary schools is only marginally lower, the proportion at the higher educational levels is substantially lower.
	+ For urban Muslim girls, NAR is substantially lower than for those professing other faiths.
* **Expenditure :-**
	+ Average expenditure per student in the primary section in urban India for the top fifth of the population is more than eight times that for the kid from the poorest fifth of the population.

**Yes, the inequalities diminished because of government efforts:**

* RTE has been successful in curbing these inequalities to an extent
* Universal primary education has been a very successful initiative of India
* Mid day Meals scheme implemented effectively diminished the caste differences in schools.
* Public funding in higher education gives an opportunity to even the socio economic backward communities to get access to quality education
* The New Education Policy (NEP) Initiated at the beginning of 2015 is a bottom-up approach was formulated. A combination of an online portal supported by on-site focus discussions was implemented in an attempt to reach out to as many stakeholders as possible.
* The educational loans provided by the banks for studies abroad also enabled even the middle class familied to fulfil their dreams.

*Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

[**6) Critically comment on the draft Geospatial Information Regulation Bill of 2016. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/09/6-critically-comment-draft-geospatial-information-regulation-bill-2016/)

[The Indian Express](http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/india-map-100-crore-fine-7-years-jail-2790822/)

**Negatives:**

* **Service providers:**
	+ Any potential misrepresentation or wrong data accessed or offered by any of the service providers could potentially land them in jail and/or have significant fines imposed on them.
	+ Besides this, accessing of such services **will become expensive, thus impacting end user cost and resulting in slower spread of digital services in India.**
* **Monitoring the digital space will also make government officials very powerful** and in a position to demand bribes from unaware or ignorant violators. If implemented in its present form, the proposed Bill could have severe consequences of these service providers
* The proposed Bill **does not cover Indian government agencies such as ISRO**, which is also another reason for protests emanating from various stakeholders.
* The success of ‘Digital India’ lies in more service operators coming out with wider range of services and greater number of users accessing these services. **If the proposed Bill acts as a deterrent to the spread of similar services,** then it will end up as a case of the government meaning well but ending up shooting itself in the foot.
* The **terminology of the draft is psychotically comprehensive**. “Whoever depicts, disseminates, publishes or distributes any wrong or false topographic information of India” can be held to account. Apart from printers,publishers, media and filmmakers who depict maps in their productions, this would include private citizens posting on social media, and even children.
* If this proposal or draft is accepted or goes through and becomes a law, sourcing information from satellites and **crowd-sourced data will become illegal.** Google Maps gets its information through this medium.
* Several stakeholders, technology analysts and enthusiasts have voiced their concerns over the proposed Bill which they believe is draconian and open to misuse and selective interpretation by elements within the government. Some have even gone as far as claiming that this is **License Raj 2.0.**

**Positives:**

* There can be no debate that the country’s territorial integrity needs to be maintained, physically and in the digital world, and therefore**, a stringent law against violators seems imperative.**
* Moreover, geospatial information easily available from services like Google Earth, Google Maps etc,**has been reportedly used by terror groups against India**. In the run up to the Mumbai terror attacks, Lashkar jihadis were reportedly shown images of vital locations in Mumbai.
* Wrong depiction of the map of India could land the violators in jail with a maximum term of seven years and fine upto Rs 100 crore. **This measure has been envisaged by the government against the backdrop of instances where certain social networking sites showed Jammu and Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh as part of Pakistan and China respectively**
* The proposed law applies not just to primary data providers such as Google and Apple, but to down-the-line service providers like Cab aggregators such as Uber and Ola, restaurant aggregators and last-mile delivery services like Swiggy, or even real estate information service providers like MagicBricks, 99 Acres, etc, all of whom draw upon geospatial data and images to offer efficient services to their end user.This law will make them accountable.
* The government is proposing to set up a regulatory body that will comprise of digitally aware senior bureaucrats along with subject matter experts who will oversee the digital space for violations. Hopefully, **this body will successfully fulfill its responsibility while ensuring a level-playing ground for all.**
* It is hoped that the government will be able to mitigate all stakeholder concerns before putting it up for final passage in Parliament.

*Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

[**2) “The proposed Geospatial Information Regulation Bill, 2016, threatens to destroy the innovation ecosystem. A better option is to switch to a simple registration-based system.” Comment. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/10/2-proposed-geospatial-information-regulation-bill-2016-threatens-destroy-innovation-ecosystem-better-option-switch-simple-registration-based-system-comment/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/a-licence-to-kill-innovation/article8577372.ece)

**Negatives of Geospatial Information Regulation Bill 2016:**

* **Data needing an update:**
	+ The draft bill’s definition of geospatial information has a **wide remit**.Geospatial information, especially when so widely defined, keeps changing.
	+ **Ex:** Changing the name of a restaurant in such data would amount to tampering with watermarked data. Not propagating updates till security clearance is released may affect the business model of businesses premised on providing up-to-date information.
	+ The **bill promises a three-month turnaround on all clearances. This might not be quick enough**
* **India doesn’t have the bandwidth to handle all applications for this usage inside and outside India:**
	+ It is hard to estimate how many different non-governmental services inside and outside India are currently using Indian geospatial data as there are a large number with significant impact.
* **Lack of manpower:**
	+ A government regulator that is yet to be set up will need hundreds of experts who can “vet” terabytes of data from each applicant.
* **Lack of logistics:**
	+ The logistics of getting these data across to the vetting authority is not enough.
* **The complexity of the ecosystem** and the trajectories such data can take are only limited by the imagination of developers and service creators working on different kinds of problems in a host of different sectors.
	+ such complexity emerges organically as different actors in the **innovation ecosystem work to create new efficiencies or leverage existing ones**, and so it is something to be encouraged
	+ . All this will further burden the vetting authority and stretch its capabilities.
* There is a **suggestion of having a registration based system**.
	+ However, even such a system is also fraught with danger in a framework that insists on scrutinising the credentials of every end user.
	+ A clear distinction is not made between the producers and consumers of geospatial data.
	+ **In order to not constrict the innovation ecosystem, the definition of consumers must be as wide as possible**.
* By shifting the onus onto the service India runs the risk of creating a significant roadblock for a major part of the innovation ecosystem. This is undesirable.

**Yes, the law is very much needed:**

* It will help when all publishers of geospatial data register with the security-vetting authority and provide an online window through which the authority can conduct an audit of their data.
* The vetting authority can go through the data and raise an objection if it finds anything objectionable, and it can do this in its own time.
* There can be no debate that the country’s territorial integrity needs to be maintained, physically and in the digital world, and therefore**, a stringent law against violators seems imperative.**
* Moreover, geospatial information easily available from services like Google Earth, Google Maps etc,**has been reportedly used by terror groups against India**. In the run up to the Mumbai terror attacks, Lashkar jihadis were reportedly shown images of vital locations in Mumbai.
* Wrong depiction of the map of India could land the violators in jail with a maximum term of seven years and fine upto Rs 100 crore. **This measure has been envisaged by the government against the backdrop of instances where certain social networking sites showed Jammu and Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh as part of Pakistan and China respectively**
* The proposed law applies not just to primary data providers such as Google and Apple, but to down-the-line service providers like Cab aggregators such as Uber and Ola, restaurant aggregators and last-mile delivery services like Swiggy, or even real estate information service providers like MagicBricks, 99 Acres, etc, all of whom draw upon geospatial data and images to offer efficient services to their end user.This law will make them accountable.
* The government is proposing to set up a regulatory body that will comprise of digitally aware senior bureaucrats along with subject matter experts who will oversee the digital space for violations. Hopefully, **this body will successfully fulfill its responsibility while ensuring a level-playing ground for all.**
* It is hoped that the government will be able to mitigate all stakeholder concerns before putting it up for final passage in Parliament.

*Topic: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests*

[**3) What options does government has to discourage smoking in India? Tobacco companies are resisting a new regulation that the mandatory pictorial warnings on cigarette packages be made larger. Should government yield to such resistance because tobacco farmers are affected? Comment. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/10/3-options-government-discourage-smoking-india-tobacco-companies-resisting-new-regulation-mandatory-pictorial-warnings-cigarette-packages-made-larger/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/all-up-in-smoke/article8577369.ece)

**Options before the government :-**

* India can follow Australia’s post-implementation report shows that there has been a statistically significant drop in the prevalence of smoking **since packages have gone logo-less**.
* **e-cigarettes** need to be strictly monitored as they could sooner or later lure consumers to take up the real thing.
* **Taxes need to be rationalised:**
	+ So far deficiencies in tax structure on cigarettes are:
		- Tax hikes in India do not match increases in real income
		- India’s complex cigarette-tax structure allows significant manipulation
	+ Cigarette-smokers comprise 39 per cent of India’s smokers according to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) 2010, but they are taxed up to 210 times more than smokers of bidis, whose manufacturers tend to have greater political clout than cigarette companies
	+ eliminate the many-tiered tax structure. The best solution to decrease cigarette sales and slow the switch from bidis to cigarettes is to adopt a single high rate on all lengths of cigarettes
* The **public health campaign** must continue apace with the enforcement of extensive curbs on smoking in public spaces.
	+ This is an effective way to help break the smoking habit, besides of course protecting bystanders from second-hand smoke.
* India has enforced rules that warnings be affixed in films when someone lights up on screen. There is still some way to go in the business of cracking down on surrogate advertising.
* Having temporarily won its battle in the Supreme Court on packaging, it is time India did more to discourage smoking.
* publishing and disseminating research results on the health effects of tobacco
* adopting comprehensive bans on advertising and promotion, and restricting smoking in workplaces and public places
* widening access to nicotine replacement and other cessation therapies.

**Should the government buckle under pressure because Tobacco farmers get affected:**

**No:**

* Smoking kills more than 1 million people a year in India.
* The World Health Organisation says tobacco-related diseases cost the country $16 billion (nearly Rs 1.06 lakh crore) annually.
* Recently, the Indian Medical Association too had urged the Health Ministry to implement the bigger pictorial warnings stating that with 275 million adult users, India is the second largest consumer of tobacco products, globally.
	+ Tobacco, it warned, causes a gamut of serious diseases including cancer, cardiovascular diseases, chronic pulmonary diseases and stroke.

**Yes:**

* the **packaging rules drastic and impractical**, saying the law will increase smuggling of **illegal cigarettes.**
* **More than 8 million workers and their families are affected**, and farmers’ groups are among those taking out large advertisements in newspapers criticising the legislation.
* The subject of tobacco needs to be handled with great care and interests of the **most vulnerable stakeholders in the delivery chain** need to be safeguarded.
	+ Unfortunately, **recent policy focus has been one sided** blindly aping the recommendations of the Western influence and in complete disregard for the local reality in India
* So far the **farming community has not been able to find any alternative,** as tobacco is grown in semi-arid and non-irrigated lands. The government has so far not provided practical alternatives before rushing into any major policy changes.

*Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health*

[**4) Supreme Court directives on making NEET compulsory for medical college admissions and revamping the Medical Council of India are moves in the right direction. Discuss. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/10/4-supreme-court-directives-making-neet-compulsory-medical-college-admissions-revamping-medical-council-india-moves-right-direction-discuss/)

[The Indian Express](http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/neet-mbbs-supreme-court-medical-exam-aipmt-2792355/)

**NEET needed:**

**Yes:**

**Merits:-**

* It **reduces financial burden** and saves the students from the trouble of writing multiple entrance exams to medical courses in state run and private institutions.
* **Can curb the increase in commercialization of higher education** in medicine by giving admissions to students with merit.
* **Ensures a transparent admission process in private,unaided institutions** which thrive on selling of medical seats.
* **Minimizes corruption and irregularities in admission** to medical courses.
* Safeguards the sanctity of medical profession
* **To prevent any form of malpractices such as donation,profiteering and capitation fees.**
* **Emphasises on merit** as the only criteria for admissions.
* **Upholds article 19(6)and provides for exception to Art 19(1)(g)**
* **Removes the problem of overlapping of many medical entrance exams**
* The NEET will compel governments to focus on high school education.

**No:**

**Demerits:-**

* Centralization of medical education affects admission process to states.
* States fear that it would undermine their reservation policy
* Private institutions especially by minorities were against any interference in their admission process as
	+ it would affect their right to regulate their own admissions that had been upheld by supreme court in the judgement of TMA pai foundation (2002)
	+ violation of article 30
* No legal clarification for states as NEET is recalled which is leading to confusion whether they have to continue their admission process or not.
* Deprives state run universities and medical colleges of their right to admit students as per their own procedures.
* Also differences in terms of content,state and central boards syllabus adds to the confusion and uncertainty the students are facing.
* It is being argued that students studying the non-CBSE curriculum and language medium schools may be at a disadvantage due to the limited preparation time.

**Reforms in MCI needed because of :**

1. **No effective curriculum:**
	1. **Failed to create a curriculum** that produces doctors suited to working in Indian context especially in the rural health services and poor urban areas.This has created disconnect between medical education system and health system.
	2. **Failure to oversee and guide the Continuing Medical Education in the country**, leaving this important task in the hands of the commercial private industry.
	3. **Failure to maintain uniform standards of medical education**, both at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels.
2. **Failure in evaluation of doctors:**
	1. Non-involvement of the MCI in any standardized summative evaluation of the medical graduates and post-graduates.
	2. even those MBBS students who pass out from colleges that have been declared unfit to impart medical education are certified.
	3. **Failure to put in place a robust quality assurance mechanism** when a fresh graduate enters the system and starts practicing so competency of doctors is not checked.
3. **suspicious system of granting recognition:**
	1. **Failure to create a transparent system of medical college inspections** and grant of recognition or de-recognition.
	2. newly-opened institute is granted recognition after it has been inspected by MCI for the fourth time and its facilities are found up to the mark even if it failed in the first three inspections.
	3. Heavy focus on nitty-gritty of infrastructure and human staff during inspections but no substantial evaluation of quality of teaching, training and imparting of skills.
4. **Disparities in college establisment:**
	1. **Failure to guide setting up of medical colleges in the country** as per need, resulting in geographical mal-distribution of medical colleges
5. **Medical ethics:**
	1. **Failure to instill respect for a professional code of ethics i**n the medical professionals and take disciplinary action against doctors found violating the code of Ethics.

*Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

[**5) “Laws prescribing educational qualifications for contesting elections are undemocratic and incoherent.” Comment. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/10/5-laws-prescribing-educational-qualifications-contesting-elections-undemocratic-incoherent-comment/)

[The Indian Express](http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/narendra-modi-pm-degree-arvind-kejriwal-delhi-university-ba-degrees-of-exclusion-2792374/)

The process which started first in Rajasthan is being continued with Haryana making a new law that makes it mandatory for candidates participating in elections of panchayats to have minimum educational qualifications like a general male candidate to pass Class X and a general woman candidate to pass Class VIII.

**This law is beneficial because:**

* The Supreme Court, while upholding the Haryana Amendment Act, noted that it is not “irrational or illegal or unconnected” to impose minimum educational qualifications as “**this would enable the candidates to effectively discharge duties of the panchayat**”
* A sarpanch in village India is more than just an elected representative. Those occupying these positions are, often, bearers of local common and cultural knowledge and experience and are closely connected with their constituents.So such a law will only benefit more.
* the law was meant to elect “model representatives for local self-government for better administrative efficiency”

**However the law is undemocratic because of the following reasons:**

* By saying that it is only education which enables one to discern good from bad and right from wrong**, the verdict completely ignores the astounding work done by many uneducated**
* Over the decade, despite male resistance, many women representatives who are unable to participate in elections have racked up an impressive list of achievements.
	+ successful campaign against female foeticide.
	+ 20 pumps installed in district with severe water shortages
	+ **Their greatest achievement, according to locals: Upgrading the primary school to secondary level.**
* Thousands of women, dalits (backward caste) and general candidates across this northwestern state are now debarred from the panchayat election
* Excluding more than half the rural population from candidacy.
	+ **The average literacy rate in Mewat, according to the 2011 census, was 22 percentage points lower than Haryana. The female literacy rate, at 37%, is amongst India’s worst for a district**.
	+ This means 89% of women and 80% of men (in the age-group 20 years and above) cannot contest elections in Mewat
	+ Since there aren’t enough schools and religion plays a big role in educational decisions, **girls in Mewat are mostly sent to madrasas, which means they are not counted as literate.**
* **Past instances of educational neglect impact the leaders of panchayat now**
* **In many gram panchayats, the electoral process is over before it started. Candidates are elected unopposed or seats are vacant.**
	+ Rajasthan problem-As many as 43% panchayat ward members were elected unopposed and 542 seats (0.5%) remained vacant in Rajasthan.
* Panchayats are also witnessing a **rise in polygamy** among the largely Muslim Meo community, with men taking second wives–with the educational qualifications needed to contest elections.
* **MP’s and MLA’s:**
	+ MPs and MLAs need not have minimum educational qualifications but panchayat members do.
	+ MPs and MLAs can contest elections despite criminal charges–they only need to declare them in their affidavits–but panchayat leaders need to append certificates from their local police stations clearing them of criminal charges.
	+ Of 90 MLAs in the Haryana assembly, as many as four MLAs are eighth-standard pass, and one is an illiterate.

*Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests, Indian diaspora.*

[**6) Saudi Arabia is trying to reshape its economy and reposition itself in West Asia. What are the challenges it faces? How will it affect the region, including India? Examine. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/10/6-saudi-arabia-trying-reshape-economy-reposition-west-asia-challenges-faces-will-affect-region-including-india-examine/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/alls-not-well-in-the-kingdom/article8577373.ece)

**How is Saudi Arabia reshaping its economy with its new policy?**

* To diversify the country’s economy which will end dependence on oil in four years.
* has proposed to sell a stake in Saudi Aramco, the nation’s oil producer, and create the world’s largest sovereign wealth fund which will diversify into non-petroleum assets. The idea is to make investments, and not oil, the key source of Saudi Arabia’s government revenue.

**Implications of this move on the world and challenges this policy faces:**

* **Political implications for it:**
	+ crisis could be enormous.
	+ It was wealth from the oil that helped the kingdom weather the Arab Spring in 2011.
	+ When people elsewhere rose against dictatorships, the late King Abdullah announced a special economic package of $70 billion to quell discontent at home.
	+ **There is doubt whether the present monarch has any such economic leeway left to cope with unwarranted situations.**

* **Iran problem:**The Saudis would not agree to any such pact unless the Iranians freeze output. Iran is unlikely to do so.
	+ The Saudis are ready to live with lower prices for a longer time.
	+ The key reason is that Riyadh is afraid of losing market share to its rivals.
	+ lower oil prices are hurting the shale oil producers in the U.S. worse than the Gulf countries. A vibrant shale oil industry is not in the long-term interests of the kingdom.
	+ lower oil prices will hit Saudi Arabia’s geopolitical rivals, mainly Iran and Russia, as well.
	+ So the Saudis have turned to a road not taken earlier — they want to reduce the dependency on oil while letting their oil-dependent rivals struggle.
* **Syria:**
	+ For more than five years, the Saudis and their friends in the Gulf have invested in Syria to topple the Assad regime But they were never close to unseating President Assad.
* **Yemen:**
	+ In Yemen, the ill-planned air strikes turned out to be disastrous both for the Saudis and the Yemenis. After a year-long campaign, the Houthis are still in Sana’a.

* **Saudi-U.S. relations are at the crossroads**. The U.S. Congress is discussing a bill that, if passed, would let the families of the 9/11victims sue Saudi Arabia for its alleged financial support to al-Qaeda
* **Even on the economic front,** there’s no guarantee that the reform measures unveiled by Prince Mohammad will succeed.
	+ Last year, oil provided 73 per cent of state revenue.
	+ The promise to overcome this dependence in four years sounds unrealistic
	+ Ironically, an International Monetary Fund report last year had predicted that the kingdom could be bankrupt within the same time period, given the spending sprees and low oil prices.
* **Saudi Arabia has other challenges as well.**
	+ The **youth unemployment rate** is 29.5 per cent, according to the World Bank.
	+ The **embers of Arab Spring are yet to be put out.**
	+ The kingdom also faces **radicalisation of its youth**; several of them have travelled to Syria to join the Islamic State.
	+ If the new economic reforms shake up the base of the rentier system,it is **difficult for Saudi to succeed keeping popular discontent within permissible limits**.
	+ it could **weaken Riyadh’s regional influence** further, at least in the short term
* **India:**
	+ Oil importers like India are expected to benefit by the dwindling oil prices which reduces its current account deficit.
	+ **diaspora-related issues**-including the treatment of Indian workers in-country and efforts towards Saudization **that might limit employment opportunities for Indian expatriates**
	+ **look east policy of Saudi can be advantageous to India –**Saudi showed keen interest in investing in India’ infrastructure development in areas such as railways, roads, ports, shipping, and energy.
	+ India might get to play more role in the region

*Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

[**3) According to the World Bank’s World Development report of 2016, despite being the second largest exporter of information and communication technology goods, India has the largest offline population in the world. It highlights the challenges that the government faces in providing Internet access to all Indians at a reasonable cost. Discuss these challenges. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/11/3-according-world-banks-world-development-report-2016-despite-second-largest-exporter-information-communication-technology-goods-india-largest-offline-po/)

[The Hindu](http://www.livemint.com/Politics/WYlC7gRhcjvtiheTwEygCI/India-has-the-largest-offline-population-World-Bank-report.html)

[WB Report](https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/23347/9781464806711.pdf?sequence=10&isAllowed=y)

**Challenges:-**

* Almost all internet connections in India are served with **poor infrastructure.**
* According to International Telecommunication Union, a UN body, **India is among the poorest countries in terms of ICT Development Index.**
* **Women as journalists around the world is extremely rare unlike India.**
* Th**e growth in average internet speed, especially for wired connections, is non existent.**The price of bandwidth on fixed internet connection has remained more or less same for the majority of consumers in the last 10 years. The price of bandwidth on 3G connections too has remained very high.
* **TRAI:**
	+ **TRAI says that it is 512kbps, which is almost 50 times slower** than what a person in the US gets.
	+ there are **no performance standards** that are being enforced by TRAI, acts like a body that protects the interests of telecom operators instead of consumers.
	+ Unfair (and possibly illegal) anti-consumer policies like Fair Use Policy go unchecked.
	+ Even on wired connections, internet speed often dips below 512kbps and yet TRAI rarely takes note of it and seeks explanations from service providers.
* **Telecom service providers:**
	+ Telecom service providers (TSPs) and internet service providers (ISPs) bemoan the lack of a viable business model in the rural areas
	+ the government complains about the lack of interest from the market players for all their efforts and initiative in creating hard infrastructure
* **Governmental issues :**
	+ The government still doesn’t have a coherent plan on how it’s going to pipe in high-speed internet broadband connectivity to every single house
	+ **Government has allowed telecom operators in India to monopolise different regions and markets.** And these telecom operators are just not interested in serving the retail market of internet. They are busy selling bandwidth to companies and organisations at high prices.
	+ while the regulators and government cannot seem to agree on fundamental policy issues from norms on speed and pricing to spectrum regulatory frameworks.
* English is the predominant lingua franca of the internet, just about 10 percent of Indians speak the

**Solutions:-**

* It is in this context that the government needs
	+ to look at some of the alternative technologies on offer, not only from the likes of Microsoft, Facebook and Google — companies with a clear-cut profit motive
	+ also from institutions as diverse as the Indian Institutes of Technology to C-DAC that have the potential to resolve the seemingly untractable last-mile challenge
* The most promising alternative technology both in terms of practicality and operational possibility is **White-Fi.** If the ongoing experiments succeed, India would cover a long way in bringing internet closer to its billion plus population even as the existing service providers continue to weigh pros and cons of investing in rural areas.

*Topic: Responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies*

[**4) In recent years, voters’ turnout in elections is steadily increasing. Discuss the significance and reasons for this increasing turnout. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/11/4-recent-years-voters-turnout-elections-steadily-increasing-discuss-significance-reasons-increasing-turnout/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/why-india-loves-to-vote/article8582147.ece)

**Importance of rising voter turnout in elections :-**

* A high turnout is generally seen as **evidence of the**[**legitimacy**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legitimacy_%28political_science%29)**of the current system.**
* Assuming that **low turnout is a reflection of disenchantment or indifference**, a poll with very low turnout may not be an accurate reflection of the [will of the people](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Popular_sovereignty).
* Still, low turnouts can **lead to unequal representation** among various parts of the population. .
* Higher turnout may lead to **policies that somewhat better reflect the views of poor and middle-class**
* This perhaps indicates **greater participation by middle and upper class voters in cities.**
* Making an effort to **make the voters aware about the importance of their vote in a democracy**. Literacy is also important factor to force the voters to cast their votes.

**Reasons for this increasing turnout :-**

* keen to express their support for a particular candidate or party
* more and more people vote for development interests rather than merely to support the party that projects their ethnic or caste identity.
* **The efforts by EC**– namely the cleaning up of electoral rolls and the voter enrolment and awareness drives undertaken by the Election Commission
* Research revealed that the act of voting itself holds enormous significance for people **because on election days the most important actors are not the politicians but the voters**.
* While politicians seemingly dominate campaigns, people point out the **irony of even the most arrogant heads being bowed to beg for votes** thereby conceding that it is ordinary people who hold power at least during elections.
* Many noted that it is also the only time they see **the administration doing their work free from political interference**, thanks to the Model Code of Conduct imposed on the political establishment. It is the world they crave for
* They point out that **as long as they have the secret ballot they can ultimately vote for whom they like as the vote is their weapon.**
* **Being able to vote gives people self-respect and dignity**. For the vast majority of the impoverished and ostracised population of India, being able to cast a vote freely is an affirmation of their status as human above all and as equal citizens of India.
* A polling station in India is the only public space of its kind where there is genuine social diversity,**where women are unafraid, where VIPs cannot be ushered to the front of the queue and where people are forced to stand shoulder-to-shoulder regardless of caste, class, skin colour**
* The procedure inside the polling booth **reinforces the dignity of the voter**further where she is treated politely and efficiently by officials, has her name called out without mention of her father or husband, sees her name on an official record, **proving she is an individual in her own right.**
* **Each of these actions reaffirms the identity of ordinary people as equal citizens of India**, each of whom counts and is worthy of respect — and this alone for many was a good reason to vote.
* In fulfilling their duty to vote, people noted they had claimed their most fundamental right as citizens.
* It should not surprise us therefore that people proudly display their inked fingers after voting, for it is a material manifestation of a bundle of emotions that entering the polling booth brings with it.
* By exercising their franchise, **voters are able to reacquaint themselves with the values that democracy promises — equality, dignity and civility** — values that sadly only manifest themselves on election days

**Trends:**

* **Statistics show** a steady rise in the turnout figures over the last three decades in several parts of India. The gap between women and men voters has also steadily reduced and in some States female voters outnumbered males.
* Evidence from the ongoing Assembly elections shows that turnouts are above 80 per cent

*Topic:Important aspects of governance*

[**3) Do you think populism, personality cult and freebie culture in politics which is often witnessed during elections in states such as Tamil Nadu is good for economic growth and development? Critically comment. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/12/3-think-populism-personality-cult-freebie-culture-politics-often-witnessed-elections-states-tamil-nadu-good-economic-growth-development-criticall/)

[The Hindu](http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/GGMQFv1iFGJiKMzPZWWVLN/Why-Tamil-Nadus-freebie-culture-works.html)

**Yes, these characteristics harm the economic growth and development:**

* **In Tamilnadu**
	+ rampant populism, autocratic administrations and widespread corruption all endemic to state politics are antithetical to economic growth and human development.
	+ The economy is also showing signs of strain. According to an India Spend analysis of state budgets, **Tamil Nadu has seen the maximum increase in debt over the past five years**, an unhealthy trend even if its debt to gross state domestic product (GSDP) ratio remains below the national average at 20%.
	+ Likewise, **the ratio of its interest payments to revenue expenditure has risen from 10.5% in 2012-13 to 11.6% in 2014-15** one of the few states to show an increase.
	+ It has also posted a **revenue deficit for the third year in a row** now 0.7% of GSDP the longest such streak in a decade.
	+ Because of freebies growth and development had been eluding the state.
	+ With the amount spent on freebies, the AIADMK government could have built 25,000 schools and 11,000 primary health centres during the last five years.
	+ What is appalling is that rough calculations reveal that the freebies announced could well cost anywhere between Rs 50,000 and 250,000 crores to the exchequer; so much so that, given the precarious state of the finances of the state, **analysts have termed these promises as impossible to be delivered.**
	+ This model depends on freebies, feeds on corruption and brazenly encourages crony capitalism.
* Dismantling of subsidies brought transparency and efficiency in policymaking and helped the banking sector become vibrant and responsive to market needs.
* In Tamilnadu further, vested interests feed on this political-business model. After all, when free television sets were promised in 2006, the cable and channel **business carried on by the family members were the biggest beneficiaries.**
* The programs and plans implemented with short term vision, apart from resulting in wastage of money also result in **negative impact on the society and the attitude of the people.**
* The culture of expecting more from the government is snowballing and **people’s desire to ‘work hard’ is getting diminished.** It is agreeable that some subsidies are inevitable for poor. But without weeding the implementation hurdles, the purpose will not be solved.
	+ In implementing the freebie schemes, currently there is no transparency or honesty, they being overshadowed by corruption and selfishness. **Because of this the purpose is not served**. If this trend continues sustainable and productive service will remain a utopian dream.
* If a country needs to grow, its people stand on their feet and see a strong economic growth, it cannot depend on freebies and subsidies alone

**It helps in economic growth and development also:**

* Despite all the concerns Tamil Nadu has the **second largest economy among all states and the third highest per capita income**.
* Its **human development index** is not quite commensurate the Institute of Applied Manpower Research’s 2014 report put it at seventh among the states and yet it is comfortably more than the national average and has trended steadily upwards since 2000.
* **Dravidian movement’s** creed of rationalism and social egalitarianism created a markedly different form of caste politics than seen elsewhere mobilizing Dalits and other backward castes, undercutting hierarchies and transforming social indicators.**That had obvious implications for economic advancement,**as per the endogenous growth theory.
* Imperious style of functioning, distasteful as it is in a democratic set-up, has also meant a**streamlined decision-making process.** **And their exalted status in the state’s political life means that Tamil Nadu has remained essentially a two-party system, promoting policy and economic stability.** The notorious freebie culture is the flipside when **politicians are treated as near-deities, munificence is expected.**
* **Targeted Subsidies can really help an economy.** Giving people free electricity or fuel or gas, however, is targeted at increasing their spending. Spending produces ripples in an economy and more transactions are always good.
	+ directed, focussed subsidies are part of a welfare state that seeks to uplift the poor, give them access to the essentials of life, which includes not only food, clothing and shelter, but also education, health care, hygiene and increasingly, connectivity.
	+ By bringing more people into the “market”, by having discretionary spending power, you create a bigger market, which then becomes a virtuous cycle.
	+ On a world level, that is one reason why rich countries provide aid to needy ones. Not only human upliftment but also to create bigger markets.

*Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations.*

[**4) How India and China manage their relationship will have global consequences. Do you think their relationship has matured and expanded over the years? Critically examine. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/12/4-india-china-manage-relationship-will-global-consequences-think-relationship-matured-expanded-years-critically-examine/)

[Livemint](http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/gBtlFZxHPHWeTirpzJydWJ/China-India-and-what-a-new-red-telephone-would-mean-for-t.html)

**How India and China’s relationship will have global consequences:**

* Their sheer size influences global markets in commodities
* China’s stock market gyrations have already begun to have knock-on effects around the world.
* As two nuclear-armed states with long-term unfinished territorial business between them and a good amount of mutual suspicion, diplomatic missteps between India and China **risk nuclear escalation.**
* This closeness between Beijing and Islamabad, coupled with a deepening skepticism in Washington over the wisdom of its own relationship with Pakistan, **has pushed India and the United States closer to each other** overcoming decades of mutual suspicion as the regional dynamics change underfoot.

**Has the relationship matured ?**

 The two largest, most populous, most durable Asian countries, for most of their collective history, have lived alongside each other with an almost studied indifference to the military, economic and cultural activities of the other. This dynamic began to change in the postcolonial period, but slowly, unevenly and with as much backtracking as forward progress.

**Yes:**

* The recent news that Delhi and Beijing may be establishing a military hotline has shown how much the Sino-Indian relationship has expanded and matured in recent years
* The last decade has seen a flurry of Sino-Indian diplomacy, trade and exchange
	+ China and India are also members of the World Trade Organization (WTO)—India as a founding member and China since 2001.
* The reduction and elimination of trade barriers has helped to stimulate economic exchange. Since 2000, trade between China and India has grown nearly twice as fast as each country’s trade with the rest of the world, and since 2001,
* Indeed, **both China and India recently signed deals with the Maldives**, for investment and defence cooperation, and India has been expanding its diplomacy in Iran, traditionally an outpost of Chinese influence in the Middle East.
* China and India are now both independent, prosperous and mostly at peace at the same time as each other, in a regional environment that is mostly secure, for the first time since the late 18th century.
* Chinese capital could help India accelerate its infrastructure revolution
* BRICS cooperation and the participation by two in the formation of new development Bank
* India being part of China’s initiatives like Asian infrastructure investment bank, BCIM corridor, Silk Road project, all show the maturity in the relationship
* **Trade has similarly intensified.**Barely $2 billion fifteen years ago, it was worth a combined $80 billion last year, and continues to increase.

**No,there are still concerns:**

* their lack of deep ties allowed disputes to escalate, culminating in the 1962 Sino-Indian War, which left them with diplomatic differences until the early 1990s.
* **geography was the primary** reason that the two countries maintained a diplomatic distance, keeping their interests separate and avoiding substantial political and economic exchanges.
* The two are likewise **engaged in an ongoing proxy struggle around the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea,** shoring up relationships with other partners.
* **Unlike trade, levels of investment between China and India remain relatively low.**
	+ Though an estimated 100 companies from each country have offices in the other, cumulative bilateral FDI is less than $500 million.
	+ A major obstacle to bilateral investment that needs to be bridged is one of lingering distrust stemming from the brief war of 1962 and unresolved border disputes
	+ **Cross-border investment remains low because Chinese and Indian companies are still in the early stages of learning how to operate and succeed in each other’s economies**
* Anti dumping measures and banning of Chinese mobiles by India show the mistrust is still prevailing.
* **military tensions between the two remain substantial.** The occasional border skirmish and bilateral interaction are tainted by their divergent views on relations with Pakistan, still-archrival of India and an increasingly close ally of China.
	+ Growing defence equipment and spending show the itch in the relationship
	+ The aggressive pursuit of string of pearls strategy by China and it trying to develop port of Gwadar and Djibouti are a concern to India.
	+ The disputes in South China Sea where china has territorial problems also makes it difficult for India to trust China.
* **Other issues:**
	+ A joint move by China and Pakistan to thwart India’s bid to designate Jaish-e-Mohammed leader Masood***Azhar***
	+ Indian visa for Dolkun ***Isa***, exiled ***Uighur***-Chinese ***leader***
	+ Stamping visa problem
	+ Dalai Lama problem all show the concerns in the relationship
	+ the fact that both countries see hotline as necessary underscores how much tension remains in the relationship.

*Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education, Human Resources.*

[**5) Since independence many commissions and committees have recommended that Indian public expenditure on education must be 6% of gross domestic product (GDP). Critically comment on the state of public expenditure on education in India. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/12/5-since-independence-many-commissions-committees-recommended-indian-public-expenditure-education-must-6-gross-domestic-product-gdp-critically-comment-state-public/)

[Livemint](http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/8xL0HlCdWpJFmatWpNvTAO/Thrift-in-education.html)

**The present State of public expenditure on education in india is not enough because of the following reasons:**

* The Education Policy of 1968, based on the recommendations of the Kothari commission (1964-66), decided that Indian public expenditure on education must be 6% of gross domestic product (GDP). This goal was reaffirmed in the New Education Policy of 1986 and its revision in 1992, with a suggestion that every attempt must be made to go beyond 6%. **There has been no comprehensive education policy articulated since then**
* India has never reached even near this goal. **The closest it has come was in 2001, when this number hit 4.4%.**
* **When India is compared with**the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries as a group and with Brazil. **educational attainment on all dimensions of these countries are better off than India**, e.g. on school completion rates, learning levels, gender equity and inclusion.
	+ **As against the 3.8% number of India, the public expenditure on education in the OECD is 5.4% and in Brazil 5.8%.**
	+ This large difference is not particular to the current period, but seems to stretch across decades. In reality, this headline number vastly understates India’s shortfall.
* **Investment issues:**
	+ India is way short of its actual need of (e.g.) secondary schools, colleges and teachers.
	+ **There are some critical parts of the education system where we have hardly invested, most notably in teacher education, physical & social sciences, humanities and vocational education**.
	+ In this investment and build-up phase, India needs more money than countries that are done with the build-up, but India is significantly short of them.
	+ This large cumulative investment gap stunts the system and its capacity structurally, i.e**. this is a structural investment gap.**
* Underfunding:
	+ **Even on teachers, many states underfund the actual system requirement, by not appointing teachers and by hiring teachers at much lower salaries with short-term contracts.**
	+ Almost every expenditure head is ludicrously underfunded, e.g. school budgets for teaching-learning material, training for teachers and principals,research in colleges and universities.
	+ each child is supposed to get a nutritious mid-day meal at school for Rs.3.4. **And this number has hardly been revised in the face of soaring food inflation.**
	+ This **operational funding gap makes ineffective**, whatever we have built structurally, and eventually erodes it.
* **Lack of infrastructure:**
	+ cannot ensure quality without reasonably good infrastructure,
	+ Schools with only girl students are more likely to be deficient in basic facilities, including toilets and fans in classrooms, and teaching aids.
	+ sufficient numbers of trained and adequately compensated teachers, other amenities and teaching aids, including access to new technologies that are becoming an essential part of contemporary life.
* **Demography problem:**
	+ the proportion of population that the education system has to serve is in the age group of 6 to 21. This number is about 29% for India, 18% for OECD and 23% for Brazil.
	+ With that high a proportion of the population to be educated India needs proportionately more money.
	+ India cannot escape this basic capacity gap.
* **Primordial differences:**
	+ The failure of the Indian state more than six decades after Independence to provide universal access to quality schooling and to **ensure equal access to higher education among all socio-economic groups and across gender and region must surely rank among the more dismal and significant failures of the development project in the country.**
	+ **institutions in backward areas and in educationally backward States tend to be both underfunded and of poorer quality** than institutions in metros or in more educationally developed States.
	+ **Rural schools are often worse than urban schools** and schools catering to elite or middle-class children tend to be better than schools for the urban poor serving slum children or rural schools serving the children of agricultural labourers.
	+ **Schools with dominantly upper-caste children also tend to provide better services**than schools mostly catering to Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe or Muslim children.
* **Literacy problem:**
	+ The low spending on education is clearly reflected in India’s low literacy rate in India.
	+ The literacy rate has steadily improved, but too many people are still illiterate

It’s clear that India needs sustained public spending much in excess of what we have done, probably way over 6% of GDP.

Despite less spending on education Indian governments have made many efforts to ensure quality and access of education to everyone through the following:

* Focus on Universal primary education according to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
* higher education funding with scholarships
* implementing Right to Education act
* Nai Manzil Scheme is an integrated Education and Livelihood Initiative for the Minority Communities. The scheme aims to benefit the minority youths who are school-dropouts or educated in the community education institutions like Madrasas, by providing them an integral input of formal education (up till Class VIII or X) and skill training along with certification
* Mid day meal schemes
* Saakshar Bharat

**What needs to be done ?**

* Improve India’s poor tax-to-GDP ratio, which stands at about 18%, compared to about 35% for OECD and for Brazil.
* **Emulating success of states:**
	+ Thus **Kerala,** which is generally acknowledged to have a good government schooling system, has **one of the highest per capita spending values**.
	+ The highest was found in Himachal Pradesh, which is one of the great recent success stories of school education; it has achieved universal and good-quality school education despite being a relatively less wealthy State .
	+ to ensure quality, raising the level of public expenditure in education is absolutely essential.
* Since the government is expected to **focus on skill development**, the challenge is to improve the education infrastructure and monitor outcomes. While we have witnessed some success stories from states in terms of outcomes in primary education, there is still a long way to go.

*Topic: Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure*

[**2) Briefly discuss the history of the Supreme Court’s decision in the *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India case* (1994). In your opinion, how should the President handle matters related to Article 356 of the Indian Constitution? Critically comment. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/13/2-briefly-discuss-history-supreme-courts-decision-s-r-bommai-v-union-india-case-1994-opinion-president-handle-matters-related-article-356/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/the-road-map-after-dehradun/article8592215.ece)

**History of S.R.Bommai vs Union of India case (1994):-**

* The Karnataka government of Bommai had elapsed when large-scale defections from the Janata Party seemed to have cost him his majority. The Governor of the day promptly reported a breakdown of the constitutional machinery in the State without even considering a floor test to the President of India. And he recommended President’s Rule which President accepted that led to the dismissal of Bommai’s government
* Bommai challenged the proclamation in the Supreme Court where, after nearly five years of his dismissal gave the famous Bommai judgement.
* The Supreme Court came down heavily on the misuse of Article 356 to impose Central rule on States.
* It made clear that Article 356 gave the President conditioned, **not absolute power, that the Supreme Court could review the materials**, i.e. the facts and the reasoning behind the cabinet’s advice, and if found to be improper or mala fide, the court would provide remedy.
* **It also drew a distinction between the breakdown of constitutional as different from administrative machinery**.
* **It made the test of majority strength in the Assembly by a clear vote in the Assembly the rule.**
* Presidents of the day invoked Article 356 not less than 90 times before Bommai in most cases with doubtful constitutional validity. Bommai changed all that.
* **Assessments by Governors of a Chief Minister’s majority were disbarred. The temptation of the Centre using its appointee in the Raj Bhavan to undo a State government of another political hue was put on hold.**

**How should president handle matters ?**

* Without prejudice to the constitutional voltage of cabinet advice, if the President receives a palpably vulnerable or politically coloured recommendation, **he must return it to the cabinet for reconsideration**.
	+ In the past instances of Uttarpradesh and Bihar President Narayanan cited Bommai in support of his decision .Narayanan’s returning of President’s Rule recommendations upheld federalism and the democratic rights of elected governments.
* during the interregnum, **consult the Attorney General and also senior counsel**.
* What the President can do if the cabinet reiterates the advice depends on the weakness of the recommendation and the strength of his conviction and, above all, on the President’s stature. **The chances are that the cabinet will not treat a presidential misgiving lightly**.

*Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Education, Human Resources.*

[**3) Direct intervention in schools by ensuring that children have access to safe, hygienic and regularly maintained toilets is said to increase their attendance and engagement. How it can be done? What are other benefits of such interventions? Discuss. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/13/3-direct-intervention-schools-ensuring-children-access-safe-hygienic-regularly-maintained-toilets-said-increase-attendance-engagement-can-done/)

[Business Standard](http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/achal-agarwal-children-can-move-the-needle-on-sanitation-116051201265_1.html)

**How to increase direct intervention in schools and the benefits there of:**

* Globally, 2.5 billion people do not have access to proper sanitation. Just provision of basic sanitation **affects people’s dignity** and **reduces the spread of life-threatening diseases that can be fatal to children**and their families.
	+ Governmental bodies and world leaders have increasingly called attention to the sanitation crisis by organising events such as World Toilet Day and more recently, by including “access to water and sanitation for all” in the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals.
	+ In India, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has galvanised strong support from all stakeholders. the construction of 10 million new toilets, with toilet facilities in 90 per cent of schools in one year is a right step in this direction
	+ Access to safe and hygienic toilets can increase their attendance by up to 11 per cent.
	+ **There is also enough evidence that inculcating toilet habits in children translates into toilet habits for the entire family**, thus helping reduce the incidence of open defecation in communities.
* Making local bodies accountable:
	+ The panchayats have to ensure the schools run properly along with checking teacher attendance.
	+ Financial devolution of powers to panchayats will help in taking care of school infrastructure at the local level itself
* Parents need to be made aware of the importance of education rather than making them child labourers.Programmes like Dhanalakshmi can ensure this happening.
* District administration can actively have sudden visits and test the quality of the schools.
* Because of all these the basic problem of quality in Indian education system can be checked from the elementary level itself along with a sense of life and dignity.

**Problems arising :**

* However, reports suggest that four out of every 10 of the school toilets in India are non-usable or dysfunctional due to lack of regular maintenance. **In rural India, one out of every two toilets in schools is unusable, leading to continued open defecation**. India reports the highest number of diarrhoea deaths among children under five, open defecation being the main reason.
* Panchayats don’t have necessary finances
* Corruption in implementing government programmes
* Illiteracy is very high.

**What is needed ?**

* **identifying specific issues school by school, engaging key influencers and school authorities**, deploying resources for specific repairs or renovation and setting up hygiene clubs to inculcate good toilet habits among children.
* industry needs to complement the government’s focus on building new toilets with sustainable interventions in areas of repair, maintenance, education and change of behaviour.
* **sanitation experts and non-profit organisations, we are also partnering with sanitation social entrepreneurs Svadha and eKutir in Odisha, to build a market-driven sanitation model.**

*Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations.*

[**2) How should Sri Lanka prevent the resurgence of political violence after the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam’s (LTTE) defeat? What’s India’s role in it? Discuss. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/14/2-sri-lanka-prevent-resurgence-political-violence-liberation-tigers-tamil-eelams-ltte-defeat-whats-indias-role-discuss/)

[EPW](http://www.epw.in/journal/2016/20/commentary/preventing-post-ltte-violence-sri-lanka.html)

**What should Srilanka do to prevent resurgence of political violence?**

* **Core grievances need to be identified** and solutions to them need to be proposed via independent commissions of inquiry that included persons who were able to empathise with the concerns of insurgents, without justifying their actions.
* **addressing the root causes of the ethnic conflict** via meetings some of the aggrieved population’s concerns helps in ensuring security and stability.
* **Understand the causes for the rise of Tamil militancy in the first place** .
* institutional, administrative and legislative measures need to be taken in order to prevent any reoccurrence of such concerns in the future
* **systematic attempt to address Tamil grievances**
* **efforts similar to**The United Front’s attempt to win over the hearts and minds of Tamil youth led by Jaffna Mayor Alfred Durriapah using state patronage for **job creation and economic advancement** need to be done.
* **Giving autonomy and providing devolution of powers to the tamil dominant region** by implementation of the 13th Amendment in letter and spirit
* **bring about social harmony between Sinhalese, Tamils and other** religious minorities to ensure that protests motivated by religion do not hurt the nation.
* **Rehabilitation and livelihood for war displaced people**
* Infrastructure development in these regions.
* **No coercion**-the heavy handedness of the government drove many Tamil youth into the hands of the terrorist groups. This resulted in the drying up of support for the security forces
* **Srilankan government needs to modify and expand its current education** system use of language which was the boundary between Sinhalese and Tamils as a uniting factor for the Srilankan people.
* Promoting textile industry as textile is the largest export of the country will create employment .

**What can be India’s role?**

* India ‘s role can be predominantly in the **development projects.**
	+ The **Indian Housing Project** is a housing reconstruction project funded by the Government of India and implemented through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL).
	+ The specific action of this project will lead to direct housing provision through the reconstruction and repair of 43,000 houses.
	+ UN-Habitat is responsible for supporting the reconstruction or repair of 16,800 houses in the districts of Jaffna, Killinochchi and Mullaitivu
* **Lines of credit:**
	+ In the recent past three lines of credit were extended to Sri Lanka: US$ 100 million for capital goods, consumer durables, consultancy services and food items, US$ 31 million for supply of 300,000 MT of wheat and US$ 150 million for purchase of petroleum products.
	+ All of these lines of credit have been fully utilized. Another line of credit of US$ 100 million is now being made available for rehabilitation of the Colombo-Matara railway.
* The projects under consideration are: Construction of a 150-bed hospital at Dickoya, upgradation of the hospital at Trincomalee and a US$ 7.5 million grant for setting up a Cancer Hospital in Colombo.
* **Education Projects**:
	+ Upgradation of the educational infrastructure of the schools in the Central province including teachers’ training, setting up of 10 computer labs, setting up of 20 e-libraries (Nenasalas), Mahatma Gandhi scholarship scheme for +2 students and setting up of a vocational training centre in Puttalam.
	+ India also contributes to the Ceylon Workers Education Trust that gives scholarships to the children of estate workers.
* India is also engaged in the reconstruction of the Northern Railway Line in the country’s war-ravaged north.

India in March 2016 signed an agreement with Sri Lanka to provide over USD 400 million to finance three water supply projects in the country that would benefit at least one million consumers.

*Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health*

[**3) What are the key features of the draft National Health Policy 2015? Do you think it should be finalized and tabled in Parliament?  Comment. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/14/3-key-features-draft-national-health-policy-2015-think-finalized-tabled-parliament-comment/)

[EPW](http://www.epw.in/journal/2016/20/commentary/niti-aayog-even-thinking-about-health.html)

**Key features of draft National Health Policy 2015:-**

* The policy is a first step in achieving universal health coverage by advocatinghealth as a fundamental right, whose “denial will be justiciable”.

**Features:**

(i) That 2.5% of the gross domestic product (GDP) as **public health spending should be reached by 2020,**of which 70% should be on primary healthcare.

(ii) That the **per capita public spending on healthcare** should be ₹3,800 at 2015 prices.

(iii) The **centre would contribute 40% of the resources** instead of its present 20% share and for this would raise resources through health cess and cess on health degrading goods like tobacco, alcohol, etc.

(iv) That **the states would have to commit 8% of their total budget for health**.

(v) **That free drugs and diagnostics in all public health facilities would be available.**

(vi) **That all district hospitals would be converted into medical colleges.**

(vii) That all healthcare facilities—infrastructure and human resources—would be as per the Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS) norms.

(viii) That financing all the above would be largely through a tax-based mechanism.

As per the draft document, government plans to rely mostly on **general taxation for financing health care expenditure.**With the projection of a promising economic growth, the fiscal capacity to provide this level of financing should become available.

The government is also keen to explore the creation of a **health cess** on the lines of education cess for raising money needed to fund the expenditure it would entail. Other than general taxation, this cess could mobilize contributions from specific commodity taxes such as the **taxes on tobacco, and alcohol,**from specific industries and innovative forms of resource mobilization.

While there is an intent to increase spend on health care, the draft policy also stresses on the role of private sector. **While the public sector is to focus on preventive and secondary care services, the document recommends contracting out services like ambulatory care, imaging and diagnostics, tertiary care down to non-medical services such as catering and laundry to the private sector.**

**Concerns:**

* even this increase in allocation falls short of the requirement to set right the dysfunctional health-care services in the country. Citing the health-care system’s low absorption capacity and inefficient utilisation of funding as an alibi for not raising the spending to 3 per cent of GDP is nothing but a specious argument. Insufficient funding over the years combined with other faulty practices have led to a **dysfunctional health-care system in the country.**
* The national programmes provide universal coverage only with respect to certain interventions such as maternal ailments, that account for**less than 10 per cent of all mortalities.**
* Over 75 per cent of the communicable diseases are outside their purview and only a limited number of non-communicable diseases are covered.
* It is, therefore, crucial for the Union government to undertake proactive measures to upgrade the **health-care services of poorly performing States such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.**
* As it stands, health will be recognised as a fundamental right through a National Health Rights Act only when three or more States “request” it. Since health is a State subject, adoption by the respective States will be voluntary.
* Though a different approach has been taken to improve adoption and implementation by States, the very objective of universal health coverage that hinges on portability will be defeated in the absence of **uniform adoption across India.**
* To meet the expenses, the policy draft wants to introduce a **complex system that relies largely on tax collection**but also proposes tapping the services of not-for-profit ventures and trusts.
* An assortment of secondary and tertiary services are proposed to be bought by the government from public and private healthcare facilities — though it is unclear how this differs from the present system of ’empanelled’ private hospitals.
	+ **This system has not proved very effective for various reasons, including delayed and inadequate reimbursement of the costs.**Indeed private provision and public financing is everywhere a recipe for disaster, and will serve no interests but that of private healthcare providers.
* The new policy acknowledges that the present concept of primary healthcare covers hardly 20 per cent of the health needs and that heavy out-of-pocket health expenditure is pushing nearly 63 million people into poverty every year.
	+ It has, consequently, done well to broaden the definition of primary healthcare to include more services related to reproductive and child health as well as several infectious and non-communicable diseases.
	+ But although bringing down medical expenses has been listed among the major objectives of the new policy, **it has no ideas on how to do it**.
* It is silent, for example, on regulating the private healthcare sector.
* Though healthcare is a state subject, most states starve it of resources.

*Topic: Judiciary – functioning*

[**2) There has been a growing recognition all over the world that criminal defamation is a powerful tool in the hands of politicians and corporations to stifle and suffocate inconvenient speech. But in India, constitutionality of criminal defamation is upheld by the highest court itself. Critically discuss the justifications given to keep this provision intact in statute book. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/16/2-growing-recognition-world-criminal-defamation-powerful-tool-hands-politicians-corporations-stifle-suffocate-inconvenient-speech/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/a-blow-against-free-speech/article8604914.ece)

**Background:**

* British imported their idea of criminal libel into the newly-minted Indian Penal Code (IPC).
* Section 499 of the IPC criminalised intentionally defamatory statements. True statements were not exempted, unless they also happened to be made for the “public good”.

**Justifications in favour of keeping this provision in the statute book are:**

* Recently the Indian Supreme Court dismissed a petition challenging the constitutionality of Section 499 of the IPC .The court kept the 1860 provision, with its 17th century roots, entirely intact
* First, it held that the **right to “reputation” was protected under Article 21 of the Constitution which guarantees “life and personal liberty”.**Now, Article 21 only protects the individual’s life and liberty against interference by the state. **the Supreme Court declared that the right to free speech under Article 19(1)(a) had to be “balanced” against the right to “reputation” under Article 21.**
* It held that **criminal defamation law protected the feeling of fraternity — or solidarity — between members of a society.**

**Justifications to abolish it:**

* In the 400 years after the origin of criminal defamation in England, and the world has moved on. There are no more duels. **The United Kingdom abolished criminal defamation altogether.**
* More recently, **the Constitutional Court of Zimbabwe struck it down as an unconstitutional restriction upon the freedom of speech**.
* There has been a **growing recognition all over the world that criminal defamation is a powerful tool in the hands of politicians** and corporations to stifle and suffocate inconvenient speech.
* The Indian Supreme court simply asserted that since reputation could not be “crucified” at the altar of free speech, criminal defamation was constitutional which is not a proper explanation.
	+ to elevate “reputation” to the level of a fundamental right, and second, to have it prevail over free speech — **have no basis in either the text or the structure of the Constitution.**
	+ it made no mention of the fact that Section 499 does not allow for “honest mistake” as a defence.
* **Article 21 which** is a shield to protect the individual against State persecution or indifference, is used as a sword to cut down the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression because of this provision.
	+ new doctrine of “death by Article 21” emerged as a serious threat to the future of constitutional rights.
	+ **Article 21 has now become so vast, that if its use as a sword becomes a regular feature, then it will likely soon swallow up the rest of the fundamental rights chapter.**
* **“Constitutional fraternity” is not a part of Article 19(2) of the Constitution,** which specifically limits the circumstances under which the state can restrict speech to eight enumerated categories.
	+ **It is also nowhere in the fundamental rights chapter of the Constitution**, so the question of “balancing” free speech against constitutional fraternity does not arise.

*Topic: Parliament and State Legislatures – structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.*

[**3) In the light of recent controversies, discuss if provision of Article 110(3) of the Indian Constitution needs insertion of any check and balances. Also examine the Supreme Court’s opinion on this Article. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/16/3-light-recent-controversies-discuss-provision-article-1103-indian-constitution-needs-insertion-check-balances-also-examine-supreme-courts-opinion/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/the-power-to-certify/article8604916.ece)

**Background:**

* Recently, the Aadhaar Bill and the Finance Bill were passed as Money Bills, though they may not have met the strict criteria laid out in the Constitution.
* This meant that the Rajya Sabha had only a recommendatory role while discussing these Bills.
* Article 110(3) states that If any question arises whether a Bill is a Money Bill or not, the decision of the Speaker of the House of the People thereon shall be final
* There was a similar case decided in 2014. **The Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly passed a Bill to amend the Uttar Pradesh Lokayukta and Up-Lokayuktas Act as a Money Bill** and did not send this to the Legislative Council. the Supreme Court decided that the decision of the Speaker “that the Bill in question was a Money Bill is final and the said decision cannot be disputed.

**Yes,checks and balances are needed:**

* There are several prior cases in which the Supreme Court has examined the decision of the Speaker or the legislature.
* **One set of cases pertains to the anti-defection law** as laid down in the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution.Similar wordings are present even in Art 110(3)
* The Constitution has a system of checks and balances, which includes the Rajya Sabha as a check on the Lok Sabha. While the Speaker has the power to determine whether a Bill fulfils the requirements of a Money Bill, there has to be a check to ensure that this power is not misused.
* The Supreme Court should examine this issue under its power of judicial review under the principles laid out in the*Kihoto Hollohan* and *Raja Ram Pal*
* **Article 122 provides immunity against challenges to proceedings on the grounds of procedural irregularities.A wrong decision taken under article 110(3) is not a procedural irregularity and hence does not grant any immunity.**

**No,checks and balances are not required:**

* The **sole discretion is being used by the ruling parties to whittle away the legislative powers of Rajya sabha** and make it a redundant legislative house by sending crucial bills like money bills as Rajya sabha doesn’t have the power over those bills.
	+ In the recent controversy of considering aadhar bill as money bill despite the bill not meting the criteria set to be for a money bill shows the provision is being misused.
* Neither the constitution nor the house rules lay down the procedure with regard to certifying the money bill making speakers decision discretionary.
* Rajya sabha can’t question as of now the decision of the speaker even when they have a strong case for contesting speakers decision.
* **House of commons in Britain appoint 2 senior members who must be consulted before speaker gives certificate that the bill is a money bill but the ultimate decision is with the speaker itself.**
* Similarly in India a mechanism can be developed where the committee of the secretaries of both the houses ay examine in detail the given bill and submit their views to the speaker before speaker’s decision.

*Topic: Transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.*

[**4) In an effort to amend RTI, a key allegation made in the Parliament is that the RTI is being widely misused, especially to blackmail public functionaries. It is also argued that government servants are unable to take decisions objectively for fear of the RTI. Are these arguments valid? If valid, should these arguments be used to amend the RTI law? Critically comment. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/16/4-effort-amend-rti-key-allegation-made-parliament-rti-widely-misused-especially-blackmail-public-functionaries-also-argued-government-servants/)

[The Indian Express](http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/rti-right-to-information-act-amendments-proposal-rajya-sabha-2802482/)

**Yes,the allegations are valid:**

* **large number of frivolous and vexatious RTI applications are being filed** resulting in a negative impact on the efficiency of the government.
* Himachal Pradesh High Court in 2015 gave a stay on the state information commission’s order mandating disclosure of details ofPriyanka Gandhi Vadra’s property acquisition in the state.
	+ The answer seeker is exercising his right under the RTI Act which in its current form does not stop one from making an RTI query **even if he could have gotten the same information by doing some legwork**

**No it is not valid:**

* These allegations are however, are not backed by data or evidence.
* One of the MPs who raised these issues in the Rajya Sabha has reportedly admitted that **his statements were based on anecdotal evidence drawn from some isolated cases**
* As part of the assessments, **20,000 RTI applications filed to different public authorities in the country were collected**.
	+ **Less than 1 per cent of the RTI applications analysed pointed towards the misuse of the law in terms of frivolous or vexatious information requests**.
	+ The majority of applicants sought basic information about decisions and action taken by the government, norms related to the functioning of public authorities and the use of public resources.
	+ **In fact, the studies showed that close to 70 per cent of the RTI applications sought information that should either have been made public proactively** or communicated to the applicant without needing to file an RTI application.
	+ The analysis also revealed that **a little over 1 per cent applications were voluminous, in terms of requiring a lot of information, which could divert time of public servants**.
	+ Again, a majority of the voluminous applications were asking for information that should have been disclosed proactively.
* In any case, how can objective government information, obtained under the RTI, be used to blackmail or harass anyone. **On the other hand, if there is some wrongdoing, the RTI applicant would be rendering a service to the society by exposing it.**
* The **assertion that the RTI can be used to compromise national security is totally unfounded.** **Section 8 of the RTI Act spells out the restrictions to peoples’ right to information**.

**Yes RTI act needs to be amended:**

* There is no reason why the RTI Act, 2005 should allow untrammeled access to information from the comfort of the home of the querist
* provision of asking for a motive or reason to be asked to the RTI applicants is needed to check frivolous applications
* **Scrutiny of RTI applications:**
	+ **There are instances where RTI information was sought on the same subject pertaining to particular ration card shop as many as 10 times**.
	+ Even information of people was demanded. There is definitely third party interest involved in such applications.**But providing information can’t be denied as activists are smart enough to turn it into a public cause**
* If the authority failed to provide information to the applicant, he can move to first appellate authority and second subsequently. **The second authority – state information commissioner – can only levy fine on the information officers, but can’t force them to provide information** to the applicant. Of course, the applicants can then knock judiciary’s doors as the last resort which is already burdened.
* All information commissioners are selected without by any process and most have no predilection for transparency.
* Besides awareness, lack of uniform rules across India that aid further implementation and an overhaul of the responsibility of the first appellate authority, are some others which needed to be looked into.

**No Amendments are not needed:-**

* There is no need to amend the Right to Information Act as the law is perfect according to experts.**They appealed to public authorities to set their internal machineries right so that more information is in public domain and there is no need for RTI pleas.**

**What should be done to strengthen RTI?**

* As per the findings, only 36 per cent in rural and 38 per cent urban areas, have heard of the Act.
* **The report suggested that fictionalise success stories should be popularised and making RTI mandatory in school curriculum.**
* **It also stated that 45% public information officers did not received any training**, the first appellate authority stage needed an overhaul of sorts.

It recommends that the problems can be solved without curbing rights of the citizens. **This is possible by reviewing every three months the kind of information people need and putting it up on website**.

*Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations.*

[**2) Analyse why stronger ties between Iran and India is in their mutual interest. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/19/2-analyse-stronger-ties-iran-india-mutual-interest/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/rebooting-ties-with-iran/article8617782.ece)

**Reasons:-**

**Energy:**

* India can decrease the dependence on Saudi for oil especially in the light of slumping oil prices and Iran oil is comparatively cheap
* **IRAN:**
	+ Iran has the world’s second-largest reserves of natural gas, yet it is not a major exporter.
	+ Iran has several challenges to overcome before it can become an energy supplier to Europe and Asia**. For one thing, Iran’s energy infrastructure – long neglected as a result of Western sanctions** – requires major upgrades to make it capable of sustained energy exports.
	+ This will require massive foreign investment and India can tremendously help here.

**Chabahar port:**

* Chabahar port, which is a symbol of Indo-Iran economic and strategic cooperation, will give **India access to Afghanistan, bypassing Pakistan**
* Chabahar port is also linked to India’s receiving natural gas imports from Iran, as the port would also serve as **the point of origin for the proposed Iran-Oman-India pipeline**.
	+ India’s strategic thinkers also view the port as a strategic counterweight to China’s pursuit of a port in Pakistan’s Gwadar.
* For India it will give access to the oil and gas resources in Iran and the Central Asian states.
* The Chabahar port project is Iran’s chance to end its US-sponsored economic isolation and benefit from the resurgent Indian economy. **Along with Bandar Abbas, Chabahar is the Iranian entrepot on the North-South corridor.**
* Apparently **a tripartite agreement was reached between Iran, Afghanistan and India** on developing two berths at Chabahar and giving India a ten-year lease, for which it offered a $150 million loan. India separately offered to supply rail-lines worth $400 million to create rail connectivity between Chabahar-Zahedan-Mashhad.

**Role in Afghanistan:**

* **Iran-Afghan railway link**:
	+ India’s involvement in the development of the port of Chabahar is even more significant when you consider that India is currently involved in constructing a 560 mile long railway line linking the **Iranian port with the iron ore mines in Hajigak in southern Afghanistan.**This endevour is linked to a larger geopolitical and economic strategy.
	+ The railway link when completed will potentially afford India some strategic benefits including –
		- Increasing India’s position and leverage in Afghanistan and the central Asian region. This affords India an easier connection to Afghanistan after avoiding Pakistani blockages.
		- Apart from the impact on security and regional politics this more importantly implies that Indian companies will have opportunities to start exploration over Afghanistan’s mineral wealth which is estimated to be close to $3 trillion. (This alone is over double the size of India’s economy.)
	+ Both Iran and India share the goal of a stable government in Kabul free of the Taliban’s influence and not revert to the Taliban-controlled Pakistani client state that it was in the 1990s. To that end, India and Iran must engage each other to strengthen the hand of the government in Kabul.

**Industries:-**

* Iran believes that India fulfils a substantial part of Iran’s needs. For example, India is very capable in steel, in aluminium, in mines and metals, railroads, software, IT, technology and so on. There is a lot of demand in these sectors in Iran.
* **One of the biggest advantages in recent times is that Indians are offering a credit line to the Iranians.**That’s a very substantial element in the hands of the Indians to offer for different projects to Iranians and this credit, which is in rupees, is beneficial to Indians.According to the financial structure, Indian companies will benefit from it, the rupee will benefit from it.
* India was waving around $20 billion of investment in various sectors.
* India is in discussions with Iran to revive the latter’s **tea industry**, which saw a major decline in the recent past, it may open up a plethora of opportunities for the Indian tea companies to seek joint ventures in Iran.
	+ Iran has approached India to modernise its tea industry in Lahijan, the area bordering the Caspian Sea.
* **Indian fertiliser companies** have shortlisted a subsidiary of  **Iran**’s **Bank Pasargad**for jointly setting up a urea manufacturing plant at  **Chahbahar** in Iran.The plant proposed to use cheap gas supplied by Iran to manufacture crop nutrients for export to India.
	+ It’s cheaper to import urea from Iran than manufacturing it locally in India.India ‘makes’ Urea at $375 when it can very well ‘buy’ at $300 from Iran.

**Geopolitical:**

* Iran would act as a gateway to Central Asia
* The Iran visit by the PM is an opportunity to restore equilibrium in India’s foreign policy, which, of late, was seen to be skewed towards Israel and Saudi Arabia.
* After Sanctions the significance of Iran geopolitically has increased.
* In fact, only the Iran route offers India both an alternative to unresolved conflict and tension with Pakistan as well as the opportunity to overcome India’s geographic isolation from energy-rich Central Asian region.
* Central Asia is going to be the scene of renewed great power rivalry, and India must act, not as a mere spectator, but as a leading player.
* Notwithstanding Iran’s growing bonhomie with Pakistan and China, India must stay in close contact with Iran and consciously and consistently pursue good diplomatic and economic relations with it.

**Terrorism:**

* Globally, New Delhi and Tehran are on the same page in their opposition towards groups like al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.
* Increasing hold of ISIS  is a threat to Iran and with India effective efforts against terrorism India can be a attractive partner

Culture:

* India’s desire to reclaim for India the influence and cultural relations it once enjoyed with the countries of Central Asia before the dawn of colonialism can only be reasonably realized through Iran
* India has the 2nd largest population of Shiias in the world after Iran some of whom probably also have ancestral ties to Iran. This ties back to a complex political situation in India. Religion and national allegiances play a large part in Indian politics and this is magnified with the upcoming elections.
* According to a BBCWorld Service Poll conducted at the end of 2005, 71% of Iranians viewed India’s influence positively, with 21% viewing it negatively, the most favourable rating of India for any country in the world.

**Other projects:**

* India has been vigorously pursuing the **Iran–Pakistan–India (IPI) gas pipeline** project for the last decade. The operation of the IPI project would be reinforced by the trilateral “Framework Agreement,” in which the three governments would be committed to the provisions of the Energy Charter Treaty
* With the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline still stuck and the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipelineyet to take off,India is very keen to kick-start an undersea pipeline project that would bring Iranian gas to India via the Arabian Sea bypassing Pakistan.
	+ This is  a great opportunity for India to transport natural gas from Iran to Porbandar port in Gujarat
* **Zaranj-Delaram Highway** is being built with financial support from India.
* A strategic partnership between **India, Iran and Russia** is intended to establish a multi-modal transport link connecting Mumbai with St Petersburg, providing Europe and the former Soviet republics of Central Asia access to Asia and vice versa.
* also provide connectivity to Central Asia and Europe, via the International North South Transport Corridor(INSTC), which is estimated to be 40 percent shorter and 30 percent less expensive than trade via the Red Sea-Suez Canal-Mediterranean route.

*Topicowers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.*

[**3) Even though the Election Commission has succeeded in curbing many malpractices during elections, it has failed to curb the flow of cash in election campaigns. Why it’s a challenge and how it this malpractice can be curbed? Comment. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/19/3-even-though-election-commission-succeeded-curbing-many-malpractices-elections-failed-curb-flow-cash-election-campaigns-challenge-m/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/tamil-nadus-direct-cash-transfers/article8617781.ece)

**Background:**

The Election Commission postponed voting in two Assembly constituencies in Tamil Nadu where there were allegations of rampant voter bribery and distribution of cash and gifts over the last month, and ordered an inquiry.

But given the situation on the ground,deferring the election in Aravakurichi and Thanjavur by a week is a grossly inadequate response.

**Why is it a challenge?**

* There is enough reason to believe that the **cash-for-votes phenomenon has taken deep roots in all constituencies.**
* **deferment means little in** the long run if recovery of cash is not followed up with the implementation of strategies to stamp out this perversion.
* The **expenditure spent by the political parties is not a transparent information** given to the Election Commission (EC) because of the entire amount spent by the parties only 20% of the expenditure is recorded and submitted to the EC and no one is aware about the rest 80% of the money spent in times of elections.
* **EC is not able to locate the actual source of this illegal** That`sthe reason why the EC of India has failed to curb the flow of illegal money during elections.
* Campaign finance remains anachronistically opaque, and the distortions include not just “money power” at election time**, but also corruption in administration and in, say, the use of local area development funds**
* While concerted efforts by the EC have dampened a candidate’s ability to spend freely, **a limited focus on candidates without concurrent efforts to limit party expenditure is re-channelling campaign finance through the coffers of political parties and**, in effect, leaving intact the primary source of exorbitant spending
	+ The **Election Commission classifies lawful campaign spending as either candidate or party expenditure.** While candidate expenditure is capped at ₹70 lakh in most parliamentary constituencies, party expenditure remains unconstrained
	+ The Commission operates with a procedural distinction between candidate and general party canvassing. For instance, even though a candidate may feature prominently on the dais at a public rally, as long as his or her name, constituency and photograph are not mentioned or displayed, **the political party absorbs the entire cost of the event**
* While video surveillance prevents a gross under-declaration of expenses incurred through public rallies,**it leaves quotidian aspects of campaign finance easily manipulated**. For example, spending often begins well before filing nomination papers, which is when the Commission officially begins tallying candidate expenditure
* **Then there’s the matter of print advertisements.** Batches printed in the tens of thousands or even lakhs are formally declared as 1,000 or even 500. sometimes even disassembling side-door panels, pockets are often ignored, enabling a single individual to smuggle up to ₹4 lakh in 1,000-rupee notes.
* **Candidates remain one step ahead of the Commission by exploiting lapses in finance regulation**. The recent election witnessed an unprecedented level of digital canvassing that go beyond the purview of regulation.Assocham estimates that expenditure on digital media may have exceeded ₹500 crore in the recent election.
* **Expenditure that the Election Commission thinks is electoral expenditure is actually a tiny fraction of the total election expenditure.** Publicity material, pamphlets, leaflets now constitute a tiny fraction of the expenditure of parties.”
* **Rural constituencies,** which are vast have little EC staff to monitor spend. Also since a team is managing these activities, in a ‘supporters’ stronghold, nothing much comes to the EC’s notice. Out of a total of 11 million people working in election management, less than 10 cent check on spend.
* **Nothing can be done in cases where money moves through couriers.** Experts point out that since a majority of this money is black; the movement is through the hawala channel and not accounted for in the banks. As per industry insiders, angadias (a long existent, unofficial courier channel) from Delhi and Mumbai are charging Rs 3 per Rs 1000 transfer to state capitals and Rs 5 per Rs 1000 transfer to district centres. The usual rate is Rs 1-1.50 per Rs 1000 transfer. Everyday crores worth of cash is being routed through the hawala channel.
* **Despite the fact that the EC has set up monitoring cells, not a single candidate has been disqualified on grounds of excessive spending**. This creates a culture of complacency where everyone knows that nothing will happen.

**What needs to be done?**

* The EC cannot wage this battle alone efforts to curb the flow of cash in election campaigns need to be embedded in a wider cleaning up of the account books of political parties
* **Strict media supervision:**
	+ During election season, media outlets often carry reports of roving flying squads intercepting troves of cash, liquor and gift-for-vote commodities, and travellers routinely encounter mobile checkpoints conducting impromptu stop-and-search procedures along national highways.
* **Election commission role:**
	+ Monitor discrepancies between declared and actual expenses, the EC has to maintain a near ubiquitous presence on the campaign trail and regularly videotapes public rallies and processions.
	+ EC has set up flying squads, risk surveillance teams, video surveillance teams, parallel accounting teams to monitor spending and movement of money. The latest initiative by the EC is that of setting up of a Multi Departmental Committee on election intelligence involving the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, the Coast Guard, and the Financial Intelligence Unit among other. This has to be strengthened.
* To stop the flow of illegal money it is necessary for the **government to provide election funds to the parties in times of election**
	+ Such that it can provide at a maximum of 100/Voter such that the entire expenditure spent by the party will be Rs.5500 Crore to the maximum which is much lesser than the expenditure spent when there is crony-capitalism present in the funding.

*Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations.*

[**4) In the light of changing geostrategic dynamics in the Himalayan region, it is said that India would do well to add economics and commerce to its strategic vision of the Himalayan region and change its Himalayan Doctrine. Discuss why. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/19/4-light-changing-geostrategic-dynamics-himalayan-region-said-india-well-add-economics-commerce-strategic-vision-himalayan-region-change/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/north-by-northeast/article8617784.ece)

**Background:-**

* The Himalayan doctrine of India has been focussing mainly on geopolitical interests .However with the changing dynamics of the relations of the neighbours India needs to increase its economics and commerce relations with these countries.
* Recently Nepal signed a free trade agreement with China and committed Nepal to participating actively in China’s ‘One Belt, One Road’ initiative
	+ Trade through Tianjin, the port closest to Beijing,  pledged $216 million to build an airport at Pokhara, Nepal’s second largest city,
	+ to build a bridge at Hilsa in the extreme west of the country to connect it by road to Tibet.
	+ Karakoram Highway, China Pakistan economic corridor also show that there is increase in trade connections between the Himalayan nations.

**Why Should India focus on Economy and commerce?**

* Historically, **the Himalayan range was never a barrier to commerce,** with local societies trading through the river valleys cutting into Tibet. Kathmandu Valley was better linked commercially to Lhasa than to the Gangetic plain, and it was the Tibet trade that contributed to the enormous wealth and cultural achievements of the Valley kingdoms.
* Strengthens SAARC and the region which will further increase the role of India in the world.
* Increase the trust of Himalayan nations that India is not just a big brother and they are not the means to counter China.
* Development of these countries can lead to opportunities in Himalayan States and North Eastern States of India as well.
* **Mutual benefit:**
	+ **Bhutan:**
		- India continues to be the largest trade and development partner of Bhutan as over 90 per cent of Bhutan’s trade is with India.
		- The India-Bhutan engagement is multifaceted and covers sectors like hydro power, health, education, human resource development, media, information technology, telecom, etc. India has been helping Bhutan in a big way in generation of hydroelectric power.These are very important for India especially energy .
		- Three major hydroelectric projects have already been commissioned with India’s assistance. These are the Chukha Project (336 MW), the Kurichhu Project (60 MW) and the Tala Project (1020 MW). The fourth and the biggest hydel power project –Punatsangchhu (1200 MW), is also sanctioned.
		- Besides, India is helping Bhutan in developing a knowledge-based economy by way of a Rs. 205 crores ‘Total Solutions Project’ which will provide access to information technology and IT solutions to a significant proportion of Bhutan’s population over the next five years. The project envisages training and establishing ICT enabled schools, computer labs, and computer stations in rural Bhutan.
	+ Can prove that **it is truly democratic** not involving in the internal affairs of the other countries:
		- A turnaround in New Delhi’s Himalayan doctrine would lead to an easier relationship with the sovereign neighbours, **helping their evolution into stable democracies.**
		- **It would also contribute to making India’s own Himalayan hinterland, from the Northeast to Kashmir, more part of the national mainstream**.
	+ India’s strategic interests in the Himalaya include several other elements, from hydroelectricity generation to the need for storage reservoirs in the deep valleys providing water for irrigation, flood control and urban use by the growing Gangetic middle class. All these push it **towards constricting the sovereign manoeuvrability of Nepal and Bhutan**.
	+ **Nepal:**
		- There is no need to fear that China will replace India’s pre-eminent role in Nepal’s economy.
		- For example the Chinese mainland and ports are 3,000 km away, as compared to 1,000 km to Kolkata.
		- Meanwhile, the open Nepal-India border is a prize of shared history to be nurtured by both countries.
		- In sociopolitical terms, Kathmandu’s civil society enjoys a comfort zone with India that the taciturn Chinese state cannot match.
	+ **China:**
		- The Chinese challenge is real, but the ground has shifted with advances in the transport, infrastructure and geopolitics of High Asia, enough to demand a policy departure
		- New Delhi will have to calibrate its position between competing with, engaging, and strategically challenging Beijing.
		- In doing so, India will get the advantages of the planned trans-Himalayan infrastructural connections, which will ultimately help India’s economy link to the Chinese mainland.
		- **Connectivity is what India’s foreign policy establishment has been championing for the** South Asian economies and there is no reason why it should not be extended north by northeast, to Tibet and all the way to the Chinese mainland.
		- Furthermore**, the societal and economic transformations introduced by the trans-Himalayan opening may finally help pry open Beijing’s grip on Tibetan society**, nothing else having worked over six decades of increasing control and demographic inundation.
		- Kathmandu’s main port of call will remain Haldia in West Bengal as of now, and Visakhapatnam and Krishnapatnam in Andhra Pradesh and Mongla and Chittagong in Bangladesh in the future
	+ **Tibet:**
		- The arrival of Qingzang Railway from the Chinese mainland to the Tibetan plateau in 2006 has been the game changer, and the line has already been extended to Shigatse town and is ploughing westward and closer to Nepal’s border points.
		- The railway makes the transfer of goods from the mainland economically feasible .It is set to create new commercial dynamics.
		- Nepal and China have agreed to **complete the Kyerung Highway starting northwest of Kathmandu,** which would allow descent from the Tibetan plateau to the Gangetic plain in less than a day.
		- There is also agreement to build the Kimathanka Highway down the Kosi river valley in eastern Nepal, which would bring the Shigatse/Lhasa railheads close to Bangladeshi and Indian ports.
		- What all this means is that India would do well to add economics and commerce to its strategic vision of the Himalayan region.It can gain economic access to parts which it never contemplated before.

**What needs to be done?**

* The New Delhi establishment has to shake off the inertia in its strategic thinking of the Himalayan range.
	+ It must simultaneously understand the desires of the Himalayan societies and consider the new-found interdependence of the Indian and Chinese economies
	+ consider ways to ensure India’s security beyond the number of boots on the ground along the mountain frontier.
	+ Out-of-the-box statecraft would bring dividends in peace of mind, savings and economic growth.
* **Nepal:**
	+ **Leaving Nepal free to develop its international outreach, as a country that can never afford to go against India’s security interests, would be a great way to begin to define the new doctrine.**
	+ Delhi must first stop treating Nepal as a de-facto protectorate, and help it to complete its transition to full nation-statehood. The first requirement for this is to respect Nepal’s sovereignty, scrupulously respect all treaty obligations and avoid intervening in its internal affairs.

*Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health*

[**2) India’s Red Line campaign to curb over-the-counter use of antibiotics is finding recognition, and could be adopted on a world scale. Discuss the objectives and significance of this campaign. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/20/2-indias-red-line-campaign-curb-counter-use-antibiotics-finding-recognition-adopted-world-scale-discuss-objectives-significance-campaign/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/india-lauded-for-red-line-campaign-on-antibiotics/article8622703.ece)

**Objectives:-**

* India’s Red Line campaign began marking prescription only antibiotics with a red line to curb their irrational use and create awareness on the dangers of taking antibiotics without being prescribed.
* It highlights the **importance of taking antibiotics only when prescribed by a doctor, and the need to finish the course.**
* Other key messages include**: learning how to identify prescription drugs; curb self medication; and become more aware of the dangers of misusing antibiotics.**
* It comes at a time when the consumption of antibiotics in India has increased sharply while the effectiveness of these drugs to treat bacterial infections has been steadily declining.
* In future it can lead to reduction of the following scenarios:
	+ High disease burden
	+ unregulated sales of antibiotics and poor public health infrastructure

**Fact:-**

* A report in the journal *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*, said that in 2010, India consumed 13 billion units of antibiotics, the highest in the world. Between 2005 and 2009, consumption shot up by 40 per cent.

**Significance:-**

* **Common labelling standards** of this type could become a condition of sale of antibiotics around the world,
* Will lead to better awareness
* It is an important step towards sensitising members of the the public as well as pharmacists to make sure antibiotics are not sold without proper prescriptions from qualified doctors.
* **It is a thin red line that Indian consumers will do well to heed while buying antibiotics in future.**
* **To discourage the rampant over the counter sales of antibiotics prevalent in India.**
* Problems like NDM-1 metallo-beta-lactamase, *coli*bacteria resistant to third-generation cephalosporins, antimicrobial resistance would reduce in future.

*Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health*

[**2) Shortage of medical personnel in rural areas is one of the biggest problems faced in India’s health sector. Analyse the causes and strategies needed to address this problem. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/21/2-shortage-medical-personnel-rural-areas-one-biggest-problems-faced-indias-health-sector-analyse-causes-strategies-needed-address-problem/)

[EPW](http://www.epw.in/journal/2016/19/editorials/holistic-prescription.html)

**Facts:**

* overall the doctor–patient ratio in India is 1:1,700 when the World Health Organization calls for a minimum of 1:1,000.
* According to official statistics around 27% of the sanctioned doctors’ posts in primary health centres, 10% of auxiliary nurse midwife posts and 40% of male health worker posts are vacant presently.
* In the case of community health centres, 68% posts for specialist doctors, almost 75% of the sanctioned posts of surgeons, 65% of obstetricians and gynaecologists, 68% of physicians and 63% of paediatricians remain vacant.

**Causes:**

* Medical students and well-qualified medical professionals **remain reluctant to service rural India.**
* In states where the rural posting is made mandatory, **most affluent students seek exemption by paying fines which run into lakhs**. Even when the fines were hiked considerably, the students preferred to pay up rather than go through the rural stint.
* The findings showed that a majority of **the medical students preferred to do postgraduate specialisation instead of opting for practice** immediately after MBBS.
* **Even the students from a rural background wanted an urban posting**. It is attributed to the fact that the medical syllabi is not community-health oriented and is carried out in a tertiary care environment.
* The **suggested solution of opening more medical colleges in rural areas with a rural health needs’ orientation has not paid dividends**, according to health activists.
* **Other reasons are:-**
	+ poor living and working conditions (including security for female doctors/students and nurses)
	+ poorly equipped centres and lack of opportunities to interact with senior professionals and hone technological skills.
	+ Many students say that higher salaries, better living conditions, better equipment and facilities, an advantage in terms of admission to postgraduate courses would induce them to consider a rural posting but only if it is not made mandatory.
* government will only be able to fulfil these expectations in an environment that places public health delivery on the priority list. So far, none of the governments have shown such an inclination
* [In rural areas](https://www.globalmed.com/case-studies/studies/rural-healthcare), **patients without insurance are an added challenge.** In an urban setting, physicians in a hospital’s residency program would usually care for patients who are admitted without health insurance coverage. In more isolated facilities, this responsibility falls to the staff physicians, who are already overworked. This makes it difficult for these facilities to keep doctors on staff.

**Solutions:**

* But instead of making the rural posting compulsory for the MBBS students**, it is better to to offer better pay** and the chance to access a postgraduate seat stronger in return.
* One significant step being taken is the **development of online training programs** for nurses, which helps fill much-needed positions at rural healthcare facilities.
* Also, **telemedicine technologies** can be used to connect rural patients with physicians anywhere in the country. This could be a major solution for improving care in remote areas where in-person treatment is not always readily available.
* **Lessons from Chile’s Rural practitioner program:**
	+ bundled set of incentives of the Rural Practitioner Programme in four domains
		- (i) monetary compensation (direct and indirect financial incentives);
		- (ii) education and regulatory interventions
		- (iii) management, environment and social support; and
		- (iv) external incentives.
	+ Strengthening the measures taken by the Central Government to encourage doctors to work in rural and remote areas which include:
		- provision of financial support to state/UTs for **providing additional incentives and higher remuneration to doctors to serve in rural areas** and improved accommodation arrangements in rural areas, so that they find it attractive to join public health facilities in rural areas.
		- **Amendment of the Post Graduate Medical Education Regulations, 2000 to provide**:-
			* 50% reservation in Post Graduate Diploma Courses for Medical Officers in the Government service who have served for at least three years in remote and difficult areas; and
			* incentive at the rate of 10% of the marks obtained for each year in service in remote or difficult areas up to the maximum of 30% of the marks obtained in the entrance test for admissions in Post Graduate Medical Courses

*Topic: Issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure,*

[**3) Critically comment on the Sutlej–Yamuna Link (SYL) canal dispute and its significance to India’s federal structure. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/21/3-critically-comment-sutlej-yamuna-link-syl-canal-dispute-significance-indias-federal-structure/)

[EPW](http://www.epw.in/journal/2016/19/editorials/watershed-moment.html)

**Background:**

* The link between the Sutlej and the Yamuna is a part of the proposed water distribution from the Bhakra–Nangal Project.
* It became an object of dispute after Haryana was carved out of Punjab in 1966, as the latter state now refused to part with “its waters.”
* During the Emergency, using the subdued political climate, the then government divided the waters equally between Punjab and Haryana, but Punjab did not implement this award.
* Since then the dispute has been litigated, work on building the canal in Punjab has been tardy, while Haryana finished its part of the work long ago. It has been urging the courts and the union government to push Punjab to finish its work.
* Recently Punjab Legislative Assembly had passed the Punjab Sutlej–Yamuna Link Canal (Rehabilitation and Re-vesting of Proprietary Rights) Bill, 2016 -peasants along the canal’s route in Punjab to “reclaim” the land which had been taken from them to build the canal and which this bill promised to return to them.

**Significance:**

* The SYL dispute may well epitomise **short-sighted electoral politics** which dominates Indian democracy
* Its roots **go back to the politics of the rich peasantry** which emerged out of irrigated capitalist agriculture. It is also a stark warning to all the dystopic plans of river interlinking.
* With Punjab refusing to give Haryana its share of water**, Haryana has suffered losses worth Rs 35,020 crore.**
* The SYL dispute, and particularly the manner in which the Punjab government has passed legislation against the Supreme Court’s orders, i**s also a stark warning about the disrepair in India’s federal structure.**
* **Witness to here is a level of unilateralism by one province against the other**,
* After the canal being hurriedly filled up in Punjab, villagers whose land was acquired for building the Sutlej Yamuna Canal Link in Haryana**have started demanding that the state government should follow suit.**
* Even as the Haryana government is stating that all possible steps would be taken to get its share of water, **the high price of the land is an enticing offer for the landowners.**
* Its construction and water dispute between Punjab and Haryana was one of the emotive issues**which had given rise to the militancy** with the radical Sikhs citing it as one of the instances of “discrimination” against Punjab.
* With the Punjab elections less than a year away, **this issue has the potential to change the political discourse in the state.**.
* The SYL dispute, like all disputes over interstate water sharing, is not just about water stress and the crises of capitalist agriculture, it is also fundamentally **about India’s (in)ability to sustain the federal structure bequeathed to itself in the Constitution.**

*Topic: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary*

[**4) Undoubtedly, India is the only country in the world with a written constitution that has been amended so many times in the six and a half decades since its inception in 1950. Do you support such frequent amendments? Discuss the judicial pronouncements that have restricted the power of Parliament for making constitutional amendments. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/21/4-undoubtedly-india-country-world-written-constitution-amended-many-times-six-half-decades-since-inception-1950-support-fr/)

[EPW](http://www.epw.in/journal/2016/19/commentary/first-amendment-constitution-india.html)

**Yes,the amendments are needed:-**

* The Constitution is a living document and must reflect the growing aspirations of the people of India from time to time.
* Hence, it is argued that amendments to the Constitution are not merely reflective of such aspirations but also emphasise and translate the will of the people to carve out their own destiny.

**No,frequent amendments is bad:**

* **derides the constant and unending process by which the Constitution is being mutated and, , mutilated, to suit the needs of the political party in power.**
* Such criticism is often made with reference to the **controversial 42nd amendment** brought in by Indira Gandhi at the height of the Emergency, when her powers were supreme.
* Parliament achieved this purpose by inserting a new article, namely, Article 131A, after Article 131, which removed the powers of the high courts in matters related to validity of constitutional matters and gave exclusive jurisdiction for the same to the Supreme Court.
* In contrast, the **Indian Constitution has proven relatively easy to change, and has been amended more than once a year on average.** The deception in India has arisen on account of the fact that even though the Indian Supreme Court has the power to strike down or set aside constitutional amendments, it has no power to repeal them, which means that many ineffective provisions of the Constitution remain on the books.
* **Some of the amendments have been done in a hurry** due to the over enthusiasm of the legislature, offending the basic structure of the constitution

**Judicial pronouncements:**

* procedure for such amendment is laid out in Article 368 of the Constitution and indeed can be said to protect the sanctity of the Constitution as well as to check the arbitrary power of Parliament. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that Parliament, through the 42nd amendment, did try to arrogate to itself supreme unfettered powers to amend the Constitution.
* **In time, judicial pronouncements restricted the power of Parliament for making constitutional amendments only in such cases as where the basic structure of the Constitution is not altered.**
* In this regard, we may in passing mention three judgments which addressed this contentious issue:
	+ **The Golaknath v State of Punjab**where it was upheld that constitutional amendments through Article 368 were subject to fundamental rights issue;
	+ The **Keshavananda Bharathi judgment** (1973), where the doctrine was espoused that the Constitution has a basic structure of constitutional principles and values and that the judiciary has the power to review and strike down amendments which conflict with, or seek to alter, this basic structure of the **Constitution**
	+ **The Minerva Mills case**  that applied and evolved the basic structure doctrine of the Constitution, unanimously ruling that Parliament cannot exercise unlimited power to alter this basic structure or tread upon the fundamental rights of individuals, including the right to liberty and equality.

*Topic: Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.*

[**5) It is said that the implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006 has been opaque and there is serious lack of awareness about its provisions not only among the beneficiaries but also among the officials in charge of implementing it. Discuss the causes and the way forward. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/21/5-said-implementation-forest-rights-act-2006-opaque-serious-lack-awareness-provisions-not-among-beneficiaries-also-among-off/)

[EPW](http://www.epw.in/journal/2016/19/commentary/forest-rights-act.html)

**Causes:**

* **Rejection of claims made by the tribals and “other forest dwellers” on the basis of insufficient deposition of documents** has often been cited as reason for the poor implementation of the act.
* **The implementation of FRA has not been effective or delayed,**
	+ when the claims made by the “other forest dwellers” are numerous
	+ where the number of claims with the evidence of occupation of land in forest are either recent or after 25 October 1980
	+ where the demand for claims on the forestland is more than two and half hectares per nuclear family
	+ if the claims happen to be in the proximity of wildlife sanctuaries or parks .
* **Gram sabha:**
	+ The process of documenting communities’ claims under the FRA is intensive ,rough maps of community and individual claims are prepared democratically by Gram Sabhas.
	+ These are then verified on the ground with annotated evidence. The Gram Sabha is treated as a public authority under the FRA, and if the higher authorities under the law reject its claims, substantive reasons have to be provided for doing so**.**
	+ **This exhaustive process is why the official order to implement the FRA so quickly lacks any understanding about the extent of the task and labour involved.**
	+ To claim land titles and community forest rights, tribal people have to prove that they have been occupying the land before December 13, 2005. **Gram sabhas or village councils have the fi nal authority over these areas but they rarely have the capacity to deal with administrative requirements.**
* **Forest department’s role:**
	+ The forest department’s idea of whom to grant forest rights and the provisions of the act are not in tandem or are in conflict.
	+ The main factor inhibiting the FRA’s full implementation is **the reluctance of the forest bureaucracy to give up control**.
	+ The forest bureaucracy has misinterpreted the FRA as an instrument to regularise encroachment. This is seen in its emphasis on recognising individual claims **while ignoring collective claims Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights as promised under the FRA by tribal communities**.
	+ To date, the total amount of land where rights have been recognised under the FRA is just 3.13 million hectares, mostly under claims for individual occupancy rights.
	+ This has created a situation where the officials controlling the implementation of the law often have **the strongest interest in its non-implementation, especially the community forest rights provisions**, which dilute or challenge the powers of the forest department.
	+ The MoTA’s February 2015 status report indicates that the total area reported to be recognised under CFR is only 73,000 hectares, less than one-five hundredth of the CFR potential in the country
	+ The **department has also been against including protecting areas for land distribution under the FRA.** The power of the forest department is formidable despite the FRA, 2006 rules notified on 6 September 2012 curtailing their role in the affairs of the act.
* The forest department perceives FRA as a one-sided legislation that may lead to grave compromises at the cost of the environment. It is also seen as an action of a hurried political action programme of the alliance that was in power then.
	+ **In short, the perception of forest bureaucracy in managing the forest resources seems to be in conflict with the political calculus of competitive democracy.**
* India is very big, knowledge of people living in interior forested areas is limited and the state bureaucracy, which is **responsible for raising awareness, is very slow.**
* In most states**, majority of individual claims over dwellings and farms in forestland were rejected.** Traditional rights of communities over forest resources like forest produce, waterbodies and pastures were**hardly recognised**.
* Institutions not constituted as per the law and faulty ways of processing claims are major hurdles.
* **The trade of MFPs like tendu leaves, mahua and saal seeds is controlled by state governments**. The monopoly curbs competition as well as restricts benefits to collectors and earns high revenue for the government . Civil society groups have long been demanding free flow of MFPs so that communities can earn good prices from them.
* Although counting both individual and community rights, more than 1.5 million titles have been issued covering 3 million hectares, in many places the area settled with the tribals is much less than their occupation; boundaries of the settled area are not demarcated; **meetings of the gram sabha are being called at the panchayat level, as in Andhra Pradesh, and not at the hamlet or revenue village level**as prescribed in the Act.
* There has been little effort to improve productivity of assigned land by linking it with soil conservation works and with NREGA funds, or to clarify which department will maintain land records, and how succession would take place in case of death of the right holder.

**Way forward:**

* National forest committee recommends that
	+ the **right to protect and manage forest resources can be transferred from the forest department to gram sabha only if the community’s claim is recognised under the Forest Rights Act.**
	+ In case the gram sabha is not keen to manage community forest or their claim is declined**, joint forest management (JFM) committees**should work under gram sabha, the main report notes.
* It would be prudent on part of the government to revisit the act. The specific areas that need an urgent examination are:
	+ identifying gaps in the act with respect to conservation of forest resources;
	+ review of the public debates around the provisions of the act
	+ analyse the patterns of its implementation across regions and identify possible conflicts between bureaucratic and political thinking.
* The forest department’s complaint since the act was enforced is that their voice was not heard by the then government; **hence sincere efforts need to be carried out to listen to the view**s, suggestions and recommendations that would be presented by it and other departments in their respective jurisdictions.
* **bridge the trust deficiency** between the forest department and tribals for future cohesive existence.
* If the government is serious about implementing the FRA, **it should confront the forest bureaucracy and make it clear that any obstruction on their part is unacceptable.** The little progress that has been made in implementation so far has been due to close coordination between tribal departments, district administrations and civil society.
* There is a clear need to **strengthen the nodal tribal departments, provide clear instructions to the State and district administrations, and encourage civil society actors.** Without a strong political will, this historical transformation is unlikely to take place.
* Therefore, **government should continue to provide technical support to the gram sabhas and monitor its sustainable use through encouraging regeneration of forests**and ensuring not only higher production of MFPs but price support as provided to farmers so as to rejuvenate tribal economy.

*Topic: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests*

[**3) Both from the geo-economic and geo-strategic view, the northern Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf is the most important external region for India’s security. However, the US and India relationship is more tilted towards the East. Discuss the reasons and need for realigning India – US focus on the Western region. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/23/3-geo-economic-geo-strategic-view-northern-arabian-sea-persian-gulf-important-external-region-indias-security-however-us-india-relati/)

[The Indian Express](http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/india-us-ties-defence-obama-modi-2814259/)

**Reasons why India –US need to focus on western region engulfing northern Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf:**

* Energy:
	+ India sources 70 per cent of oil from there.
	+ As energy needs increase, this area will only become more important
* Indians in that region:
	+ 7 million Indian citizens working there send back $30 billion in remittances.
	+ In the past, India had to carry out large-scale evacuations of its nationals because of war-like situations in this region, most recently from Yemen in 2015.
	+ countries in the Middle East are a good source of employment for Indians.
* **Unstability in the region:**
	+ The prognosis for the stability of the whole region is not particularly good.
	+ Yet, somehow, there are no drills, joint exercises or planning between the US, which is the dominant power, with a fleet headquartered in Bahrain, and India for conflict contingencies.
* India needs the US as a guarantor of a secure and stable world system, but especially as a security provider in the Persian Gulf region, where India has no military capacity.
* This region is very important with respect to development of Chabahar port,India’s interests in Afghanistan especially when US is reducing its army ,north south corrider,CASA 2000 project etc..
* This region can be a gateway for having access to activities even in Suez canal.
* The holy place of Islam, followers of which are in India, makes it more important.
* Middle East is considered as a gateway to central Asia as well, an evolving and upcoming resource hub.

*Topic: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary*

[**4) It is found that either fishermen arrested by Pakistan or India for minor transgressions face many ordeals. In your opinion, what should India and Pakistan do to address problems of their fishermen languishing in each other’s jails. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/23/4-found-either-fishermen-arrested-pakistan-india-minor-transgressions-face-many-ordeals-opinion-india-pakistan-address-problems-fishermen/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/fishermen-in-troubled-waters/article8634150.ece)

**Measures needed to be taken By India and Pakistan:**

* India and Pakistan need to treat these prisoners within the norms laid down by **international covenants**
* India and Pakistan had signed the **Agreement on Consular Access in 2008**, according to which consular access must be provided within 90 days of arrest of either country’s prisoners. This period is given to help verify the person’s nationality and enable necessary steps to repatriate the person to his or her country of origin.This has to be implemented effectively.
* In 2008, India and Pakistan set up the **India-Pakistan Joint Judicial Committee on Prisoners**, which consisted of retired judges from both countries.
	+ The committee worked hard to seek early repatriation of prisoners who have completed their sentences in the other country’s jail and also ensure that they are treated humanely.
	+ It met every six months and visited prisoners in both countries. It discussed issues such as health and food of the prisoners and the need to evolve a mechanism for humanitarian treatment of women, the mentally challenged, juvenile prisoners, and so on.
	+ Unfortunately, this committee has not met since the new Indian government came to power.
	+ India and Pakistan must immediately revive the committee to ensure that the prisoners are ensured their rights and are repatriated at the earliest.
* India and Pakistan need to evolve a policy of **no arrest on straying fishermen.**
* **New Fish farming techniques** need to be taught so that the fisherman do not go into the others territorial waters for fishing.
* The Indian government has **undertaken a censusof fishermen** in western Gujarat, preparing a database of information on fishermen and their boats to be used for more effective monitoring of fishing activities in Indian territorial waters alongside Pakistan and to prevent boats from straying into Pakistani waters
* The Indian Coast Guard has also begun **installing tracking devices** in fishing boats operating in the waters off western Gujarat to maintain surveillance and to stop them from straying into Pakistani waters.
	+ the tracking device has the ability to send out alerts for fires on board, a sinking vessel, a medical emergency and when the boat is apprehended by another country.
* The problem is aggravated by the dispute over the Sir Creekin Kutch and the **failure to officially determine the maritime boundary** between the two nations.
* **Provide navigational tools:**
	+ Most local fishermen possess no navigational tools and are unable or incapable of determine their location by longitudesor latitudes.
* **Release imprisoned fishermen** as a confidence-building measure and gestures of peace and goodwill.

*Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations..*

[**5) Why is Chabahar of strategic importance for India? Despite Chabahar’s strategic importance, India has failed to develop the port even after many years. Examine why and suggest solutions. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/23/5-chabahar-strategic-importance-india-despite-chabahars-strategic-importance-india-failed-develop-port-even-many-years-examine-suggest-solutions/)

[Livemint](http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/NlnFBJGnWjG7xmMfJBG5gM/Indias-Chabahar-conundrum.html)

[The Indian Express](http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/india-iran-chabahar-port-project-narendra-modi-hassan-rouhani-ashraf-ghani-2814263/)

**Why is this port important ?**

* It is the nearest port to India on the Iranian coast, which provides access to the resources and markets of Afghanistan and Central Asia.
* It is located 76 nautical miles (less than 150km) west of the Pakistani port of Gwadar, being developed by China; this makes it ideal for keeping track of Chinese or Pakistani military activity based out of Gwadar.
* Chabahar port is suitably located to serve India’s outreach in the region to Afghanistan and beyond as well as**link with International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** to which India is one of the initial signatories.
* The port will cut**transport costs/time** for Indian goods by a third.
* From Chabahar, the existing Iranian road network can link up to Zaranj in Afghanistan.The Zaranj-Delaram road constructed by India in 2009 can give access to Afghanistan’s Garland Highway, setting up road access to four major cities in Afghanistan — Herat, Kandahar, Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif.
* Chabahar’s significance also rose, as China began to develop Gwadar and unveiled ambitious plans for linking its far western province of Xinjiang with the Arabian Sea with a transport corridor running through Pakistan.
* The successful launch of the Chabahar project allows India to circumvent the geographic limitations imposed by Partition and the enduring hostility with Pakistan.

**Why has India failed to develop this port ?**

* **Iran’s unenthusiastic support for the project:**
	+ Although the idea was first mooted in 2003, it was only in 2012 that Iran conceded to set up a joint working group to operationalize the port project as part of the trilateral cooperation agreement between Afghanistan, India and Iran
	+ **key factor behind Iran’s reluctance to allow an Indian presence at Chabahar was the opposition by the Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution** (the so-called Revolutionary Guards), which reportedly uses the port to ship arms to Yemen and militant groups in the region
* **The economic viability of the project is suspect:**
	+ India, which has had trouble raising funds for the project, has so far been able to invest only $85 million to build a couple of berths.
	+ While India recently indicated that it was willing to invest up to $20 billion one of its largest overseas ventures to develop the port, petrochemical and fertilizer plants in the Chabahar SEZ, it remains to be seen if it can raise the funds.
* **Gwadar complication:**
	+ Moreover, given the presence of Gwadar next door, where China has already invested over $1 billion and committed another $46 billion for the 3,000-km long economic corridor to link Gwadar to Kashgar in Xinjiang province and its One Belt, One Road project**, it is unclear whether the Chabahar route will generate enough trade and traffic to justify the investment.**
	+ In fact, Tehran, itself plans to invest $4 billion to build a refinery in Gwadar to process 400,000 barrels of oil per day
* **India’s actions against Iran:**
	+ Delhi’s vote against Iran at the International Atomic Energy Agency on the nuclear issue has done a lot less damage than India’s inability to find practical ways to advance the relationship on the ground.
	+ **Lack of political will:**
		- The Indian governents could not muster the necessary political will to direct different ministries and agencies to work in unison to pursue declared strategic objectives towards Iran.
		- Nor was it nimble enough to navigate the international financial sanctions that were imposed against Iran.
	+ The delay in the execution of the Chabhar project, however, has exposed the big problem that India had created for itself. **It is the vast gap between an expansive rhetoric on promoting regional connectivity and the lack of institutional capacity to implement strategic projects across and beyond borders.**
	+ **Leasing confusion:**
		- After signing MoU for Chabahar, an Indian team that visited Iran in 2015 was surprised by an Iranian announcement that the port had been let out in 2014 on a long lease to Arya Bandar, a private Iranian company. **This was something that was not disclosed at the time of signing of the MoU.**
		- The leasing of port changed things for India entirely as earlier it was a deal between Indian and Iranian governments. However, with a private company coming into picture, things became complicated as all clearances from government/Cabinet had to be re-initiated**.**
	+ **Custom duty on equipment:**
		- India would be exporting and installing equipment worth $150 million on Chabahar Port and the custom duty would be around $8-10 million. India argues that since the equipment would remain with the Iranian port once India leaves its operations, the custom duty should be waived. Iran does not agree.
	+ **Change in equipment specifications:**
		- Iran has changed specification of the equipment to be supplied to the Chabahar Port and installed in 18 months. The change in specifications has led to escalation of costs.
	+ **Foodgrains export from Chabahar:**
		- Iran has refused to allow India to export foodgrain and other humanitarian aid to Afghanistan via Chabahar from the two terminals that would be allotted to India.
	+ **Contract Termination Payment:**
		- The formula for contract termination payment considers depreciation impact twice, decreasing India’s revenue.
	+ **Fines for delays:**
		- India wants Iran’s government to stand guarantee for the Iranian company Arya Bandar if it defaults, but Iran does not agree.
		- On the contrary, if the India fails to install all equipment within stipulated 18 months time, it would be liable to pay $85,000 per day.

**What can be done?**

* The Union Cabinet has now authorized the Ministers of Finance, External Affairs and Shipping to approve the final contract with Iran and for resolution of any issue arising in implementation of the project.
* The Union Cabinet has also authorized the Ministry of Shipping to form a Company in Iran for implementing the Chabahar Port Development Project and related activities.These need to be effectively taken care of.

*Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation*

[**2) “There is an undeniable need to build a coherent policy framework to deal with geospatial data as indeed there is with all forms of online data flows. These must however be premised on an understanding of popular sovereignty over individual and collective data. These must also be premised on a technologically competent understanding of the nature of the data form and the way it is made use of.” In the light of recently released draft geospatial bill, discuss the statement. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/28/2-undeniable-need-build-coherent-policy-framework-deal-geospatial-data-indeed-forms-online-data-flows-must-however-premised-understan/)

[EPW](http://www.epw.in/journal/2016/21/editorials/panoptic-work.html)

**Background :**

* The GIRB appears to be another step in a multipronged attempt by the central government to achieve overarching regulatory and surveillance authority over data flows in Indian cyberspace.

**Negatives :**

* The draft appears to be beset by a **lack of understanding of the technological basis**of geolocation services and the markets in which the geospatial data generated by them are used.
* In many applications, geospatial data is dynamic, for instance, in Google’s application that provides real-time traffic data. **It is unclear under the GIRB how geospatial data that is continuously changing will be vetted by any authority.** Under the bill, the authority can take up to three months to vet a data set, **a condition that manifestly will not be able to synchronise with real-time dynamic data**.
* Presently, Google enjoys a dominant position in the global geospatial market. In this context, it is not necessarily inappropriate to attempt to restore the sovereignty of the people of India over geospatial information pertaining to themselves. **However, unlike a natural resource, the government is not the custodian of this information**. **It is outside its remit for it to appropriate for itself the right over information** that is the property of the citizenry at large, individually and collectively.
* However, it is arguably just as much of a national security threat when multinational corporations such as Google dominate the market for geospatial data to the extent that it does. **The GIRB fails to act effectively against this, instead providing a mechanism to institutionalise such dominance.**
* **Data needing an update:**
	+ The draft bill’s definition of geospatial information has a**wide remit**.Geospatial information, especially when so widely defined, keeps changing.
		- **Ex:**Changing the name of a restaurant in such data would amount to tampering with watermarked data. Not propagating updates till security clearance is released may affect the business model of businesses premised on providing up-to-date information.
	+ The**bill promises a three-month turnaround on all clearances. This might not be quick enough**
	+ **India doesn’t have the bandwidth to handle all applications for this usage inside and outside India:**
		- It is hard to estimate how many different non-governmental services inside and outside India are currently using Indian geospatial data as there are a large number with significant impact.
	+ **Lack of manpower:**
		- A government regulator that is yet to be set up will need hundreds of experts who can “vet” terabytes of data from each applicant.
	+ **Lack of logistics:**
		- The logistics of getting these data across to the vetting authority is not enough.
	+ **The complexity of the ecosystem**and the trajectories such data can take are only limited by the imagination of developers and service creators working on different kinds of problems in a host of different sectors.
		- such complexity emerges organically as different actors in the**innovation ecosystem work to create new efficiencies or leverage existing ones**, and so it is something to be encouraged
		- All this will further burden the vetting authority and stretch its capabilities.
	+ There is a**suggestion of having a registration based system**.
		- However, even such a system is also fraught with danger in a framework that insists on scrutinising the credentials of every end user.
		- A clear distinction is not made between the producers and consumers of geospatial data.
		- **In order to not constrict the innovation ecosystem, the definition of consumers must be as wide as possible**.
	+ By shifting the onus onto the service India runs the risk of creating a significant roadblock for a major part of the innovation ecosystem. This is undesirable.

**Positives :**

* The **military and national security concerns** with regard to data are valid.
* The efforts to **develop an indigenous capacity for generation of geospatial data** as well as to evolve a policy framework for it have emerged from a military requirement which presented itself during the Kargil war, when the United States refused to share its geospatial data with India.
* The **vetting authority can go through the data and raise an objection** if it finds anything objectionable, and it can do this in its own time.
* There can be no debate that the country’s territorial integrity needs to be maintained, physically and in the digital world, and therefore**, a stringent law against violators seems imperative.**
* Moreover, geospatial information easily available from services like Google Earth, Google Maps etc,**has been reportedly used by terror groups against India**. In the run up to the Mumbai terror attacks, Lashkar jihadis were reportedly shown images of vital locations in Mumbai.
* Wrong depiction of the map of India could land the violators in jail with a maximum term of seven years and fine upto Rs 100 crore. **This measure has been envisaged by the government against the backdrop of instances where certain social networking sites showed Jammu and Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh as part of Pakistan and China respectively**
* The government is proposing to set up a regulatory body that will comprise of digitally aware senior bureaucrats along with subject matter experts who will oversee the digital space for violations. Hopefully,**this body will successfully fulfill its responsibility while ensuring a level-playing ground for all.**
* It is hoped that the government will be able to mitigate all stakeholder concerns before putting it up for final passage in Parliament.

*Topic: Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of vulnerable sections*

[**3) Recently, the Maharashtra state legislative assembly passed the Maharashtra Protection of People from Social Boycott (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2016. Examine the objectives, constitutional validity of this Act and challenges in its implementation. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/28/3-recently-maharashtra-state-legislative-assembly-passed-maharashtra-protection-people-social-boycott-prevention-prohibition-redressal-act-2016-examine-objectives-const/)

[EPW](http://www.epw.in/journal/2016/21/law-and-society/social-boycott-act.html)

**Objectives :-**

* Seeks to criminalise a panchayat or any person who imposes or enforces a social boycott.
* **Tries to take measures to prevent such social boycotts** and give relief to the **victims with compensation.**
* It also places an **obligation on the district administration** to take proactive steps to prevent panchayats and other such bodies from issuing calls for social boycotts.
* It creates the **post of a “social boycott prohibition officer**,” who is supposed to help the district administration and other officers in discharge of their duties.
* Because of all this the discrimination levied on the socio backward communities like scheduled castes, women can be checked.
* It is **directed against caste panchayats** which often function as community-based parallel forums of justice, and whose diktats are invariably directed against recalcitrant individuals who have been deemed to transgress the bounds of caste or community morality.
* The Maharashtra social boycott law, therefore, is an important step in the long-standing struggle for social inclusion

**Constitutional validity of the act :-**

* Apart from the prohibition of untouchability, the Constitution guarantees non-discriminatory access to “shops, public restaurants, hotels, and places of public entertainment” (Article 15(2)). The Constitution grants individuals rights not merely against the State, but also against other individuals.
* Maharashtra’s social boycott law is best understood as one front in a long struggle to effectuate the Constitution’s guarantee against social exclusion, as expressed in Articles 15(2) and 17.

**Challenges in implementation :-**

* addressing social evils through criminal law does not take into account the massive problems its enforcement will run into, given the **weaknesses in the police machinery at the state level.**
	+ The law’s effectiveness hinges on the ability of the police to necessarily take the side of the individual, the weaker and oppressed sections of the society, over their oppressors; something that they have not had much success doing in the context of laws protecting women and Dalits.
* With its focus on caste-panchayat driven community boycotts, the Maharashtra law leaves a**significant area of discrimination untouched.**
* In the **rural hinterlands**, the decrees of village elders, who are often members of these groups, are taken more seriously than court rulings.This might not change even after the law enforcement.
* The Act requires the appointment special officers who will detect social boycott, and help the police bring the culprits to justice. Activists, however, are worried that the **power-wielding village elders are likely to influence or bribe state officials**, which is usually the way things go.
	+ For this reason, social boycott is a bailable offense under the Act.
* **Convincing victims and survivors of a boycott to speak out is a challenging task**.This can be an incredibly dangerous proposition which requires activists to build trust before someone agrees to open up.
* Another big challenge will be **proving social boycott in a court of law** because many of these situations involve oral directions nothing is written down or recorded.
	+ The police could find it incredibly hard to find evidence of premeditated boycott unless a member from inside the community speak out.
* They wield immense power in communities which are **governed by social codes rather than the law of the land.**

*Topic: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests; Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.*

[**4) What do you understand by the Singapore issues? Should these issues be brought under multilateral trade negotiations? Discuss. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/28/4-understand-singapore-issues-issues-brought-multilateral-trade-negotiations-discuss/)

[EPW](http://www.epw.in/journal/2016/21/insight/new-issues-multilateral-trade-negotiations.html)

**Singapore issues:**

* Ministers from WTO member-countries decided at the 1996 Singapore Ministerial Conference to set up three new working groups: on **trade and investment, on competition policy, and on transparency in government procurement.**
* They also instructed the WTO Goods Council to look at possible ways of simplifying trade procedures, an issue sometimes known as **“trade facilitation”.** Because the Singapore conference kicked off work in these four subjects, they are sometimes called **the “Singapore issues”**.
* While three of the four Singapore issues were dropped in the 2004 July package, the fourth issue was sealed with the trade facilitation agreement at the Bali Ministerial Meeting in 2013.

**No,they should not be brought under multilateral trade negotiations :-**

* **Threatening sovereignity:**
	+ On issues like **investment and competition policy**, India feels that having a multilateral agreement would be a serious impingement on the sovereign rights of countries.
	+ Investment is seen as an area in which ceding sovereign rights would leave governments, particularly developing country governments, with too little room for maneuver in directing investments into areas of national priority.
* **Investment:**
	+ The principles of “non-discrimination, MFN and national treatment” were created in the context of trade in goods. They are inappropriate when applied to investment.
	+ If the “scope and definition” of an agreement goes beyond foreign direct investment then there are even **more serious implications for financial stability**as the road is opened for more volatile and potentially damaging forms of investments and investors to enter and operate with reduced regulation. **This may include portfolio investment, loans and investment funds.**
	+ It would also weaken the bargaining position of government vis-a-vis foreign investors (including portfolio investors) and creditors.
* **Competition policy:**
	+ In addition, on the specific issue of competition policy India has pointed out that there is no clarity on whether these would include export cartels.
		- The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is perhaps the best known example of an export cartel that rigs prices by fixing production ceilings.
	+ **Transparency:**
		- On the issue of transparency in government procurement, the Indian position is that while the principle is entirely acceptable, there **cannot be a universal determination of what constitutes transparent procedures.**
	+ **Trade facilitation:-**
		- On trade facilitation,India has argued that once again while the idea is unexceptionable,**developing countries may not have the resources by way of technology**, or otherwise to bring their procedures in line with those in the developed world over the short to medium term.
	+ The common theme of three of the issues (investment, competition, government procurement) is
		- to **maximise the rights of foreign enterprises** to have market access to developing countries through their products and investment
		- to reduce to a **minimum the rights of the host government to regulate foreign investors** and
		- to **prohibit government from measures** that support or encourage local enterprises.
	+ If these agreements come into the WTO, developing countries will find it increasingly difficult to devise their own policies for development and for the building up of their local enterprises to be competitive.
		- The rich country governments will press for the principle of “national treatment” to be applied to these new areas. Developing countries would no longer be allowed to support their local industries.
		- **Many local companies may not survive, and millions of workers would lose their jobs.**
	+ Actually, these issues do not belong to the WTO as**they are not directly trade issues.** The developed countries want to place them in the WTO so that they can use the trade sanctions mechanism to enforce rules that suit their interests. This is why the WTO has become a favourite vehicle for their global economic governance. But the results would be very damaging.
	+ With weaker legal and institutional frameworks and wide interpretations of investment treaty provisions this could **open the floodgates of litigations** for developing countries and make policymaking more complex.
	+ Further, developing countries sometimes lack the data and skills to determine the quantitative impact of activities of transnational corporations on their local economy. **Defending cases can therefore be quite challenging.**
	+ Mere adoption of rules without implementation can in fact result in **increasing the vulnerability of the developing countries to international disputes** and severely restrict their policy space in the area of investments.

**Yes,these issues should be part of multilateral negotiations:**

* Open, transparent and non-discriminatory procurement is generally considered to be the best tool to achieve this goal as it optimises competition among suppliers.
* Government procurement accounts for 10-15 per cent of the GDP of an economy on average. It constitutes a significant market and an important aspect of international trade. The WTO’s work on government procurement aims to promote transparency, integrity and competition in this market.

**Suggestions:**

* If a multilateral approach is needed, there are other venues that are more suitable, for example, UNCTAD already has a Set of Principles on Restrictive Business Practices.
* Moreover, if the objective is to arrange for cooperation among competition authorities of countries, then it is unnecessary and inappropriate for the WTO to be the venue.
* Improvements in trade facilitation should be made through national efforts aided by technical assistance, rather than through imposing additional obligations in the WTO.

*Topic: Functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.*

[**5) Examine the laws, mechanism and policies that exist to prevent flow of illegal money during elections. Are these effectively working on the ground? Examine why. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/28/5-examine-laws-mechanism-policies-exist-prevent-flow-illegal-money-elections-effectively-working-ground-examine/)

[Frontline](http://www.frontline.in/cover-story/money-power-unplugged/article8644601.ece?homepage=true)

**Laws and mechanisms governing illegal money during elections :**

* The E.C announced guidelines to bring transparency and accountability in the funding of political parties.
* **Proviso (a) to** **Section 13A of the Income Tax Act, 1961**, requires every political party to maintain books of accounts and other documents to enable proper deduction of its income.
* **Sections 80GGB and 80GGC of the IT Act, 1961**:
	+ state that no deduction shall be allowed on the contributions made in cash by any person or company to a political party.
	+ Therefore, political parties are required to maintain the names and addresses of all individuals, companies or entities making donations to them during their rallies.
	+ Further, any donation received in cash should be duly accounted in the relevant account books and deposited in the party’s bank account within a week of its receipt.
	+ However, a party is allowed to retain a reasonable amount required for its day-to-day functioning and for defraying cash expenses.
* **Section 40 A (3) of the IT Act, 1961**, stipulates that all payments exceeding Rs.20,000 made by a business entity to a person in a day are required to be made by account payee cheque/draft, except the exempted category as provided in Rule 6 DD of Income Tax Rules, 1962.
* For monitoring day-to-day election expenditure incurred by a candidate,**an election expenditure mechanism**is put in place in each constituency.
* Maintenance of the day-to-day account of election expenditure by a candidate is mandatory. Though an account of election expenditure is required to be submitted within 30 days from the date of the declaration of the result, the **monitoring has to be done on a regular basis** during the campaign period for it to be of any use.
* **Expenditure Observers (E.O.s**) are appointed by the E.C. for specified constituencies.

**No ,working is not good:**

* There is enough reason to believe that the **cash-for-votes phenomenon has taken deep roots in all constituencies.**
* **deferment means little in**the long run if recovery of cash is not followed up with the implementation of strategies to stamp out this perversion.
* The **expenditure spent by the political parties is not a transparent information**given to the Election Commission (EC) because of the entire amount spent by the parties only 20% of the expenditure is recorded and submitted to the EC and no one is aware about the rest 80% of the money spent in times of elections.
* **EC is not able to locate the actual source of this illegal**That`sthe reason why the EC of India has failed to curb the flow of illegal money during elections.
* Campaign finance remains anachronistically opaque, and the distortions include not just “money power” at election time**, but also corruption in administration and in, say, the use of local area development funds**
* While concerted efforts by the EC have dampened a candidate’s ability to spend freely, **a limited focus on candidates without concurrent efforts to limit party expenditure is re-channelling campaign finance through the coffers of political parties and**, in effect, leaving intact the primary source of exorbitant spending
	+ The **Election Commission classifies lawful campaign spending as either candidate or party expenditure.**While candidate expenditure is capped at ₹70 lakh in most parliamentary constituencies, party expenditure remains unconstrained
	+ The Commission operates with a procedural distinction between candidate and general party canvassing. For instance, even though a candidate may feature prominently on the dais at a public rally, as long as his or her name, constituency and photograph are not mentioned or displayed, **the political party absorbs the entire cost of the event**
* While video surveillance prevents a gross under-declaration of expenses incurred through public rallies,**it leaves quotidian aspects of campaign finance easily manipulated**. For example, spending often begins well before filing nomination papers, which is when the Commission officially begins tallying candidate expenditure
* **Then there’s the matter of print advertisements.**Batches printed in the tens of thousands or even lakhs are formally declared as 1,000 or even 500. sometimes even disassembling side-door panels, pockets are often ignored, enabling a single individual to smuggle up to ₹4 lakh in 1,000-rupee notes.
* **Candidates remain one step ahead of the Commission by exploiting lapses in finance regulation**. The recent election witnessed an unprecedented level of digital canvassing that go beyond the purview of regulation.Assocham estimates that expenditure on digital media may have exceeded ₹500 crore in the recent election.
* **Expenditure that the Election Commission thinks is electoral expenditure is actually a tiny fraction of the total election expenditure.**Publicity material, pamphlets, leaflets now constitute a tiny fraction of the expenditure of parties.”
* **Rural constituencies,**which are vast have little EC staff to monitor spend. Also since a team is managing these activities, in a ‘supporters’ stronghold, nothing much comes to the EC’s notice. Out of a total of 11 million people working in election management, less than 10 cent check on spend.
* **Nothing can be done in cases where money moves through couriers.**Experts point out that since a majority of this money is black; the movement is through the hawala channel and not accounted for in the banks. As per industry insiders, angadias (a long existent, unofficial courier channel) from Delhi and Mumbai are charging Rs 3 per Rs 1000 transfer to state capitals and Rs 5 per Rs 1000 transfer to district centres. The usual rate is Rs 1-1.50 per Rs 1000 transfer. Everyday crores worth of cash is being routed through the hawala channel.
* **Despite the fact that the EC has set up monitoring cells, not a single candidate has been disqualified on grounds of excessive spending**. This creates a culture of complacency where everyone knows that nothing will happen.

**What needs to be done?**

* Based on past history, the profile of a constituency and other developments, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) should identify constituencies which are prone to high expenditure and corrupt practices by candidates. **Such constituencies are to be termed “Expenditure Sensitive Constituency”.**
	+ For such constituencies, there should be two AEOs, an additional number of flying squads, static surveillance teams and video surveillance teams as required, over and above those deployed in the remaining constituencies.
* The EC cannot wage this battle alone efforts to curb the flow of cash in election campaigns need to be embedded in a wider cleaning up of the account books of political parties
* **Strict media supervision:**
	+ During election season, media outlets often carry reports of roving flying squads intercepting troves of cash, liquor and gift-for-vote commodities, and travellers routinely encounter mobile checkpoints conducting impromptu stop-and-search procedures along national highways.
* **Election commission role:**
	+ Monitor discrepancies between declared and actual expenses, the EC has to maintain a near ubiquitous presence on the campaign trail and regularly videotapes public rallies and processions.
* EC has set up flying squads, risk surveillance teams, video surveillance teams, parallel accounting teams to monitor spending and movement of money. The latest initiative by the EC is that of setting up of a Multi Departmental Committee on election intelligence involving the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, the Coast Guard, and the Financial Intelligence Unit among other. This has to be strengthened.
* To stop the flow of illegal money it is necessary for the **government to provide election funds to the parties in times of election**
	+ Such that it can provide at a maximum of 100/Voter such that the entire expenditure spent by the party will be Rs.5500 Crore to the maximum which is much lesser than the expenditure spent when there is crony-capitalism present in the funding.

*Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations*

[**6) How will the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) transform Pakistan? Does CPEC come at a cost to the bonhomie between India and China? Critically examine. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/28/6-will-china-pakistan-economic-corridor-cpec-transform-pakistan-cpec-come-cost-bonhomie-india-china-critically-examine/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/the-new-game-changer-in-pakistan/article8657440.ece)

**Background :**

* It is the $46 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, a highway which is to run from Kashgar in China to Gwadar in Balochistan, on the edge of the Persian Gulf, in Pakistan.

**How will this corridor transform Pakistan ?**

* Pakistan experts feel unprecedented Chinese investment over the next decade-and-a-half will make Pakistan the next Asian Tiger.
* Clearly, all provincial governments (with their own particular ethnic and regional alliances), political parties and interests realise the huge externalities which are expected to accrue to the infrastructure and road building along the corridor, **and hence their interest in acquiring political and economic returns from it.**
* There is an expectation, well-founded no doubt, that **such projects will give rise to jobs**(particularly unskilled ones), will allow local businesses to benefit, and might open the way to development.
* **FDI:**
	+ An important indicator of the work in progress is the huge Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) which has come into Pakistan over the last year.
	+ Pakistan has been an FDI-starved country for a host of reasons, but the first 10 months of the current fiscal year (Pakistan’s fiscal year runs from July to end June) saw FDI increase by 5 per cent on a year-on-year basis, to $1 billion, of which 55 per cent came from China alone.
* **prospects for Pakistani development**, and many business and investment interests are waiting in the wings to cash in once the corridor and its ancillary investments take off.
* The **Pakistani military is an obvious beneficiary** with its role in security and with its fingers in numerous infrastructure and economic projects around the corridor.
* Perhaps some **underdeveloped regions** in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will also benefit.
* The project would link China’s far-western region to Pakistan’s Gwadar port (built with Chinese investment and technical expertise) and **would provide 14,000 MW of electricity to the energy-starved Pakistan.**
* **Confusion prevailing :**
	+ Even a year after the initiation of the CPEC project, there continues to be much ambiguity about what the $46 billion project entails.
	+ There **is little public information and disclosure** as to what will be built, how it will be financed and who will implement the various parts of the corridor, which includes roads, railway lines, pipelines and other infrastructure.

**Effect of CPEC on India China relations :**

**Negatives :**

* **Gilgit Baltistan:**
	+ The corridor will **run through India’s periphery, more significantly**, Gilgit Baltistan, claimed by India as part of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).
	+ In due course, this geographical reality of the CPEC could potentially impinge upon India’s geopolitical calculations and pose a strategic challenge.
	+ In the Gilgit Baltistan segment, the CPEC project design includes a major expansion of the**Karakoram Highway**, establishing industrial parks in special economic zones,**constructing hydropower projects, railway line and road building.**The project also entails building hydropower projects and motorways/highways in the so-called.
* The CPEC poses a **policy challenge to India on how best to strike a precarious balance between securing its strategic/territorial interests** without at the same time being confrontational.
* Considering the fact that the Pakistan-China strategic partnership is coinciding with Pakistan’s fast-increasing strategic ties with Russia, **a Pakistan-China-Russia axis is on the anvil.**This is bad news for the Indian strategic establishment.
* Once completed, **the CPEC project would enlarge China’s strategic footprints in the Indian Ocean**and would change the regional power matrix forever.One of the fallouts would be that China would then wield a much more powerful influence in the Indian Ocean even though geographically speaking China is not an Indian Ocean power.
* The CPEC project would mean that the **Chinese presence in entire Pakistan, including Pakistan Occupied Kashmir**, becomes all pervasive and powerful.This is a nightmarish scenario for the Indian strategic establishment
* CPEC heightens the **threat China poses to India’s defense**. In the event of a military confrontation with India or if China decides to come to Islamabad’s aid in an India-Pakistan war, CPEC’s infrastructure will facilitate Chinese deployment of troops rapidly to India’s western front, as well.

**Positives :**

* India has no worry over the construction of Pakistan-China Economic Corridor as an economically strong Pakistan would bring stability in the region.
* **Genuine concerns for China**:-
	+ In monetary terms, the $46 billion Chinese funding for an ambitious 3,000-km-long China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) **which will shorten the route for Chinese energy imports from the Middle East by 12,000 km,**is the biggest overseas investment by China announced yet.
* India could also**benefit from CPEC if it were to be extended to connect with Indian markets**,India has been eyeing an overland route to Central Asian markets, which CPEC’s infrastructure would provide.
* Beijing is dependent on Pakistan to ensure the security of its citizens and investments, if the economic corridor project is to materialise. For this, Pakistan has to contain home-grown jihadi groups**. In turn, India will benefit because time and again, it has called on the international community to pressurise Pakistan for reining in jihadists and curbing their activities**. Now pushed by its ally, Pakistan is compelled to undertake such measures.
* These are **plain commercial ventures likely to expand the India-Pakistan trade, especially in the energy sector**. India is an energy-deficient economy and with a stabilised Afghanistan, energy trade is far more likely to happen.
* For the Chinese, **economic expansion is high on agenda and it is highly unlikely that through Pakistan, it wants to encircle India**. Their concerns are more economic given the goal to develop poorer regions in the west and containing extremism in the Xinjiang province of China.

*Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation*

[**3) It is argued that water pricing is the only long-term, sustainable solution to promote efficient and equitable use of this precious natural resource. Do you agree? What challenges its implementation would face in India? Comment. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/24/3-argued-water-pricing-long-term-sustainable-solution-promote-efficient-equitable-use-precious-natural-resource-agree-challenges-implementatio/)

[Livemint](http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/3TO6p9MTaxiPtioFxWe4eJ/Moving-towards-a-water-pricing-regime.html)

**Yes,Water pricing is needed?**

* Without a price on water usage, it is the poor who will suffer the worst consequences of a drought.
* A 2015 study by the International Monetary Fund concluded that **water subsidies**provided through public utilities amounted to 0.6% of global gross domestic product in 2012 and are also inequitable, disproportionately **benefiting upper-income groups**.
* With 18% of the world population, India has only 4% of the world’s renewable water resources. Moreover, **the distribution is geographically skewed and the majority of rainfall occurs over just a few months**, leading to reckless consumption in well-endowed geographies and during those months.This can be avoided because of pricing.
* Inefficient agricultural usage of water and exports of water-intensive crops **make India a large virtual exporter of water**
* Low water rates, apart from encouraging the inefficient use of water, result in low revenue collections and contribute to the growing burden of government subsidies
* OECD studies say that putting the right price on water will encourage people to waste less, pollute less, and invest more in water infrastructure.
* Government subsidies for agricultural production can encourage wasteful water use and pollution

**No need for water pricing:**

* A counter-argument will be that water pricing may erode India’s export advantage
* More burden of electricity on farmers without government’s help.

**Challenges:**

* will be to make a case for water pricing at a time when the most vulnerable to water shortage are already reeling under severe economic hardship
* The challenge is in the entrenched political economy in different parts of India. The severe water crisis in Latur was in stark contrast to flourishing fields of sugarcane, a water-guzzling crop, sustained with the patronage of politicians in the state of Maharashtra. **Then the public procurement policies also promote cultivation of water-intensive crops, sometimes in those very states where the usage is most inefficient**.
* The inherent design problems associated with water pricing. This is because the government does not **exercise control over the sources of water as it does over other natural resources**

**What can be done ?**

* water prices have rather negligible effects on income distribution within the farming sector and hence **water pricing should be designed in order to promote efficiency, leaving equity consideration to other policy tools.**
* It is **important to target irrigation water for pricing purposes** because it alone comprises more than 78% of the total water usage in India. Also, irrigation consumption is an area where the scope for increase in efficiency is very high.
* Several countries including rich ones such as Singapore and poor ones such as Burkina Faso have, within their own constraints, benefited from water pricing India needs to do the same.
* **Innovative Financing Mechanisms for the Water Sector**examines ways to attract new financial resources to strengthen investment in water and sanitation services. For example, **the Indian state of Tamil Nadu improved access to capital markets by small waste utilities by pooling water and sanitation projects** into investment packages and combining different sources of capital to fund the packages. This reduces the risk of default, increases financial volume and cuts transaction costs.

*Topic: Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure,*

[**4) India’s democratic experiment is largely hailed as a success. To which factors do you attribute this success? What else needs to be done to address some of the problems affecting India’s democratic system? Discuss. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/24/4-indias-democratic-experiment-largely-hailed-success-factors-attribute-success-else-needs-done-address-problems-affecting-indias-democratic/)

[The Indian Express](http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/election-commission-of-india-campaign-financing-elections-india-2815835/)

**Success:**

* In 1947 India was 550 independent states with 350 million people speaking more than two dozen languages and practicing a variety of religions. And yet 66 years ago, the country peacefully banded together to form the Union of India after achieving independence from Britain.
* Constitution:
	+ The significance of India’s progressive constitution, which formed a democracy for such a varied population.
* Elections:
	+ India has never had an issue with transfer of power or had a government collapse. Even with 10 to 15 political parties running the country at any given time India has never had a dispute over election results.
	+ The very fact that proper elections were carried out after independence, in spite of the presence of no other party of a national level stature in the political arena, shows his commitment to establishing a well-functioning democracy
* Religion:
	+ India’s constitution was revolutionary due to its neutral stance on religion.
* Unity in diversity:
	+ The Indian experiment of a representative government of more than 1.1 billion people is one of the most unique in the world. There are very positive opinions about the Indian experience of peaceful coexistence among different ethnic groups.
* Economy:
	+ The recent performance of the Indian economy has signaled a very positive trend and it is never too late to correct the mistakes of the past.
* is a nation where pluralism and the rights of minorities are respected–at least relative to many other countries (including democracies) in India’s neighborhood.
* Judiciary role played a major role in upholding the tenets of the constitution and the democracy.

**Negatives :**

* India’s human rights record is far from perfect, and there have been way too many incidents of**communal, sectarian and ethnic violence** for a successful democracy to live with.
* There is no doubt that the degeneration of politics in India and the values it has engendered have infected the country’s public institutions.
* Contemporary Indian society is still striving to promote social justice, economic progress and widespread political participation by adopting necessary reforms to modernize its social, political and administrative institutions.
* infamous ‘national emergency’ (1975-77) is seen as the only interlude or rather a blot on our memoirs as a democratic regime as has been chronicled thus far.
* The current stage of our development as a democratic state also experiences some hiccups mostly undermining our commitment to secularism like the Babri Masjid Demolitionin 1992, or the post-Godhra Riots in 2002
* The major problems before India were linguistic problems, caste system, poverty and illiteracy. To add to them malnutrition and poor health conditions, poor housing, poor work capability, lack of occupational adaptability and an inadequate level of savings reflected the clear picture of India.
* Corruption is one of the greatest challenges Indian democracy faces. The fact that it [corruption] has penetrated India’s entire political fabric has troubling implications for any democracy.

**How can India strengthen its democratic system?**

* Volunteer for Election Watches: We need people for various activities during election watches, like: data entry, interacting with election officers, etc.
* Strengthening media role to avoid yellow Journalism
* high time that locals participate and build a transparent and healthy democracy,
* Its democracy requires much improvement — particularly in strengthening government institutions, curtailing repression, and lowering income inequality.

*Topic: Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure,*

[**2) India’s record in conducting fair and free elections is exemplary. Critically comment on the non-electoral performance of India’s democracy. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/25/2-indias-record-conducting-fair-free-elections-exemplary-critically-comment-non-electoral-performance-indias-democracy/)

[The Indian Express](http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/assembly-elections-2016-india-democracy-tamil-nadu-kerala-assam-west-bengal-2817416/)

**Background:-**

Non electoral performance of India’s democracy is also about ensuring the basic liberal freedoms : freedom of expression, freedom of religious practice, freedom of association etc.

**India has not fared well in the non electoral performance of its democracy:-**

* **No protection:**
	+ In a multi-religious society, which has had a deeply hierarchical system, some group or the other can always claim to be hurt.
	+ When a group claims injury, the government does not protect the writer, the artist, the speaker.
	+ Thus, Salman Rushdie’s Satanic Verses was banned because the Muslim right felt injured; M.F. Husain, a leading painter, had to leave India because his paintings offended the Hindu right.
* Once an elected government takes over, it often places **restrictions on basic liberal freedoms**. Intellectuals, writers, artists, students and non-governmental organisations can face harassment on grounds that they hurt the sentiments of certain groups, or undermine national interest.
* **Communalism**has been Indian democracy’s greatest failure. Communal riots keep propping up in different parts of the country.
* Even though Indian constitution has a neutral stand on religion,successive governments take stands which are biased towards one community or the other.For example Beef ban by government was for appeasing the hindu majority .This **raises insecurity in the minority communities.**
* **Despite 73rd and 74 th constitutional acts** enacted and panchayat raj institutions were given the power,decentralization has not been effective as state still has a major role to play and PRI are just given power for namesake.
* **Reservation problem:**
	+ Despite Indian constitution intent behind giving reservation for socio economic backward communities was genuine,this aspect has been misused by the successive governments to gain votes.
	+ The recent announcement of 10% reservation for forward community in Gujarat strengthens this perspective.All these alienated different communities against one another.
* **Criminal justice system delay:**
	+ Increase in the number of pendency of cases, wrong convictions,undertrials problem ,eroding quality of judges have led to excessive delay in justice system.
	+ Justice delayed is justice denied led to many poor people lose trust in the judicial system of the country.
* **Misuse of presidents rule**:
	+ Art 356 has been used over 100 times most often usurping the power of state legislatures.
* **Decline in parliamentary discipline:**
	+ The elected representatives disciple in assemblies and parliament has been deteriorating to a great extent as seen from the instances where violence is used,involvement in scams ,watching indecent videos etc..
* **Social indicators of India** especially Maternal mortality ,malnutrition,infant mortality are still alarming .
* Even after 68 years of Independence the divide between the rich and poor is increasing with **poor becoming poorer rich becoming richer** ,gender gaps are increasing which is very evident in the sex ratio.Also India has a very lo**w gini coefficient.**
* Because of **excessive exploitation of cities** and failure to plan them according have led to rapid urbanization leading to deteriorated quality of life,pollution in the cities and other environmental problems.
* Socio economic backward communities like tribals,Adivasis etc have been the worst hit.The **rapid exploitation of forest resources** and mining activities hit their livelihood in a very adverse way.
* **Decline in values in the society** where material success is given more importance than the ethics and morals of the person.
* **Failure to solve the developmental issues** led to rise of left wing extremism and insurgency in many Indian states.

**Yes,Indian democracy has been successful:-**

* The **evolution of institutions** like Election Commission, Supreme Court, CAG etc in upholding the values in the constitution has been phenomenal.
* The **passage of laws** like right to information,Social audit,Right to Education,citizen charter gave accountability and transparency to the Indian system which was lacking earlier.
* **Judicial interventions** in the light of public interest like the Vishakha guidelines,transgender rights gave a push to the legislature reminding it of the need for good governance in the democracy.
* Even the **measures taken by governments** like NREGA,PAHAL,Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana put India on the world map showcasing the efficiency in providing smart governance.
* With **decentralization of powers** given to PRI, local governance has given the right to the people at the bottom to demand governance and make them part of the decision making process.PESA and Forest rights act gave further thrust to this aspect.
* **Minorities** have not been neglected as seen from the governments attention by the programmes like 15 point program,Nai Manzil,reservation etc..
* **Socio economic backward communities** benefitted a lot as is seen in the rise of literacy levels in the country for these categories along with the employment benefits.
* **Food security**has been achieved with self sufficiency in food grains,having huge buffer stocks leading to poverty reduction which ultimately paved the way for the better health outcomes.
* Indian democracy has been largely successful in making India one of the fastest growing economies in the world ,a force to reckon with and a country that can be trusted and respected in the international arena.

*Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations*

[**3) Examine the objectives of recently signed Chabahar agreement between India and Iran. Discuss the significance of this agreement for India. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/25/3-examine-objectives-recently-signed-chabahar-agreement-india-iran-discuss-significance-agreement-india/)

[The Indian Express](http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/chabahar-port-deal-narendra-modi-tehran-india-iran-2817413/)

[Business Standard](http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/the-emergence-of-iran-116052401579_1.html)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/raising-the-stakes-with-chabahar/article8642355.ece)

**Objectives :**

* One major purpose of Chabahar has always been to cut Pakistan out of the route between India and Afghanistan
* To reorder India’s geopolitics to the north-west of the subcontinent.

**Significance :**

* The $500 million deal promises to lead to the development of a deep-water port,a 500-km rail line linking it to Iran’s rail network, and new aluminium and urea plants.
* The **Chabahar agreement marks a new level in India’s overseas ambitions**, establishing a genuinely strategic presence in one of the world’s great energy markets
* Freed of sanctions, Iran’s economy is expected to grow sharply in coming years**; Indian businesses will now be in a position to capitalise on the coming boom.**
* The deal w**ill also allow India to expand its strategic presence in Afghanistan**, allowing businesses in both countries to bypass a Pakistan that has proven reflexively hostile to allowing transit rights to trade between them.
* In short, the deal signals that India, like China, has **big-league ambitions.**
* On both security and economic grounds, therefore**, the re-emergence of Iran has given India a big new card to play in its neighbourhood.**The agreement signed recently has the potential to alter the geopolitical map of South and Central Asia.
* India has already said its companies will set up plants in sectors such as fertilizers, petrochemicals and metallurgy in the zone. It will also supply $400 million worth of steel rails to Tehran to build the railway link.

**Negatives :**

* The fate of the Chabahar project will depend on successive governments showing sustained resolve in the face of geopolitical hurdles.
	+ relations between Tehran and the West, though vastly improved, remain fraught, with many hardliners in Iran believing the country was short-changed in the nuclear deal that paved the way for an end to sanctions. **That, potentially, could lead to tensions**
	+ Iran’s role in Syria and Afghanistan.
* Indian governments will also **have to incentivise private corporations for using the Iranian route** to transit goods to Central Asia, rather than the fast, cheap networks they now use through Singapore and China.
* Finally, the project can only be successful **if Indian manufacturing is globally competitive**
* **real challenge lies in execution**. India’s record in finishing big-ticket projects abroad is far from consistent.

**What is needed ?**

* One is that the port itself, with a relatively modest capacity,  must not become a casualty of dilatory work by the Indian agencies responsible.
* The second is that ambitions must not be moderate should indeed be expanded. Not just Afghanistan, **but all of Central Asia should be opened up to trade with India through Chabahar**.
* India has been rightly wary of the Chinese international infrastructure investment programme that goes by the name of “One Belt, One Road”; but the extent that it plans to link Iran to eastern China through Central Asia should not be ignored in the development planning for Chabahar.
* India needs to energise its diplomacy to keep engagement with Iran on an even keel, **irrespective of outside pressure.**

*Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations*

[**4) Should India be a part of the reconciliation process with the Taliban in Afghanistan peace process? At present what should be India’s role in Afghanistan? Examine. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/25/4-india-part-reconciliation-process-taliban-afghanistan-peace-process-present-indias-role-afghanistan-examine/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/chabahar-and-the-afghan-roundabout/article8642360.ece)

**Yes, India needs to be part of the reconciliation process:**

* **Strategic significance of Afghanistan makes it imperative for India:**
	+ Afghanistan has gone from being a landlocked country with limited options to a country at the centre of many plans.
* **Projects involved increases the necessity for India to play the role:**
	+ INSTC
	+ while the U.S. is supporting the ‘New Silk Road Initiative’ linking Afghanistan to Central Asia
	+ Turkey is planning the ‘Modern Silk Road’ with Georgia and Azerbaijan, not to mention the ‘Silk Wind initiative’.
	+ There are ancillary projects like the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline, and the CASA-1000 electricity project, not to mention the SAARC dream of seamless connectivity to the east.
	+ A 2007 study by the Ministry of Commerce estimated that bringing Afghanistan into a possible South Asian Free Trade Agreement would alone yield benefits of $2 billion, of which $606 million would go to Afghanistan.
	+ And then there is the biggest plan yet, that of the Chinese ‘One Belt One Road’, combined with its China-Pakistan Economic Corridor that Afghanistan joined .
* Rise of Taliban again in Afghanistan and ISIS rapidly expanding can cause havoc in India. So India needs to be very cautious especially in the light of security reasons.
* India invested hugely in Afghanistan.
* All these make imperative for an increase in role of India in Afghanistan and also make it a strong contender in the reconciliation process.

**No:**

* The first is obviously the **Taliban’s basic ideological opposition to India** and India’s troubles with Pakistan, which houses much of the leadership.
* The second is that the **process itself is in trouble, with Taliban leaders refusing to come for talks**, and Afghanistan pulling most of its delegation out of the Quadrilateral Coordination Group meeting in anger with Pakistan.
	+ Given the atmosphere, the U.S. strike on Taliban chief Mullah Akhtar Mansour would most definitely have buried the already dying reconciliation process as well.
	+ Instead, the Afghan government has had more success on signing a preliminary agreement this month on its own, with the Hizb-e-Islami, than it has in all these years with the Taliban.
* Also ideological differences India and the other countries like Iran in the region have for approaching Taliban also can be a contentious issue.

**India’s role in Afghanistan :**

* It is no longer possible to see Afghanistan in terms of a line from Delhi to Kabul, **but as a centre-point of many strands of connectivity and energy**, with each strand held by a different world power or regional leader.
* This is **also true of security in Afghanistan,** and India needs to find its own voice and speak clearly to be heard if it is to build on the potential of the Chabahar gambit.
* While Afghanistan is no longer the Great Game, groupings such as the U.S. and allies, including non-NATO allies, and another with Russia, China and Iran, are beginning to coordinate in different ways.
	+ Former Afghan President suggesting an “important role” for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Afghan stability is significant in this regard.
	+ It is not only time but also necessary for India to clearly define where it stands on all of this.
* **If New Delhi cannot be a peacemaker, it would be hard to see how it could be a peacekeeper in Afghanistan**.
* Its **strategic assistance to the country**, in the form of helicopters and jeeps, helping finance weaponry for the Afghan Army, and training army and police officers marks the broad area in which India must continue to operate.
	+ In the country’s surveys, India’s popularity outranks that of every other country. Of the projects, the three biggest the highway to Iran, the Parliament, and the reconstruction of the 42MW Salma irrigation and electricity project are now complete, and the government must begin to think of next projects in Afghanistan, given their impact.

*Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health*

[**5) “Every investment in combating non-communicable diseases is a means of promoting development.” Elaborate the statements and discuss the threats of non-communicable diseases to economy and measures needed to be taken to address these threats. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/25/5-every-investment-combating-non-communicable-diseases-means-promoting-development-elaborate-statements-discuss-threats-non-communicable-diseases-economy-measures/)

[Livemint](http://www.livemint.com/Industry/XFv6LkrLPSCa3TBvNhRMqK/Healthcare-funding-options-needed.html)

**Background:**

* Children, adults and the elderly are all vulnerable to the risk factors that contribute to noncommunicable diseases, whether from **unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, exposure to tobacco smoke or the effects of the harmful use of alcohol.**
* These diseases are driven by forces that include ageing, rapid unplanned urbanization, and the globalization of unhealthy lifestyles. For example, globalization of unhealthy lifestyles like unhealthy diets may show up in individuals as raised blood pressure, increased blood glucose, elevated blood lipids, and obesity.
* NCDs **threaten progress towards the UN Millennium Development Goals** and post-2015 development agenda.
* **Poverty is closely linked with NCDs**. The rapid rise in NCDs is predicted to impede poverty reduction initiatives in low-income countries, particularly by increasing household costs associated with health care.
* **Vulnerable and socially disadvantaged people get sicker and die sooner than people of higher social positions**, especially because they are at greater risk of being exposed to harmful products, such as tobacco or unhealthy food, and have limited access to health services.
* In low-resource settings, **health-care costs for cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes or chronic lung diseases can quickly drain household resources, driving families into poverty.**
* The exorbitant costs of NCDs, including often lengthy and expensive treatment and loss of breadwinners, are forcing millions of people into poverty annually, stifling development.

**Threats to economy:**

* Global evidence on health spending shows that unless a country spends at least 5-6% of its GDP on health, basic healthcare needs are seldom met. NCD programmes **require significant fiscal resources.**
* **Late detection problem:**
	+ Early diagnosis and management are the most cost-effective way of tackling NCDs. But the**absence of facilities, manpower and resources make quick detection and preventive care a low priority.**
	+ Late detection of NCDs **increases the costs of treatment** and management hugely across the country.
* National economies are reportedly suffering **significant losses** because of premature deaths or inability to work resulting from heart disease, stroke and diabetes.
	+ For instance, China is expected to lose roughly $558 billion in national income between 2005 and 2015 due to early deaths.
	+ In 2005, heart disease, stroke and diabetes caused an estimated loss in international dollarsof national income of 9 billion in India and 3 billion in Brazil.
* **Mental health:**
	+ The burden of chronic NCDs including mental healthconditions is felt in workplaces around the world, notably due to elevated levels of absenteeism, or absence from work because of illness, and presenteeism, or productivity lost from staff coming to work and performing below normal standards due to poor health.
	+ For example, the United Kingdom experienced a loss of about 175 million days in 2006 to absence from illness among a working population of 37.7 million people.
	+ The estimated cost of absences due to illness was over 20 billion pounds in the same year.

**What needs to be done?**

* Need a comprehensive and diverse system of healthcare financing that pools financial risk and shares the cost burden
* **PPP:**
	+ In fact, strategic public-private partnerships between central and state governments and private stakeholders will drive global and national attention to NCDs, attract more funds and promote the establishment of stronger policies.
	+ Public-private partnership will play a major role in ensuring wider healthcare coverage that serves the unique needs of diverse rural and urban populations.
	+ For example, a social health insurance programme designed to provide basic healthcare services for populations with limited financial means may be the answer for rural and underprivileged populations, whereas private health insurance schemes may serve employed urban groups more effectively.
* **comprehensive approach is needed** that requires all sectors, including health, finance, foreign affairs, education, agriculture, planning and others, to work together to reduce the risks associated with NCDs,
* Other ways to reduce NCDs are **high impact essential NCD interventions that can be delivered through a primary health-care approach to strengthen early detection and timely treatment**. Evidence shows that such interventions are excellent economic investments because, if applied to patients early, can reduce the need for more expensive treatment.
* Change in diets by people can act as a preventive mechanism to non communicable diseases.

*Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations*

[**2) Analyse India’s mistakes vis a vis its conducting of foreign policy with Iran, especially developing Chabahar Port and the strategic importance of Iran for India. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/26/2-analyse-indias-mistakes-vis-vis-conducting-foreign-policy-iran-especially-developing-chabahar-port-strategic-importance-iran-india/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/the-takeaway-from-tehran/article8647134.ece)

**India’s mistakes :-**

* **Absence of a strategic view of Iran**:
	+ India’s ties with Iran were looked as purely transactional, essentially a buyer-seller relationship centred on energy.
* Chabahar complications:
	+ The Finance Ministry initially **applied the brakes on plans for development of the port**, insisting that there had to be a certain assured return on investment for the project.
	+ The strategic import of the project, especially by way of providing access to Afghanistan, did not figure in their calculations.
* **The United States’s sanctions on Iran**:
	+ Although the Indian government claimed that it would not adhere to any unilateral sanctions, in practice it took a cautious tack.
	+ The danger of exposing Indian banks and companies to indirect American sanctions for dealing with Iranian entities bulked large in the government’s thinking.
* **India did not rightly understand the strategic importance of Iran:**
	+ The basic point is that Iran has always potentially been the most important power in the region. It has a unique geopolitical location owing to its reach in Central Asia and Caucasus as well as in West Asia and the Persian Gulf.
	+ The wars against Iraq in 1991 and 2003 removed the strongest regional counterweight to Iran.
	+ During this period, Iran also began supporting dissident Palestinian groups such as Hamas as well as anti-Israel outfits like Hezbollah.
	+ The rise of the Islamic State apart, the disintegration of the region has empowered Iran by driving Iraq, Syria and Russia closer to it.
	+ **If India desires any influence in the region, it must prepare to navigate these tricky geopolitical shoals**.
* **Ideological differences:**
	+ As far as Afghanistan is concerned, it is clear that Iran does not share India’s opposition to any attempt at reaching out to the Taliban
	+ Hence, India will remain marginal to the evolving political situation in that country unless India rethinks its approach.

**However India always knew the importance of Iran as seen from the following points:**

* **Chabahar port:**
	+ a contract for the development and operation for 10 years of two terminals and five berths
	+ the extension of credit lines of $500 million for the port and of Rs.3,000 crore for importing steel rails and implementation of the port
	+ memorandums of understanding on provision of services by Indian Railways, including financing to the tune of $1.6 billion, for the **Chabahar-Zahedan railway line** a line that is also part of the trilateral agreement between India, Iran and Afghanistan on a transit and trade corridor.
	+ India started focusing on Chabahar especially to look into the Gwadar port which is under Chinese influence in Pakistan.
* India wants cooperation with Iran for many of the connectivity projects like INSTC,CASA project etc..

*Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India’s interests*

[**3) The United States’ Federal Open Market Committee is said to take a decision to raise the so-called Fed Funds Rate at its next meeting in mid-June. Should India be worried? Discuss. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/26/3-united-states-federal-open-market-committee-said-take-decision-raise-called-fed-funds-rate-next-meeting-mid-june-india-worried-discuss/)

[Business Standard](http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/a-bumpy-ride-116052501836_1.html)

**Yes India should be worried :**

* If it does so, there would be **shifts in the pattern of global fund flows** and corresponding**readjustments in currency exchange rates.** Those effects, and the underlying reasons for the Fed turning hawkish, would require policy makers elsewhere to review their **policy stances.**
* **Portfolio investors** may pull some of their corpus out of emerging markets and head for the American bond market instead.
* This could mean a **falling rupee.** If the rupee falls even as prices of crude oil and gas rise, a **larger current account deficit is likely**. India’s inflation gauges are already headed high and such a scenario of higher energy prices could lead **to higher inflation**.
* For RBI there would be less headroom to cut interest rates. The Budgetary assumptions and calculations with respect to the **fiscal deficit** and to **energy and fertiliser subsidies might need to be revisited**.
* And if the stock market slides lower, the disinvestment programme would be hit hard.
* Unfortunately, a weaker currency may not be enough to revive exports

**No:**

* a weaker rupee would help a little in terms of **trade competitiveness** so long as the fall is not accompanied with great volatility.
* The strengthening of the dollar could have a **positive impact on India’s export of goods and services**while potentially limiting the growth of imported goods. This first order effect **will likely result in an improvement in the balance of trade for India**

*Topic: Indian constitution – features*

[**4) “The right to free speech cannot be read to mean that one citizen can defame another.” Should Right to Reputation be considered as fundamental right? Critically comment. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/26/4-right-free-speech-cannot-read-mean-one-citizen-can-defame-another-right-reputation-considered-fundamental-right-critically-comment/)

[Livemint](http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/KNg7qwrvynNiOPfa1QjZ2K/Right-to-reputation-is-a-fundamental-right.html)

**Background:**

* The recent judgment of the Supreme Court rejecting the constitutional challenge to criminal defamation stands as a landmark verdict in the context of the world’s largest democracy.

**Yes ,Right to Reputation should be considered a fundamental right:**

* There have been several judgements on fundamental rights of freedom of speech and expression and their importance in the context of democracy; however, **this judgement highlights the other fundamental principles that are equally important** and elevates reputation to the status of a fundamental right.
* In the context of harmful content especially in the context of the virtual world **reputation has to be protected** and it cannot be considered a private wrong. Therefore, there has to be redressal for genuine loss of reputation and the State is obligated to protect the human dignity of an individual.
* The **fundamental right to speech and expression** includes speech laden with harmful intent, made with reckless disregard as well.Right to reputation is an integral part of Articles 21 and 19(2) of the Constitution. **The right to free speech cannot be read to mean that one citizen can defame another.**
* The **theory of balancing of rights** dictates that along with the right to freedom of speech and expression, **there is a correlative duty on citizens not to interfere with the liberty of others,** as everyone is entitled to the dignity of person and of reputation.
	+ Nobody has a right to denigrate the others’ right to person or reputation.
	+ In this context, criminal defamation, which exists in the form of Sections 499 and 500 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), is not a restriction on free speech that can be characterized as disproportionate.
* It is pertinent to note that the primary basis for this judgment of the Supreme Court is the balance of right to free speech and the right to reputation, and as a result of this balance, **the court upheld the provisions of criminal defamation.**

**No:**

* The recent judgment of the Supreme Court upholding the constitutional validity of criminal defamation has been critiqued as an opportunity lost for striking down criminal defamation from the statute books, primarily because **defamation is only a civil wrong, and nothing more**.
* The principal argument made on behalf of the petitioners was that **to have defamation as a component of criminal law was an anathema to the idea of free speech** as enumerated in our Constitution,and therefore an unreasonable restriction on a basic fundamental right.

Perhaps it is time for the legislature to consider the criminality of defamation, and decide as to whether the act of defamation is civil tort or criminal wrong.

*Topic: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests*

[**5) China and Pakistan are trying to scuttle India’s efforts to become member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Do you think China has moral right to block India’s efforts? How will its action impact India – China relations? Critically comment. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/26/5-china-pakistan-trying-scuttle-indias-efforts-become-member-nuclear-suppliers-group-think-china-moral-right-block-indias-efforts-will-action-impact-ind/)

[Livemint](http://www.livemint.com/Opinion/YscXkydO5bKjQGuzmwMq1K/Indias-NSG-bid-China-in-the-way.html)

**China does not have a moral right to block India’s efforts :-**

* **NSG membership doesn’t depend on NPT:-**
	+ India rejected China’s contention that it must sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to get membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), saying France was included in the elite group without signing the NPT.
* Membership of the NSG will be the final step in India’s inclusion in the global nuclear order.It is not surprising, therefore, that China is taking such a strong stand on this issue despite the fact **that its own non-proliferation track record remains abysmal.**
* **Pakistan factor:**
	+ In fact, **it was China’s support for Pakistan’s nuclear programme that led the way for India’s overt nuclearization**.
	+ China has supplied Pakistan with nuclear materials and expertise and provided critical assistance in the construction of Pakistan’s nuclear facilities. **The Sino-Pakistani nuclear relationship is perhaps the only case where a nuclear weapon state has actually passed on weapons-grade fissile material and bomb design to a non-nuclear weapon state**
	+ After the 2008 US-India civilian nuclear pact, China made it a point to further enhance nuclear cooperation with Pakistan, despite criticism from other nuclear powers.**This action was in clear violation of NSG guidelines that forbid nuclear transfers to countries not signatories to the NPT or adhere to comprehensive international safeguards on their nuclear programme**.
* China has relied on an **obstructionist argument** and called for further discussion on whether “India and other countries” that have not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) can join the NSG.
* China has made **NPT signature its central argument** to scuttle India’s entry. Beijing is claiming that a “compulsory” requirement for NSG membership is that “the NSG members must be signatories to the NPT”.
* Apart from the rhetoric about the NPT, **China has also encouraged Pakistan to apply for NSG membership so as to link New Delhi’s entry** with that of Islamabad’s, knowing well that there will be few takers for Pakistan’s case.
* India wants to be part of the decision-making at the highest levels of global nuclear architecture. As a rising and responsible nuclear power, it should be a part of this structure and it will also be good for the NSG if India is part of the decision-making process.

**Yes China does have some moral right :**

* China suggested that there were political reasons concerning the stability of South Asia to justify the exports echoing Pakistan’s oft-repeated complaint that the US-India nuclear pact had upset stability in the region by assisting India’s strategic programme. That is why it is opposing India’s bid for NSG membership.

**Effect of China’s action on India China relations :**

**Negative :**

* Experts feel **China wants to be the supreme uno regional player** in Asia and doesn’t want other countries to rise in power
* **Shows the China’s refusal to acknowledge**  India’s role in upholding of nuclear safety tenets.
* It can get **into other areas** where mutual suspicion might prop up especially related to border conflicts, improving relations with each other armies.
* **Affect relations in multilateral forums** like BRICS,SCO and the recent banks NDB,AIIB where mutual cooperation is very significant
* India –US :
	+ The US has been declaring its support for India’s full membership since 2010.
	+ Can make India act as an important country in U.S pivot of Asia doctrine
* To many in India, this will further reinforce the perception that China is willing to sacrifice a long-term strategic partnership with a rising power for the short-term objective of trying to scuttle its rise. This won’t be helpful for Sino-Indian ties.

**Positive :**

* Can make India realise the need to up its military and diplomatic capabilities especially in the light of rejection of terrorist bid against azhar and now this.

*Topic: Functioning of judiciary*

[**6) The Supreme Court of India’s expansionist role attempting to orchestrate environmental governance in the case relating to vehicular pollution in Delhi is seen as a problem. Examine why. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/26/6-supreme-court-indias-expansionist-role-attempting-orchestrate-environmental-governance-case-relating-vehicular-pollution-delhi-seen-problem-examine/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/the-courts-future-is-in-its-own-hands/article8647135.ece)

**Background:**

* The Supreme Court ordered all diesel taxis to cease operations in Delhi because the deadline for their conversion to CNG had expired.
* However after protests and a fresh hearing, the court agreed to modify its order and allowed already registered taxis to ply, while at the same time preventing fresh registrations.

**Reasons why Supreme Court’s in this case is seen as a problem are:**

* that repeated persuasion could force the court to change its mind. Nothing could be **more antithetical to the dignity of a court of law than an insinuation that it is amenable to entreaty.**
* **The order of the court to ban diesel taxis in Delhi in the first place was contrary to law, common sense and practical reality.**
	+ In pure legal terms, taxi owners had legitimate expectations that once a commercial licence was issued on particular terms, those terms would be respected.
	+ For the court, without finding those terms themselves faulty, to have modified them to the detriment of the taxi owners would upset their legally protected expectations.
* Moreover, while the right to a pollution-free environment can be traced to Article 21 of the Constitution, **it is neither a problem unique to Delhi nor the exceptional responsibility of taxi drivers to redress**.
	+ In a recent survey, Delhi was found to be behind Gwalior, Allahabad, Patna and Raipur in the list of polluted cities.
	+ For the court to justify special restrictions on taxis that requires their banning as well as treating Delhi as a special case, it would have to demonstrate that pollution by diesel taxis in Delhi was somehow of a distinct type warranting particularly stringent intervention.So this looks like a futile exercise.
* The futility of such an exercise also underlines the fact that managing Delhi’s pollution is simply**not a task that is within the managerial competence of the judiciary.**
* **Why is it difficult for judiciary?**
	+ When American Supreme Court tried to effectuate ground-level social change three constraints emerged
		- **a lack of independence**
		- **the limited text of constitutional rights and the inability to conceptualise**
		- **enforce holistic reform.**
	+ While the Indian Supreme Court may have successfully overcome the first two,**it is intrinsic to the judicial function that it is unable to enforce meaningful reform.**
		- The order to convert all diesel taxis with national permits but operating in Delhi to CNG failed to take into account the abject lack of CNG filling stations in States contiguous to the National Capital Region where such taxis most often travel.
	+ **The combination of an openness to entreaty, a simplistic consideration of legal principles, and not taking its institutional limitations seriously**has meant that the Supreme Court is increasingly seen as a court that runs government rather than one that dispenses justice**. However, the concern arises not from the fact that the court plays such a role, but how it does so.**
	+ Recent episodes demonstrate that the court has rushed headlong into this task, determined to correct wrongs and uphold rights. It is important to note the incipient costs.**Playing such a core governance function means that it is only a matter of time before people expect it to be accountable as government is — to provide in times of need, and to criticise it, perhaps even defy it when needs are not met.**The protest by diesel taxi drivers is a warning sign in this regard**.**

It is imperative that the court picks up on it and introspects on carving out a role in national governance that doesn’t jeopardise its institutional credibility.

*Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations*

[**2) Do you think the elements of the 2003 New Delhi Declaration between India and Iran are still relevant today? Examine. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/27/2-think-elements-2003-new-delhi-declaration-india-iran-still-relevant-today-examine/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/watch-the-follow-through/article8652050.ece)

**Background :**

* The New Delhi Declaration provided the strategic underpinning in terms of shared regional and global interests and addressed all aspects of bilateral cooperation — energy, connectivity, education and training, and science and technology with special reference to information technology.
* Both countries also established a framework for enhancing defence cooperation.

**Yes the declaration is still relevant :-**

* All the elements identified in the 2003 New Delhi Declaration remain valid today, especially **long-term energy cooperation** as well as developing **Chabahar port for enhancing connectivity to Afghanistan** and Central Asia.
* With the PM’s visit beginning has been **made to release about 20 per cent of the pending payment.** This helps in removing an irritant and building up Iranian oil supplies in future from current levels to the pre-sanctions levels of over 500,000 barrels per day..
* A key development was signing of the **Trilateral Transit and Transport Corridor Treaty for**.The project involves developing Chabahar port (barely a thousand kilometres from Kandla, Gujarat) with road and rail connectivity linking it to Zaranj, on the Afghan-Iran border, 900 km to the north.
* Connectivity especially to India bypassing Pakistan is still very significant even today
* Geopolitical strength and connectivity to Central Asia and Europe
* Iran is a key partner for India for strengthening its role in Afghanistan and also in the light of containing the spread of ISIS and other terrorist organizations.

**No:**

* The regional backdrop is more complex today compared to 2003.
* Developments in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, strains in Iran’s relations with Saudi Arabia and rising sectarianism in the Islamic world are exposing new fault lines.

*Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health,*

[**3) Since 2008, concerns have been growing globally about resistance against antibiotics in bacteria and other disease-causing pathogens. How is India affected by antibiotic resistance? What strategy is needed to fight it? Examine. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/27/3-since-2008-concerns-growing-globally-resistance-antibiotics-bacteria-disease-causing-pathogens-india-affected-antibiotic-resistance-strategy/)

[Business Standard](http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/drug-resistance-crisis-116052601542_1.html)

**How is India affected by antibiotic resistance ?**

* The fear is that the unchecked growth of microbial resistance may hasten the end of the antibiotics era **without offering any effective substitute for these wonder drugs.**
* Simply put, **even trivial infections may turn deadly for want of curative treatment**
* **Economic dimension** – incurable infections could sap $100 trillion from the world economy between now and 2050, apart from killing over 10 million people every year by then.
* The chances of the spread of NDM-1 and similar other bugs too, are relatively higher in India as people are inclined to self-medicate with antibiotics for minor infections.
* The doctors, too, tend to prescribe these drugs even in cases where these are not indicated, unmindful of the fact that **indiscriminate use is the single-most potent factor for soaring antibiotics resistance**
* Antibiotic-resistant bacteria, also known as superbugs**, infect about two million people and kill at least 23,000 people in the US each year**.There is **no comparative data for India**, but the country is the world’s largest consumer of antibiotics and has emerged as a leading hotbed of untreatable bacterial infections, their threat doubling over five years.
	+ These bugs have also the ability to evolve, adapt and fight back.
* **Healthcare expenditure per capita increases** leading to increased out of pocket expenditure so savings are hurt which could have been used for other productive means.
* The **governments have to spend more money** in containing the diseases with new strains developing each day.So research and development expenditure has to increase.Social expenditure on poverty alleviation programmes will be affected.**Also fiscal consolidation takes a toll with chances of rising fiscal deficit.**
* With rise in drug resistant diseases like TB,Diarrheoa etc**,the work force in the country takes a hit**as the productivity and efficiency of the people is below par which leads to underutilization of their potential like in India’s case demographic dividend which is supposed to be the largest individual contibutor of workforce in the near future.
* New innovation of drugs for treating the diseases with antimicrobial resistance like XDR-TB may lead to **increased price of drugs**.The cost to treat infection caused by MRSA (Methicillin Resistant staphyloccus aureas) is twice that of the sensitive strain i.e MSSA.
* **poor sanitation and open defecation** are another problem in the case of India as it makes it even more vulnerable for antimicrobial resistance like NDM-1 enzyme .
* **Foreign investment,tourism and even exports can be adversely effected** as the world may be doubtful with the products of the country from the increased microbial resistance.
* **Insurance sector might be adversely affected** as it will be under immense stress to provide the claims which go beyond its capacity as many people demand at once.

**Solutions :**

* A **multi-pronged strategy** is urgently needed. Europe has made a beginning in this direction by**increasing awareness of this issue among public** and health care workers to ensure rational use of antibiotics.
* Indian policy in 2011- Instructions went out under this policy to stop over-the-counter sale of antibiotics and to bar doctors from suggesting more potent antibiotics than are indicated by the disease.
* **Quantum dot therapy** for treating superbugs can be an effective approach to deal with antimicrobiotic resistance
* **India’s red line campaign** is also very helpful .
* **Improvement in sanitation** is the foremost among the recommended measures, which is highly relevant to developing countries like India where hygiene and cleanliness are at a discount.
* Besides, **higher investments are needed in research and development** to invent new antibiotics, vaccines and other drugs to serve as effective alternatives to antibiotics.
* Equally important is the need to **create a surveillance network to monitor the use of antibiotics**and the growth of resilience among microbes.

*Topic: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests*

[**4) Analyse the factors that have impacted the pace of development of Indo-EU relations and suggest solutions to overcome the habitual pause in their relationship. (200 Words)**](http://www.insightsonindia.com/2016/05/27/4-analyse-factors-impacted-pace-development-indo-eu-relations-suggest-solutions-overcome-habitual-pause-relationship/)

[The Hindu](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/bloc-stock-and-barrel/article8652052.ece)

**Factors affecting indo EU relationship :**

* The proximate causes for the talks being stalled for four years were the **Italian marines case** and the temporary ban, in 2015, of 700 **generic drugs** from India.
* However, **a fundamental lack of understanding** and a deficit of knowledge regarding the potential gains from the relationship, on both sides, has made the dynamic less productive than it could be and more vulnerable than it ought to be.
* The **complications within the relationship of EU countries** like migrant crisis etc do affect India EU relations .
* Another factor that has impacted the pace of development of Indo-EU relations is the fact that the**EU is grappling with how India functions**.
	+ The EU establishment is road-mapping the interaction between State and Central governments, how and where policy is formed and implemented.
	+ It is also learning from its member states that doing business directly with State governments in India is often the way forward.
* India’s **strong bilateral relationships with the parts**, i.e. several EU member states, such as France, Germany and the U.K., have affected the relationship with the whole.
* The **Broadbased Trade and Investment Agreement negotiations have remained deadlocked since 2007** over growing differences regarding greater market access sought by both aides for merchandise exports.
* India has been pushing for opening European markets for its **services sector and the movement of people to deliver those services** while the EU has been keen on reducing or abolishing tariffs in several sectors, including in the automobile and wine and spirits sectors.
* issues **related to facilitation of greater movement of professionals** from one country to another, arising out of the **Mode 4 provisions** of the 1995 General Agreement on Trade in Services is another point of contention between the two sides.
	+ This also involves India’s demands to be classified a data-safe country, which will help Indian information technology and outsourcing companies gain a foothold.
* **IPR issues**
	+ EU ban on generic drugs from India created a slight friction in pharma sector and banning of alphonso mangoes from india in 2014.
* EU’s concern over **human right violations** in India.EU brings up issues of NGO harassment like green peace and the overlooking of rights of marginal groups in development projects in India..

**Solutions:**

* The EU should **raise awareness among member states**of the added value of dialogue with India as a bloc through EU coordination (rather than acting bilaterally) on issues of common concern.
* **Enhancing public diplomacy:**
	+ The EU should also increase its visibility and reach out to the Indian public to improve understanding of the EU’s unique nature and potential. EU public diplomacy is mainly financed through the Partnership Instrument.
* **India’s IPR policy** can give impetus for resolving the contentious issues related to patents and other aspects of the intellectual property rights
* **India’s red line campaign** against excessive use of antibiotics has gained international acceptance .This can to some extent clarify the doubts regarding Indian generic drug industry .