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UPSC MAINS

Solved PYQs

2023

General Studies Paper 1



How to Maximize Your UPSC Mains Score Using These PYQs

Transform Your Preparation into Your Success Strategy

✗ "I solve PYQs but still struggle in mock exam"

Your Problem: You're treating PYQs like MCQs - solving for the sake of solving without strategic analysis.

Strategic Solution: After solving each question, spend 10 minutes analyzing: What was the examiner testing? Which keywords were crucial? How can I improve my answer structure? Create a "mistakes point list" to track recurring weaknesses.



"I can't finish questions within time limits"

Your Problem: You know the content but struggle with time management and answer structuring under pressure.

Time-Bound Practice: Set strict timers - 7 minutes for 10-mark questions, 12 minutes for 15-mark questions. Practice writing concise, impactful answers. Use bullet points and subheadings to save time while maintaining clarity.



"My answers lack depth and examples"

Your Problem: Your answers are generic and don't stand out among thousands of similar responses.

Content Enhancement: For each PYQ, create a "example bank" - collect 2-3 specific case studies, data points, or contemporary examples. Practice weaving these naturally into your answers to demonstrate comprehensive understanding.



"I don't know which topics to prioritize"

Your Problem: Without pattern analysis, you're studying everything equally instead of focusing on high-weightage areas.

Smart Analysis: Create a frequency chart of topics from last 7 years. Identify recurring themes and question patterns. Allocate 60% of your time to high-frequency topics, 40% to emerging trends. Also Sleepy Classes has a video on complete pattern analysis of UPSC mains.

⚠ Critical Mistake to Avoid

Don't just read solved answers and move on. The real learning happens when YOU attempt the question first, then compare with model answers to identify gaps.

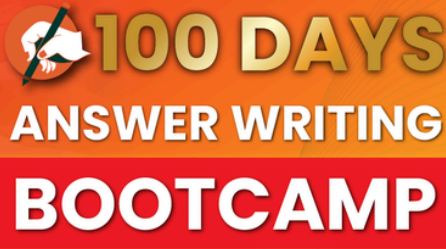


Remember: PYQs are your blueprint, not just practice material

Every question tells you exactly what UPSC expects. Use this collection to decode the examiner's mindset, not just to test your knowledge. Your success lies in understanding the 'why' behind each question.

FREE - GS Mains PYQs Discussion

Date	Day	Topic	Year
02 June 2025	Monday	General Studies Paper 1	2024
03 June 2025	Tuesday	General Studies Paper 2	2024
04 June 2025	Wednesday	General Studies Paper 3	2024
05 June 2025	Thursday	General Studies Paper 4	2024
15 June 2025	Sunday	General Studies Paper 1 to 4	2023
22 June 2025	Sunday	General Studies Paper 1 to 4	2022
29 June 2025	Sunday	General Studies Paper 1 to 4	2021
06 July 2025	Sunday	General Studies Paper 1 to 4	2020



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History

1) What are the main features of Vedic society and religion? Do you think some of the features are still prevailing in Indian society?

Introduction

- The Vedic period in ancient India, spanning roughly from 1500 BCE to 500 BCE, is characterized by the composition of the Vedas, the earliest sacred texts of Hinduism, and the emergence of distinct social and religious practices. Understanding the main features of Vedic society and religion provides valuable insights into the foundations of Indian civilization.

The key features of Vedic society

Aspect	Rig Vedic Period	Later Vedic Period
Social Stratification	Tribal Society, Divided into three groups - Warriors, Priests and People. Shudras towards end.	Varna system - Rigid and hierarchical, division of society into four classes: Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras.
Social Inequality	By and large egalitarian society, but presence of Slaves/Dasyus, unequal distribution of spoils of war, and women slaves as gifts to priests, fewer mantras dedicated to female gods, points towards social inequality. But society was tribal and largely egalitarian.	Brahmins and Kshatriyas privileged, disabilities imposed on Shudras (not allowed to read Vedas or undergo upanayana / sacred thread ceremony), choice of occupation restricted.
Kinship and Family	Kinship was basis of social structure, Joint Family, Patriarchal.	Territorial affiliation became strong, with emergence of "Rashtra".
Women's Status	Women had access to education; attended political assemblies (Sabha and Vidhata), Composed Vedic Mantras (Brahmavadini)	Decline in status; thought to be inferior and subordinate to men, restricted from rituals and formal education, and not allowed to attend Sabha, several disabilities not allowed to read Vedas or undergo upanayana / sacred thread ceremony).

Marriage	Practice of Levirate, Widow remarriage, No examples of child marriage.	Child marriage a common practice now, restrictions on widow remarriage, gotra exogamy
Polity	Sabha and Samiti held power; chiefs guided by elders. No standing army; tribal militia (Vrata, Gramani)	Strong kingship; Vedic rituals - Rajasuya, Ashvamedha, used to legitimize power.
Occupation & Economy	Pastoral Economy	Agriculture - main stay of the economy.
Religious Sphere	Polytheism, Worship of natural forces in anthromorphic form. Yajnas. Neither temple nor idol worship Simple rituals, Sacrifices were not of much significance	- Rudra, Prajapati, Vishnu became chief deities, Rituals and Cattle Sacrifice, Brahmanical Monopoly became dominant feature of the society. - No temples or idol worship. - Concept of Dharma (Universal Law) - Revolt and Resistance against Brahmanical Hinduism, Upanishads and Heterodox Philosophies.

Continuation in Contemporary Indian Society

While Indian society has undergone significant transformations over millennia, certain features of Vedic society and religion continue to persist in contemporary India:

- Caste System:** The varna system laid the groundwork for the caste system, which continues to influence social relationships and identities in India. Despite legal measures to abolish caste-based discrimination, social hierarchies based on caste still exist in many parts of the country.
- Ritual Purity and Pollution:** Based on Later Vedic texts and Dharmashastras, the idea of purity/pollution continues in practices like untouchability (though legally banned), separate utensils in rural areas, and temple access restrictions.

- **Family Structure:** While there have been shifts towards nuclear families and greater gender equality, elements of the patriarchal joint family system can still be observed in Indian society. The patriarchal authority of male elders and the importance of extended family networks remain significant.
- **Religious Practices:** Rituals and sacrifices, albeit in modified forms, continue to be performed in contemporary Hinduism. Temples dedicated to Vedic deities are still revered, and rituals such as yajnas and puja (worship) are conducted by priests and households.
- **Belief in Karma, Dharma, Moksha:** Core philosophical ideas like *dharma* (duty), *karma* (action), and *moksha* (liberation), which began evolving in the Late Vedic period, are still central to Hindu religious worldview.
- **Agrarian Economy:** Festivals and Ceremonies linked to nature (Chhath Puja, Makar Sankranti, Ganga Dusshera etc.)

Conclusion

- The Vedic period in ancient India was characterized by a complex social, religious, economic, and philosophical landscape that continues to influence contemporary Indian society. The enduring legacy of Vedic society and religion can be observed in various aspects of Indian life, from social organization and religious practices to economic activities and philosophical thought.
- By understanding the main features of Vedic society and religion, we gain deeper insights into the continuity and resilience of Indian civilization across millennia, highlighting the enduring relevance of ancient traditions in shaping contemporary Indian identity and culture.

2) How did colonial rule affect the tribals in India and what was the tribal response to the colonial oppression?

Introduction

The colonial rule in India had profound implications for the tribal communities residing in various regions of the subcontinent. **The policies and practices of the British administration often marginalised and exploited tribal populations, leading to significant social, economic, and cultural disruptions.**

Impact of Colonial Rule on Tribal Communities

1. Disruption of Traditional Land Rights

- **Introduction of Private Property:** British land revenue policies such as the *Permanent Settlement* and *Ryotwari System* failed to recognize communal land ownership. Tribals were dispossessed of lands traditionally used for shifting cultivation (*jhum*) or forest-based livelihoods.
- **Invasion of Dikus (Outsiders):** Moneylenders, zamindars, and traders—protected by colonial laws—encroached tribal lands, often through deceit or usury, leading to indebtedness and land alienation.
 - *Example:* The Santhals of the Rajmahal Hills lost land to zamindars and moneylenders, leading to the Santhal Rebellion of 1855–56.

2. Forest Laws and Economic Exploitation

- **Forest Acts (1865, 1878, 1927):** Declared forests as state property, restricted tribal access to forest produce, grazing, and hunting. Criminalized traditional practices.
 - *Example:* Gonds and Bhils of Central India lost access to sacred groves and livelihood resources.
- **Forced Labour and Commercial Forestry:** Tribals were often forced into exploitative labor for road-building, railways, or timber extraction.

3. Cultural and Social Intrusions

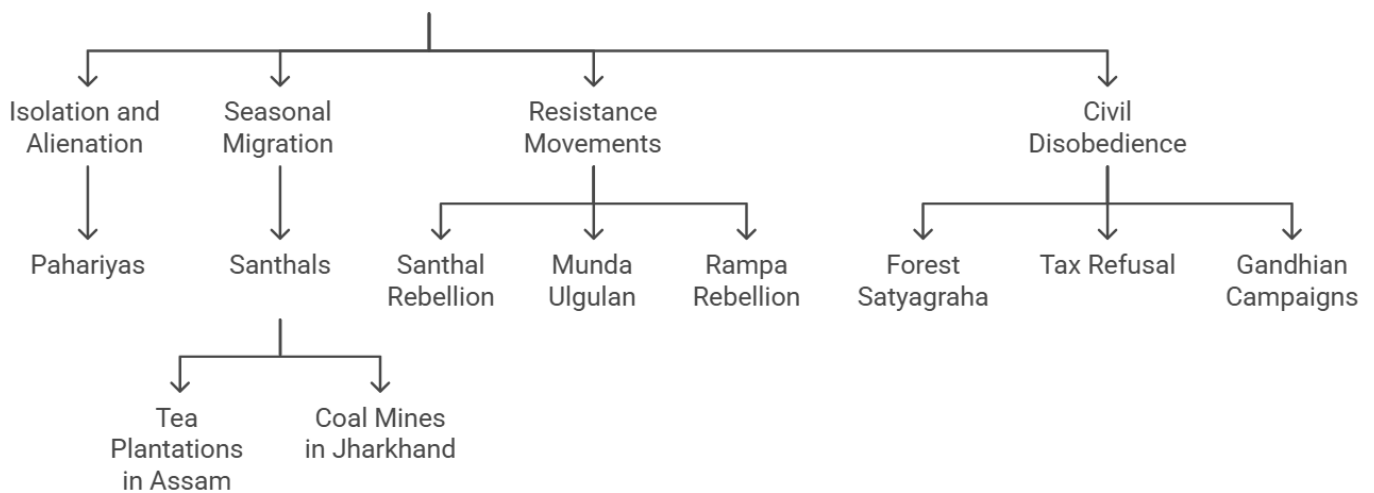
- **Missionary Activities:** Introduced Western education, Christianity, and new norms, often at odds with tribal customs. While some gained access to modern education, many perceived it as cultural erosion.
- **Criminal Tribes Act (1871):** Labeled several nomadic tribes as "criminal by birth", legitimizing their surveillance, harassment, and exclusion.

4. Economic Marginalization

- **De-industrialization and Loss of Traditional Occupations:** Colonial policies promoted cash crops and undermined tribal artisanship.

- **Integration into Market Economy:** Tribals were drawn into exploitative commercial markets without institutional safeguards.

Tribal Response to British Rule



Tribal Responses to Colonial Oppression

- Isolation and Alienation - e.g Pahariya tribesmen of Santhal hills
- Migration to work in Plantations, Mining etc.
- Armed Resistance: In response to the oppressive policies of the colonial administration, many tribal communities engaged in armed resistance movements to defend their lands, livelihoods, and autonomy.
- Tribal Uprisings: Several tribal uprisings erupted against British rule, such as the Santhal Rebellion (1855-1856) led by leaders like Sidhu and Kanhu Murmu, and the Bastar Rebellion (1910) led by tribal leaders against exploitative forest policies.
- Guerrilla Warfare: Tribals employed guerrilla warfare tactics, including ambushes, raids, and attacks on colonial outposts and settlements, to resist British encroachments on their territories.

Nonviolent Protests and Movements

In addition to armed resistance, tribal communities also engaged in nonviolent protests and movements to assert their rights and demand justice.

- Peasant Movements: Tribal peasants participated in various peasant movements and protests against unjust land policies, revenue demands, and exploitation by landlords and colonial officials.
- Social and Cultural Revival: Tribal leaders and intellectuals initiated social and cultural revival movements aimed at preserving indigenous traditions, languages, and customs. Efforts were made to revive traditional forms of governance and community solidarity.



- Example- The Forest Satyagraha of the 1930s is a notable example of non-violent protest by tribals in colonial India. In response to oppressive British forest laws that restricted their traditional rights, tribals peacefully asserted their access to forest resources, aligning with Gandhian principles of non-violence.

Participation in Nationalist Struggle

Tribal communities also participated in the broader nationalist struggle for independence from British rule, aligning themselves with the Indian National Congress and other political movements.

- **Tribal Leaders in Congress:** Several tribal leaders, such as **Birsa Munda and Alluri Sitarama Raju**, played prominent roles in the Indian National Congress and other nationalist organizations, advocating for tribal rights within the framework of the broader freedom movement.
- **Demand for Tribal Autonomy:** Tribal representatives in the Congress and other forums articulated demands for tribal autonomy, protection of tribal lands and resources, and recognition of tribal customary laws and governance systems.

Conclusion

- The colonial rule had profound and far-reaching effects on tribal communities in India, leading to land alienation, economic exploitation, cultural assimilation, and social dislocation. In response to colonial oppression, tribal communities demonstrated resilience and resistance through armed uprisings, nonviolent protests, and participation in the nationalist struggle. While the legacies of colonialism continue to impact tribal communities in contemporary India, their struggles and resilience have contributed to the ongoing quest for social justice, autonomy, and recognition of tribal rights in the post-colonial era.

3) What were the major technological changes introduced during the Sultanate period? How did those technological changes influence Indian society?

Introduction

- The Sultanate period in Indian history, spanning from the 13th to the 16th century, witnessed significant technological advancements that transformed various aspects of society.

The major technological changes introduced during the Sultanate period

Technological Development	Description	Impact on Indian Society
Agriculture :	Improvement of Persian Wheel (Rahat): Improved irrigation techniques by lifting water efficiently from a deeper level for irrigation, enhancing agricultural productivity in regions like Punjab and Haryana.	Increased agricultural output , supported larger populations , and urban growth . Facilitated economic prosperity and the development of trade networks .
	Crop Diversification / New Crop Introductions Brought from West and Central Asia: <i>spinach, pomegranate, watermelon, citrus fruits.</i>	Enriched Indian diet and agricultural diversity.
Industry	Improved glass techniques due to Middle Eastern influence; innovations in leather, carpet, shawl production, and stone polishing. Textiles : Introduction of Charkha and carder's bow (Dhunia) in cotton production. Promotion of sericulture and cloth coloring/ dyeing (Rangsazi).	- A definite growth in towns and town life - Flourishing Urban Economy. - Ibn Battutah calls Delhi the largest city in the eastern part of the Islamic world. He says that Daulatabad (Deogir) equalled Delhi in size. - The other important cities - Lahore and Multan in the northwest, Kara and Lakhnauti in the east, and Anhilwara (Patan) and Cambay (Khambayat) in the west.

		▪ Boosted textile production in regions like Gujarat and Bengal and exports of muslin, silk, and cotton, enhancing economic growth. ▪ Cambay in Gujarat was famous for textile and gold and silver work. ▪ Sonargaon in Bengal was famous for raw silk and fine cotton cloth (called Muslin later on) ▪ Promoted trade with West Asia and Europe, leading to greater economic integration and cultural exchange.
Introduction of Paper	Paper, introduced from Islamic regions, replaced older writing materials like palm leaves and birch bark.	Facilitated a more sophisticated administrative system (Revolutionized record-keeping, administration), improved governance and tax collection, and spread Islamic culture and education. Enhanced historical documentation.
Military Technology	Use of Gunpowder and Firearms : Introduction of gunpowder and firearms, including cannons and muskets, which were crucial in warfare. The Turks also brought improved horse-riding techniques and new bow designs (Navik) for archery. Advances in metalworking techniques, including the use of new alloys and improved methods of casting and forging, led to the production of superior quality weapons.	Enhanced military capabilities led to political unification, expansion of territories, and control over rebellions , shaping the political landscape of medieval India.

Architectural Innovations	Introduction of true arch and dome techniques revolutionized Indian architecture. Use of lime mortar and new construction methods enabled the building of massive structures like forts, mosques, and tombs, such as Qutub Minar and Tughlaqabad Fort.	Emergence of Indo-Islamic architecture, reflecting cultural syncretism between Indian and Islamic architectural styles.
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Conclusion

- The Sultanate period in Indian history was characterized by significant technological advancements that transformed various aspects of society. From advancements in irrigation and water management to architectural innovations, military technology, and economic infrastructure, these technological changes had a profound impact on Indian society, shaping its economic prosperity, cultural landscape, and social dynamics.

4) Explain the role of geographical factors towards the development of Ancient India.

Introduction

- Geographical factors played a pivotal role in shaping the development of ancient India, influencing its **settlement patterns, economic activities, cultural interactions, and political dynamics**.
- The diverse and varied geographical features of the Indian subcontinent, including its **rivers, mountains, plains, and coastlines**, provided both **opportunities and challenges** for ancient **Indian societies**. A nuanced understanding of India's ancient development cannot be complete without analysing the role of geographical factors in it.



The significance of geographical factors in the development of ancient India

Geographical Factor	Impact on History (with Examples)
Rivers (Indus, Ganga, Yamuna)	Enabled agriculture, urbanization, and early civilizations (e.g., Harappan on Indus; Magadha in Ganga basin, Pataliputra (Natural Water Fort))
Fertile Plains	Supported dense population, powerful kingdoms (e.g., Maurya and Gupta empires in Gangetic plains)

Himalayas	Acted as a barrier to invasions and influenced climate; however, passes (Khyber, Bolan) allowed Persian, Greeks and Kushana entries
Vindhyas and Satpura ranges	Created a cultural divide; limited northern expansion but enabled distinct South Indian polities (e.g., Cholas, Satavahanas)
Monsoonal Climate	Seasonal rainfall shaped cropping cycles; fertile regions (e.g., eastern UP, Bihar) became political cores
Peninsular Plateau & Mineral Resources	Iron, copper, and gold deposits led to early metallurgy and state formation (e.g., Megalithic sites, Magadhan rise)
Coastlines (Eastern & Western)	Facilitated trade and urban growth; ports like Lothal, Tamralipti, Arikamedu linked India to Rome, Mesopotamia, SE Asia
Deserts (Thar)	Limited settlement but enabled trade caravan routes; fostered martial clans like Rajputs
Forests and Hills (Central India, NE)	Preserved tribal cultures, delayed state penetration; later centers of spiritual movements (e.g., Buddhism in Magadha)
Natural Barriers & Isolation Zones	Led to regional diversity, political fragmentation, and preservation of distinct linguistic and cultural identities

Conclusion

- Geographical factors were not merely passive backdrops but active agents shaping ancient Indian civilization. They influenced the **location of settlements, nature of states, economic patterns, and cultural flows**. The integration of diverse ecological zones through trade, conquest, and ideology laid the foundation of a **subcontinentally unified civilization** that defined Ancient India.

5) What was the difference between Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore in their approach towards education and nationalism?

Introduction

- Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore were two towering figures of modern India who shared a deep concern for India's freedom and cultural regeneration. However, their visions of **education and nationalism** reflected different philosophical foundations. While both sought liberation from colonial thought, they diverged in methods and ideals—offering complementary critiques of modernity and nationhood.

Approach towards Education

Mahatma Gandhi

- Gandhi's approach towards education was deeply rooted in his philosophy of "**Nai Talim**" or "**Basic Education**," which emphasised the **holistic development of an individual's physical, intellectual, and moral faculties**. Gandhi believed in the **integration of learning with manual labour and productive work**, viewing education as a means of empowering individuals to become **self-reliant and socially responsible citizens**.
- He believed in the importance of incorporating indigenous knowledge, cultural heritage, and moral teachings into the educational curriculum, viewing traditional crafts, arts, and spirituality as integral components of holistic education.
- He advocated for a **decentralised educational system that promoted vocational training, practical skills, and moral values, with an emphasis on community participation and social upliftment**.
- Mahatma Gandhi strongly felt that **Indian languages ought to be the medium of teaching. Education in English crippled Indians, distanced them from their own social surroundings, and made them "strangers in their own lands"**.
- Western education, Mahatma Gandhi said, focused on reading and writing rather than oral knowledge; it valued textbooks rather than lived experience and practical knowledge.
- **Example:** Gandhi established several educational institutions, such as the **Tolstoy Farm and Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat**, where students engaged in activities like spinning, weaving, and agriculture alongside academic studies, embodying the principles of "**Nai Talim**."

Rabindranath Tagore

- Tagore's approach towards education was shaped by his belief in the intrinsic value of **creativity, imagination, and self-expression in the learning process**. He founded **Visva-Bharati University in Santiniketan**, which emphasised a **liberal arts curriculum** that encouraged students to explore diverse disciplines and perspectives.

- Tagore's educational philosophy emphasised **the importance of individual freedom, intellectual inquiry, and cultural exchange, rejecting rigid pedagogical methods in favour of a more fluid and inclusive approach to learning.**
- Supported the **inclusion of modern science in education alongside traditional knowledge.** Advocated for the **assimilation of the best aspects of Western education into the Indian system.**
- Example: At Visva-Bharati University, Tagore implemented an open-air classroom system known as "Patha Bhavana," where students and teachers engaged in informal discussions, artistic activities, and communal living, fostering a spirit of creativity and collaboration.

Note:

- Purpose of Education:
- **Gandhi** saw education as a tool for moral awakening and swaraj (self-rule), **Tagore** envisioned it as a liberating force for the soul – transcending political boundaries.

Method of Instruction :

- **Gandhi** : Vernacular language and integration with rural life.
- **Tagore** : English and mother tongue; advocated cosmopolitan learning.

Critique of Western System :

- **Gandhi** : Rejected it as materialistic and alien to Indian ethos, promotes rote learning.
- **Tagore** : Supported the inclusion of modern science in education alongside traditional knowledge. Advocated for the assimilation of the best aspects of Western education into the Indian system, but rejected its mechanical rigidity

Approach towards Nationalism

Difference in Approach Towards Nationalism

Aspect	Mahatma Gandhi	Rabindranath Tagore
Concept of Nationalism	Rooted in <i>Swaraj</i> – self-rule, rooted in Indian civilizational values	Marked by his emphasis on cultural pluralism, humanism, and internationalism, which transcended narrow notions of patriotism and territorial boundaries. Example: In his essay "Nationalism in India," Tagore criticised the excesses of nationalist fervour and called for a more inclusive and humane vision of nationalism that respected the rights and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their race, religion, or nationality.

View on Nation-State	Supportive of Indian nationhood as a spiritual and moral project	Cautious; rejected the idea of aggressive nationalism and chauvinistic fervour, warning against the dangers of narrow-mindedness, fanaticism, and xenophobia.
Mass Movement	Mobilized masses through non-violent resistance	Focused on cultural awakening, not political mobilization
Critique of Western Nationalism	Rejected Western imperialism and nationalism alike	Criticized West's nationalism post-WWI as narrow and destructive
Engagement with Politics	Deeply involved in anti-colonial mass movements	Primarily a cultural critic; resigned knighthood after Jallianwala Bagh

While Gandhi saw **nationalism as a moral and collective awakening**, Tagore feared it **might suppress individuality and global humanism**.

Conclusion:

- Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore differed in their approaches towards education and nationalism, reflecting their unique perspectives, ideologies, and contributions to India's struggle for independence
- Despite their differences, both Gandhi and Tagore played pivotal roles in shaping the course of Indian history and inspiring generations of freedom fighters, intellectuals, and social reformers in their quest for a better and more just society.

6) Bring out the socio-economic effects of the introduction of railways in different countries of the world.

Introduction

- The advent of railways in the 19th and 20th centuries ushered in a new era of socio-economic transformation, leaving an indelible mark on various countries across the globe. These iron arteries of transportation not only connected distant regions but also played a pivotal role in reshaping economic structures, **fostering industrialization, and influencing societal dynamics.**

The nuanced socio-economic effects of railways in different nations

Agricultural Transformation

- Railways played a crucial role in transforming the agricultural sector, particularly in countries where vast expanses of arable land were connected to markets. In the United States, the development of the railway system facilitated the movement of agricultural products from the Midwest to urban markets in the East. **The so-called "Granger Laws" reflected the significance of railways in the agricultural sector, as they aimed to regulate railroad rates to ensure fair treatment for farmers.**
- Similarly, in Argentina, the late 19th-century development of the railway system had profound implications for agriculture. **The fertile Pampas region became accessible through railways, leading to the expansion of agriculture and the establishment of large-scale commercial farms.** This not only boosted the country's economy but also resulted in changes in land-use patterns and agricultural practices.

Economic Expansion and Trade

- The economic ramifications of railway development were profound, particularly in countries like the United States and India. In the United States, **the completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad in 1869 marked a watershed moment, connecting the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and transforming the nation into an integrated economic entity.** The railway network facilitated the efficient movement of goods and people, spurring economic expansion by providing a fast and reliable means of transportation. This, in turn, **accelerated westward expansion, as settlers and entrepreneurs could now access previously remote regions, contributing to the economic development of the entire nation.**
- Similarly, in India, the extensive railway network constructed during British colonial rule connected diverse regions, facilitating the movement of raw materials and finished goods. This connectivity was instrumental in integrating the Indian subcontinent economically, contributing to the growth of industries and trade. **The railways became the lifeline of the colonial economy, enabling the extraction of resources from the hinterlands and their transportation to ports for export.**

Industrialization and Urbanization

- Railways played a central role in driving the process of industrialization, particularly in Europe and Asia. In the United Kingdom, the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, railways revolutionized the transportation of raw materials such as coal and iron, essential for powering the burgeoning industries. **The efficient movement of goods via railways facilitated the growth of industries, leading to the concentration of economic activities in urban centres.** Urbanization became a parallel phenomenon, as people migrated from rural areas to cities, drawn by employment opportunities in the expanding industrial sector.
- This pattern was replicated in countries like Japan and Germany, where railways became integral to their industrialization processes. The development of an extensive railway network not only facilitated the movement of goods but also transformed the landscape of these nations, as cities expanded and urban centres became the focal points of economic and social life.

Social Impact

- The social impact of railways was multifaceted, influencing the way people lived, worked, and interacted. **Railways revolutionized travel, making it faster, more affordable, and accessible to a broader segment of society.** In the United Kingdom, for instance, the development of railways transformed commuting patterns, allowing people to live in suburban areas and travel to cities for work. This led to the growth of commuter towns, altering the dynamics of urban life and contributing to the expansion of metropolitan areas.
- **In India, the impact of railways on society was equally significant. The vast railway network facilitated the movement of people across vast distances, fostering cultural exchanges and the mingling of diverse communities.** However, the social impact was not uniformly positive. The construction of railways often involved displacing local communities and disrupting traditional ways of life. In countries like Canada and Australia, the expansion of railways led to the displacement of indigenous populations, contributing to the erosion of their socio-cultural fabric.

Note: Additional Points

Political Impact:

- **Administrative Centralization & State Consolidation**
 - **Faster communication** enabled tighter control over distant provinces.
 - Railways allowed **central governments to deploy troops quickly**, helping suppress rebellions and maintain authority.
 - *Example (India):* British used railways to suppress the 1857 Revolt efficiently by moving troops swiftly.
 - *Example (Germany):* Otto von Bismarck used railways to unify German states under Prussian control.

- **Imperial Expansion & Colonial Control**

- Railways became a tool of **imperial dominance**, used by colonial powers to integrate colonies into global empires.
- Facilitated **resource extraction and troop movement**, strengthening colonial grip.
 - *India*: Railways served British economic and strategic interests, not native development.
 - *Africa*: Railways built to connect mines to ports, often ignoring local needs.

- **National Integration and Identity Formation**

- Created a **shared physical and psychological space** among diverse regions.
- Promoted the idea of a **nation-state** by linking people through mobility and interaction.
 - *Example (US)*: Transcontinental railroad helped build American national identity across states.
 - *Example (India)*: Though colonial, railways inadvertently helped Indians visualize a united India – later aiding the freedom movement.

- **Rise of Political Consciousness**

- Easier travel enabled **leaders, ideas, and newspapers to spread quickly**, fostering political awareness.
- Railways supported the **formation of political parties, trade unions, and mass movements**.
 - *India*: Gandhi extensively used railways to reach the masses during non-cooperation and civil disobedience movements.
 - *Russia*: Bolsheviks used railway workers and networks in the 1917 revolution.

- **Displacement and Political Marginalization**

- Railway expansion often **displaced tribal and indigenous communities**, eroding their traditional political systems.
- Created **hierarchies** where the elite controlled railway access, marginalizing local governance.
 - *Canada & Australia*: Indigenous peoples lost land and political autonomy due to rail-linked colonization.

Conclusion

- The introduction of railways played a transformative role in shaping the socio-economic landscapes of various countries worldwide. The economic expansion, industrialization, urbanization, and agricultural transformation brought about by railways laid the foundation for modern societies. However, it is crucial to recognize that the impact of railways was not uniform, as it brought about both positive and negative consequences. While railways facilitated progress and connectivity, they also posed challenges, contributing to social inequalities and the displacement of communities. Understanding the nuanced effects of railways is essential for comprehending the complexities of modern societies and appreciating the historical forces that have shaped them.

Geography

7) Discuss the consequences of climate change on the food security in tropical countries.

Introduction:

- Food security encompasses availability, access, utilization, and stability of food. Tropical countries – largely agrarian and climate-sensitive – face disproportionate impacts of climate change, endangering their ability to feed growing populations sustainably.

Consequences of climate change on food security in tropical countries:

Temperature Increase and Crop Yields

- Extended periods of heatwaves and drought can hinder crop development, leading to lower yields and a decline in harvest quality.

Ex –

- High temperatures cause early flowering and faster ripening, affecting the quality and quantity of wheat crop yield in India.
- For instance, studies show that every 1°C rise in temperature can reduce wheat yields by up to 6%.
- Various studies have shown that sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change because of its overreliance on rain-fed agricultural production and that this sphere of production is highly susceptible to the vagaries of weather and climate

Spread of Pests and Diseases

- Warmer temperatures and altered precipitation patterns create favourable conditions for the spread of pests and diseases .
 - Ex - Studies have linked a hotter climate to more damaging locust swarms, leaving Africa disproportionately affected- There has been an increase in locust swarms and pest infestations across East Africa and South Asia
- In tropical countries, where agriculture is often dominated by smallholder farmers with limited resources, the increased prevalence of pests poses a significant threat to crops. Invasive species and new strains of pathogens can reduce yields and affect the quality of produce

Water Scarcity:

- Drying rivers, and erratic monsoons reduce irrigation potential. Tropical regions, already facing water stress, are expected to suffer further decline in per capita water availability, directly impacting food production.

- Ex - In regions heavily dependent on rain-fed agriculture, irregular rainfall can lead to soil moisture stress, affecting crop growth and productivity.
- According to WRI's Aqueduct data, 25 countries—home to one-quarter of the global population—face extreme water stress, putting at risk their food, health, and energy security, and making them highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Disruption in supply chain & Price Fluctuation:

- Disruptions in supply chains due to floods or droughts cause sharp food price fluctuations.
 - Ex: India imposed a ban on wheat exports in May 2022, after an unseasonal heat wave affected the crop and increased domestic prices.

Impact on Nutrition and Food Utilization

- Ex - Protein and micronutrient deficiencies in maize, rice, and wheat are intensified by climate impacts. The nutritional decline in staple foods poses serious health risks in already vulnerable populations.

Impact on fisheries

- **Rising Ocean Temperatures:** Alters fish migration and breeding cycles, leading to decline in fish catch.
- **Ocean Acidification:** Weakens marine food chains, affecting species like shellfish.

Impact on Food Access and Affordability

- Climate shocks reduce incomes and disrupt supply chains, leading to food shortages and price hikes. Poor households face reduced access to affordable, nutritious food, worsening inequality and undernutrition.

Shifts in Growing Seasons

- Changing climate patterns disrupt traditional planting and harvesting cycles, making farm planning unpredictable. This uncertainty reduces yields and contributes to market instability.
Example: In 2023, the delayed monsoon onset resulted in a 15% decrease in paddy sowing area in Punjab and Haryana, leading to lower yields and increased economic stress for farmers.

Loss of biodiversity:

- Climate change accelerates the loss of pollinators and wild food species.
- Studies show that **climate change contributes significantly to honeybee declines**, which in turn threatens the yields of pollinator-dependent crops such as fruits, vegetables, and oilseeds.

Adaptation Measures

- **Climate-Smart Practices:** Use resilient crop varieties, adjust cropping patterns, adopt water-efficient and soil-conserving methods.
- **Tech Integration:** Expand access to weather forecasts, precision farming, and invest in resilient seed R&D.
- **Farmer Training:** Build capacity in climate adaptation, risk management, and empower women farmers.
- **Infrastructure:** Strengthen irrigation, storage, and early warning systems.
- **Financial Tools:** Ensure crop insurance, credit access, and market support.
- **Global Support:** Foster international funding, technology transfer, and knowledge sharing.

Conclusion:

- Tropical countries must adopt climate-resilient agricultural practices, invest in early warning systems, and build sustainable food systems. Regional cooperation, adaptation funding, and inclusive policies are crucial to mitigate climate risks and ensure food security for vulnerable populations.

8) Why is the world today confronted with a crisis of availability of and access to freshwater resources?

Introduction:

- Freshwater is essential for human survival, economic development, and ecosystem health. However, the world is facing an acute crisis of both availability and access to freshwater, driven by a complex interplay of natural, socio-economic, and governance-related factors.

Factors contributing to the crisis :

- **Natural availability:** The distribution of freshwater resources varies widely around the world. Regions with arid and semi-arid climates often struggle with water scarcity, as their locations receive little rainfall.

Population Growth and Urbanization:

- Rapid population increase has escalated domestic, industrial, and agricultural demand for water.
- Urban expansion often outpaces water infrastructure, leading to unequal access in informal settlements and peri-urban areas.
 - Ex : Despite early monsoon rains in May 2024, groundwater levels fell sharply due to over-extraction from borewells and construction activities that blocked natural recharge, leaving the city's water table severely depleted

Climate Change:

- Climate change worsens freshwater scarcity by disrupting rainfall patterns, increasing droughts and floods, and accelerating. These unpredictable weather extremes make sustainable water management and planning more difficult.
 - **Ex :** Climate change is projected to further reduce flows into the Rio Grande, impacting the people who rely on the river and the region's natural ecosystems
- Warming of the surface ocean from human-induced climate change is likely fueling more powerful tropical cyclones (TCs) leading to saline intrusion in coastal regions, further reducing the availability of freshwater resources.

Unsustainable Agricultural Practices

- Agriculture is a major consumer of freshwater, accounting for a substantial portion of global water withdrawals. However, inefficient and unsustainable agricultural practices, such as **excessive irrigation, contribute to water depletion**
- In many regions, water-intensive crops are cultivated in arid or semi-arid areas, leading to the overexploitation of aquifers and the depletion of water water sources.



- **Ex** - After the Green Revolution, states like Punjab and Haryana shifted from diverse traditional crops to water-intensive varieties such as rice and sugarcane. This change led to a dramatic increase in groundwater extraction and has significantly depleted local water tables
- Additionally, the use of agrochemicals contaminates water bodies, further exacerbating the crisis.

Overextraction of Water

Pollution and Contamination

- Water pollution reduces both the quantity and quality of freshwater, mainly due to industrial waste, agricultural runoff, and poor sanitation.
- Contaminants make water unsafe for people and ecosystems, especially in developing countries, where polluted sources threaten health and limit access to clean water.
 - **Ex** - The Annual Groundwater Quality Report by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) highlights that West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Assam are most affected by arsenic contamination, especially in the Ganga and Brahmaputra floodplains.

Geopolitical and Economic Inequality :

- Ex - Transboundary water disputes (e.g., Nile) hinder cooperation and equitable access.
- Marginalized communities often face exclusion from water infrastructure due to poverty or conflict.

Inadequate Water Management and Governance

- Inefficient irrigation methods, leakages in distribution systems, and subsidies promoting overuse worsen scarcity.
- Lack of integrated water resource management (IWRM) leads to fragmented and unsustainable practices
 - **Ex** - Groundwater extraction reached 136% of its recharge capacity in 2024. Nearly half its villages (47%) are classified as "water-stressed", and states are now facing serious planning challenge

Note - Crisis of Access :

Urban-Rural Disparity

- Rural areas often lack piped supply; urban poor depend on tankers or shared taps.

Socio-Economic Inequality

- Marginalized communities and slum dwellers often have to pay more for water or depend on unsafe sources, perpetuating cycles of poverty and ill health.

Gender Burden

- Women and girls bear the brunt of walking long distances for water in many regions
- Ex – According to UNICEF - In 8 out of 10 homes without running water, it is the girls who are responsible for lugging heavy containers over rough terrain

Conflict Zones and Fragile States

- War and instability disrupt access to water infrastructure.
- Ex - Hundreds of Gaza's water and sanitation facilities have been damaged or destroyed since Israel began military action against Hamas

Quality of Supplied Water

- Unsafe water due to contamination leads to health issues or dependence on bottled sources.
- Ex: In Bihar and Assam, arsenic and fluoride contamination in groundwater affects local residents.

Ineffective Governance and Corruption

- Leakages, illegal connections, and poor maintenance reduce equitable access.

Climate-Driven Supply Disruptions

- Ex- Bengaluru faced “abnormally high temperatures” in early 2024, bringing the city close to a “Day Zero” scenario where taps could run dry

Way Forward

- Integrated Water Resource Management
- Technological Interventions
- Policy Reforms
- Infrastructure Investment
- Community Participation
- Transboundary Cooperation
- Climate Adaptation

Conclusion

- The global freshwater crisis is a multifaceted challenge rooted in natural scarcity, unsustainable practices, and governance failures. Urgent, coordinated action—combining technological, policy, and community-based solutions—is essential to ensure equitable and sustainable access to freshwater for present and future generations.

9) Why is the South-West Monsoon called Purvaiya (easterly) in Bhojpur Region? How has this directional seasonal wind system influenced the cultural ethos of the region?

Introduction

- The South-West Monsoon, while generally blowing from the southwest across most of India, is locally called 'Purvaiya' – meaning “easterly” – in Bihar . This is a case of **relative local perception**, not a of scientific wind direction.

South-West Monsoon called Purvaiya (easterly) in Bhojpur Region

- The term 'Purvaiya' stems from the Hindi word “**Purva**”, which translates to “**east**” in **English**. The South-West Monsoon is called 'Purvaiya' in the **Bhojpur region** due to the direction from which the monsoon winds predominantly arrive.
- The monsoon winds originate in the Indian Ocean and travel across the subcontinent from the **south-west to the north-east**. As these winds bring the much-awaited rain, the locals aptly associate the monsoon with its easterly trajectory, giving rise to the term 'Purvaiya.'

This is a case of **relative local perception**, not a of scientific wind direction.

How has this directional seasonal wind system influenced the cultural ethos of the region

The directional influence of 'Purvaiya' on the South-West Monsoon is reflected in the cultural and religious festivities of the Bhojpur region. Festivals and rituals follow in succession with the arrival of these seasonal winds, including **Chatt Puja, and Teej.**

- Language and folklore hold "purvaiya" in high regard, as this term is celebrated in the region and appears in stories, and proverbs. Proverbs such as “Purvaiya chale to khet khile” (When the easterly blows, fields bloom) reflect the wind’s perceived benevolence.
- The **culinary traditions** of the Bhojpur region also reflect the impact of the 'Purvaiya.' Local cuisines often include dishes that are seasonally aligned, taking advantage of the fresh produce and abundance brought about by the monsoon rains. The seasonal abundance brought by the monsoon shapes local cuisine, with dishes like **ghughni, dahi-chura, pakoras, and other monsoon-specific foods becoming prominent**
- The easterly arrival of the South-West Monsoon brings the much-needed rainfall for rainfed agriculture in the Bhojpur region. The agricultural practices are intricately tied to the monsoon, with farmers relying on timely and adequate rainfall for sowing and cultivation. **The arrival and progression of 'Purvaiya' become a marker for agricultural activities, influencing the rhythm of rural life.**

Conclusion

- The 'Purvaiya' is not just a meteorological term but a cultural symbol in the Bhojpur region. It encapsulates the intimate relationship between nature and society, shaping agriculture, festivals, folklore, cuisine, and even the architecture of the region. The South-West Monsoon, as 'Purvaiya', thus remains an enduring heartbeat of Bhojpuri identity

10) Comment on the resource potentials of the long coastline of India and highlight the status of natural hazard preparedness in these areas.

Introduction

- India, with a coastline of over 7,500 km, offers vast resource potential that significantly contributes to the nation's economy, ecology, and strategic interests.

Resource Potentials of India's Long Coastline

Fisheries and Aquaculture:

- India is one of the largest producers of fish globally, and the coastal regions contribute significantly to the country's seafood exports.
 - Ex-** India is the 2nd largest fish producing country with around 8% share in global fish production. Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka being the major fish producing states.
- Additionally, aquaculture practices in brackish water areas along the coast further augment the fisheries sector.

Trade and Ports:

- The coastline is home to major ports and harbors, facilitating maritime trade. The strategic location of these ports contributes to economic growth, job creation, and the development of coastal regions as trade hubs.
 - Ex -** Ports such as Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata serve as vital gateways for imports and exports, connecting India to global markets.
- The Vizhinjam International Seaport in Kerala will be India's first deep-water transshipment hub, strategically located near global shipping lanes.
- Projects under Sagarmala aim to modernize ports and enhance coastal logistics.

Tourism and Coastal Development

- Coastal tourism has emerged as a significant contributor to the national economy, attracting both domestic and international visitors. This, in turn, stimulates local economies through hospitality, recreation, and associated services.
 - Ex -** Regions like Goa, Odisha, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands support ecotourism and house rich biodiversity including coral reefs and mangroves.
- The Ministry of Tourism has launched the Swadesh Darshan Scheme for Integrated Development of theme-based Tourist Circuits - The Coastal Circuit, which includes beaches, is one of the thematic circuits identified for development under this scheme.

Energy Potential:

- Offshore oil and gas exploration in the Krishna-Godavari and Mumbai High basins plays a significant role in meeting energy demands.
- Coastal regions are rich in heavy minerals such as monazite and sillimanite.
- The coastline holds immense potential for harnessing renewable energy, particularly through wind energy .

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services:

- Coastal ecosystems – mangroves, estuaries, and coral reefs – support rich biodiversity and provide essential services like shoreline protection, water purification, and carbon storage.
- However, coastal regions are also prone to natural hazards such as cyclones, storm surges, and tsunamis.

Natural Hazard Preparedness in Coastal Areas

Early Warning Systems:

- Ex :
 - India Meteorological Department (IMD) has developed state of art tools for cyclone warning services, and has demonstrated its capability to provide early warning for Cyclones. The cyclone forecast accuracy has significantly improved in recent years as has been demonstrated during cyclones Phailin (2013), Hudhud (2014), Vardah (2016), Titli (2018), Fani& Bulbul (2019) and Amphan, Nisarga&Nivar (2020). During recent years, the loss of life due to cyclone has been drastically reduced being limited to double digit figures.
 - Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) has set up Storm Surge Early Warning System (SSEWS) for the Indian coasts in active collaboration with IMD.

Structural measures:

- Government of India has initiated the National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP) to undertake suitable structural and non-structural measures to mitigate the effects of cyclones in the coastal states and UTs of India.
- Under Pradhan Mantri MatsyaSampada Yojana (PMSSY) - support is provided to procure PFZ devises, network and cost of installation as part of “Strengthening of safety and security of fishermen”.

Disaster Management Framework:

- The Disaster Management Act, 2005 institutionalized preparedness via NDMA, SDMA,

Climate Resilience and Adaptation

- Efforts under the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and other schemes focus on ecosystem-based resilience.
- Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) 2019 balances infrastructure development with ecological protection.
- Local communities are being trained in disaster response and evacuation procedures by various governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Challenges

- Urban Flooding and Inadequate Drainage
- Coastal Erosion and Sea-Level Rise
- Limited Last-Mile Connectivity and Awareness
- Infrastructure Gaps in Cyclone Resilience

Conclusion

- India's coastline is a strategic asset, but increasing climate risks demand integrated planning that combines technology, resilient infrastructure, and community participation for long-term sustainability.

11) Identify and discuss the factors responsible for diversity of natural vegetation in India. Assess the significance of wildlife sanctuaries in rainforest regions of India

Introduction

- India's remarkable diversity of natural vegetation is the result of a complex interplay of geographical, climatic, and ecological factors.

Factors Responsible for Diversity of Natural Vegetation in India

Geographical Variation

- India's **vast landscape** comprises contrasting features, such as the Himalayan Mountain range, the Deccan Plateau, and the coastal regions. Each of these regions fosters specific ecosystems.
- **Ex -**
 - For instance, the Western Ghats, a mountain range along the western coast, supports tropical evergreen forests with high biodiversity.
 - The Himalayan region exhibits alpine vegetation at higher altitudes, including rhododendrons and coniferous trees.

Monsoon influence (Rainfall patterns):

Rainfall distribution determines forest type and density.

- **Ex -** Due to the southwest monsoon rains, tropical evergreen forests flourish on the western slopes of the Western Ghats, whereas the eastern slopes receive less rainfall and do not support such dense vegetation.

Soil Composition :

- The variety of soil types (alluvial, black, red, laterite, sandy) across India determines the kind of vegetation each region can support.
- **Ex -** The sandy soils found in the Thar Desert are well-suited for plants that can withstand dry conditions, while the rich alluvial soils of the Ganga-Brahmaputra plains are capable of nurturing a wide variety of crops.

Altitude

- Vegetation changes with increasing elevation due to declining temperatures.
- Topographical features like slopes (windward vs. leeward) also affect vegetation types
 - **Ex -** The Himalayan region, with its diverse altitude gradients, showcases different vegetation types at various elevations. From tropical , to wet temperate forest forests to alpine meadows and snow-covered peaks at higher elevations, these zone hosts specific plant species.

River Systems

- Major river systems in India, such as the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and Yamuna, contribute to the formation of fertile plains. These plains, characterized by alluvial soils, are not only agriculturally productive but also support diverse ecosystems.

Human Intervention

- Deforestation, agriculture, and urbanization have altered natural vegetation patterns.

Significance of Wildlife Sanctuaries in Rainforest Regions

Climate Regulation and Carbon Sequestration

- Rainforests act as carbon sinks; protected areas prevent deforestation and help mitigate climate change.

Biodiversity Conservation

- Rainforest sanctuaries safeguard biodiversity hotspots by protecting diverse plant and animal species from threats like deforestation and poaching.

Tourism and Economic Benefits

- Well-managed wildlife sanctuaries can contribute to sustainable tourism, providing economic benefits to local communities.

Ecosystem Services

Rainforests provide crucial ecosystem services, such as climate regulation, water purification, and carbon sequestration

- **Cultural and Indigenous Preservation:** Many sanctuaries help protect the traditional lifestyles and knowledge of indigenous communities, who have historically depended on rainforest resources for their livelihoods
- **Research and Education:** Wildlife sanctuaries in rainforest regions become hubs for scientific research and education. Researchers study the intricate relationships between species, contributing to our understanding of ecological processes.

Conclusion

- India's vegetation diversity is shaped by natural factors like climate and topography and increasingly by human choices, making conservation and sustainable land use essential for ecological balance.

12) Why did human development fail to keep pace with economic development in India?

Introduction

- India's sustained economic growth in recent decades has positioned it as a key player in the global economy. However, improvements in human development indicators have not always kept pace with this economic progress.

Reasons Why Human Development Lagged Behind:

Post Independence approach:

- Post-independence, India followed a top-down development approach, with policies flowing from the Centre to the grassroots. However, delays, corruption, and poor implementation often prevented benefits from reaching the last mile, weakening human development.

Economic Disparities:

- **Ex - According to a report by OXMFAM (2023 report) -**
 - India's top 1% owned more than 40.5% of its total wealth in 2021.
 - The report highlighted the large disparity in wealth distribution in India, saying that more than 40% of the wealth created in the country from 2012 to 2021 had gone to just 1% of the population while only 3% had trickled down to the bottom 50%.

Gender Inequality

- Women, especially in rural areas, have limited access to education, employment, and financial resources.
- **Ex -** India has ranked 131 out of 146 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2025, which measures gender parity across four key dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment, slipping two places from its position last year.

Disparities in resources:

- Sometimes, there exists a mismatch between a state's fiscal health and its human development outcomes.
 - **Ex -** According to Fiscal Health Index 2025- The states like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, often considered among India's most backward in social development, rank among the best in fiscal health. Meanwhile, states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala, known for their high social and human development indicators, are ranked lower.

Rural Urban Divide

- India's development is unevenly distributed, with rural areas lagging significantly behind urban centres in access to healthcare, education, sanitation, and employment.

Lack of Social Security

- Workforce is in the informal sector, lack social security and decent working condition which undermines the quality of life even when GDP figures improve

Low public Expenditure

- Inadequate investment in key sectors like education and health limits the reach and quality of services.

Governance Gaps

- Leakages, corruption, and inefficiencies in welfare schemes dilute their impact.
 - Ex - For instance, nutrition schemes like ICDS, Mid Day meal schemes often face implementation hurdles, reflected in persistent child malnutrition.

Demographic Pressure and Population Size:

- The scale of population dilutes the per capita impact of economic growth, and service delivery becomes challenging.

Environmental and Urban Challenges:

- Urbanisation has led to slums, pollution, and infrastructure deficits.
- Environmental degradation (e.g., air and water pollution) further reduces quality of life.

Measures

- Boost public spending on health and education
- Generate inclusive jobs through MSMEs and labour-intensive sectors.
- Bridge rural-urban gaps in basic services and infrastructure.
- Improve governance via transparency and decentralised delivery.
- Empower women and marginalised groups through access and representation.
- Expand social security for informal sector workers.

Conclusion

- To bridge the gap between economic and human development, India must prioritize inclusive policies, strengthen social infrastructure, and ensure effective implementation. Only by making growth more equitable and people-centric can the nation realize its full human potential.

13) From being a net food importer in the 1960s, India has emerged as a net food exporter to the world. Provide reasons.

Introduction

- In the 1960s, India faced severe food shortages and was heavily dependent on imports and food aid. However, today India is not only self-sufficient but like rice, wheat, sugar, and spices. **This transformation reflects a multidimensional agricultural and policy evolution.**

Reasons behind India's transition :

Green Revolution

- The Green Revolution boosted agricultural productivity through HYV seeds, irrigation, and fertilizers, enabling higher yields and multiple cropping.
 - Ex : Green Revolution in Punjab in the mid-1960s singularly contributed to making India self-sufficient in food, by ringing in a quantum jump in foodgrain – wheat and rice – production and productivity.

Agricultural Policy Reforms

- Post-Green Revolution, India introduced policies like Minimum Support Prices (MSP), input subsidies, crop insurance, and agricultural credit to support farmers and promote sustainable farming. These measures boosted confidence, investment, and productivity, aiding India's shift to a net food exporter.
 - Ex - The PM Fasal Bima Yojana (2016) and Kisan Credit Card scheme (1998) helped reduce risk and ensured access to timely credit.

Crop Diversification and Cropping Patterns

- To further strengthen the agricultural sector, India diversified its crop portfolio and cropping patterns which reduced the country's reliance on a few key crops but also contributed to a more balanced and sustainable agricultural ecosystem.
 - Ex : The Economic Survey 2024-25 highlights floriculture as a "sunrise industry" with a strong export focus, while horticulture continues to surpass traditional farming in profitability and productivity.

Infrastructure Development

- Enhanced irrigation, transport, and storage infrastructure reduced post-harvest losses and improved supply chain efficiency.
 - Ex - The development of integrated cold chain projects (PMKSY) in states like Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat has enabled large-scale exports of perishable items strengthening India's position in global agri-trade.

Technological Innovation and Digitalization

- The integration of technology in farming practices, such as precision farming, use of drones for crop monitoring, and data-driven decision-making, has significantly increased productivity and resource efficiency.
 - Example: Platforms like e-NAM and the Soil Health Card Scheme have empowered farmers with better pricing and input use, contributing to surplus production and enhanced agri-exports.

Globalization and Trade Liberalization

- Liberalized trade policies and WTO-led reforms opened global markets for Indian farmers, enhancing export opportunities and competitiveness.

Note - Reasons for being net food importer in the 1960's:

- In the years following independence, India faced severe food security issues and was a net food importer due to multiple structural and historical challenges. **The colonial legacy had distorted** India's agrarian structure by **promoting crops like indigo, cotton, for export, often at the expense of food grain cultivation**, leading to long-term food insecurity. Agricultural productivity remained low due to **traditional practices, lack of irrigation, and limited access to modern inputs like high-yielding seeds and fertilizers**. Heavy dependence on monsoons made farming highly vulnerable to droughts. A rapidly growing population further widened the demand-supply gap. Additionally, weak institutional support – **no MSP, procurement system, or crop insurance** – and poor infrastructure led to high post-harvest losses. As a result, India had to depend on food imports and foreign aid, notably **PL-480 wheat from the USA**, to feed its population.

Conclusion

- India's shift from a food importer to a major exporter reflects the success of integrated agricultural reforms, technological adoption, and policy support. It serves as a model for achieving food security through a strategic and holistic approach.

14) How are the fjords formed? Why do they constitute some of the most picturesque areas of the world?

Introduction

- Very deep glacial troughs filled with sea water and making up shorelines (in high latitudes) are called fjords/fiords.

Formation of Fjords

- A fjord is created where glaciers cut into a previously created river valley (often V-shaped) or a glacier-shaped valley (usually U-shaped).
- Many such valleys were formed by ice age glaciers when the sea level was significantly lower (100-120 meters) than today because large amounts of water were tied up in the large ice masses on land.
- Towards the end of each ice age, the climate warmed and the glaciers melted back.
- The sea level rose because the water that was bound in the ice masses flowed back to the sea, **valleys were filled again giving rise to Fiords.**

Why Fjords Are Among the Most Picturesque Areas

- Aesthetic Grandeur: Fjords are often framed by steep cliffs that rise dramatically from the water's edge. These cliffs can reach impressive heights, creating a sense of grandeur and imposing beauty.
- Reflections and Still Waters: The sheltered nature of fjords, with their narrow and enclosed channels, often results in calm, reflective waters. This characteristic creates mirror-like reflections of the surrounding cliffs and peaks, amplifying the visual impact.
- Scenic Waterfalls and Glacial Features: Fjords frequently feature cascading waterfalls descending from the cliffs above. These waterfalls are often fed by melting glaciers or glacially sourced rivers, contributing to the dynamic and ever-changing landscape. **The presence of glacial remnants, such as icebergs or ice floes, enhances the visual spectacle, creating a dynamic interplay of ice and water.**
- Tranquillity and Serenity: The sheltered nature of fjords often results in calm waters and a tranquil atmosphere. The sense of peace and serenity, coupled with the stillness of reflective waters, creates an immersive experience for visitors.

Conclusion

- Fjords are a product of powerful glacial processes and stand today as awe-inspiring natural monuments. Their striking topography and serene beauty not only offer scenic value but also underscore the dynamic interactions between climate, geology, and time.



Social Issues

15) Do you think marriage as a sacrament is losing its value in Modern India?

- Introduction : Marriage as a Sanskar – Firm tradition from centuries-but facing social, economic, political challenges
- Factors leading to shift in marriage – Rising Individual autonomy, Changing forms of marriage: Serial monogamy, Live in relations ; Changing gender roles ; Intercaste/Interfaith marriages ; Delayed marriages (median age of marriage increasing) ; Increase in divorce rates to certain extent
- Still Dominant element of society : Changed sanctity (Couples even in love marriage give imp to symbols ; Destination weddings; Ambani Wedding; Familial involvement much prevalent in rural areas, Commercial and Status symbol; Considered milestone of social stability ; Legal recognition under different laws
- Conclusion- Core ideals remain same; while outer symbols, rituals, practices may have adapted to changing times.

16) Explain why suicide among young women is increasing in Indian Society.

- **Introduction : NCRB Data : overall 4.2 percent increase in suicide rates (2021-22); young adults accounted for 35 percent. Women form intersectionality of vulnerability**
- **Reasons :** Gender roles and conformity pressures; educational stress; career related concerns; pink collar and glass ceiling effect; safety issues in urban areas; vulnerability to mental health concerns; marriage and domestic violence (35000 suicides of housewives) ; Cyber bullying; Glorified and unrealistic beauty standards ; media
- **Need of the hour :** Mental health awareness; gender sensitization; strengthening support system especially in urban areas
- **Conclusion-DR BR Ambedkar quote on importance of women empowerment.**

17) Child cuddling is now being replaced by mobile phones. Discuss its impact on the socialization of children.

- Introduction : Mobile phones integral part – but it has many victims – sleep, peace, eye health, mental health. One of the biggest / Recent ban on social media for kids below 16 in Australia
- Impact on socialisation – Weakening emotional bonds ; Impaired Social Skills, Mental Health Challenges, Distorted Public and private relationships, Classism and elitism , lack of physical activities; no sensitization ; exposure to inappropriate content
- Some positive impacts as well : Video call long distance relatives increases familial ties; online classrooms esp during COVID, Exposure to multiple languages and cultures ; special help for PWD
- Conclusion-Any technology is as good or bad as its user.

18) Does urbanization lead to more segregation and/or marginalization of the poor in Indian metropolises?

- **Introduction : Urban Population of India : 31 percent India population, 40 percent by 2036 but 65 million people live in urban slums**
- Impact on socialisation – Weakening emotional bonds ; Impaired Social Skills, Mental Health Challenges, Distorted Public and private relationships, Classism and elitism , lack of physical activities; no sensitization ; exposure to inappropriate content
- Some positive impacts as well : Video call long distance relatives increases familial ties; online classrooms esp during COVID, Exposure to multiple languages and cultures ; special help for PWD
- Conclusion-Any technology is as good or bad as its user.



19) Discuss the impact of post-liberal economy on ethnic identity and communalism.

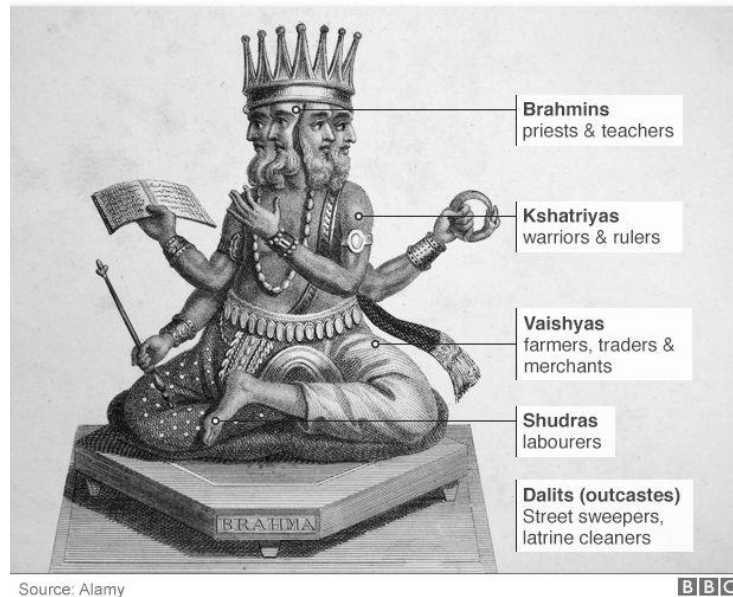
- Introduction : Explain what is post liberal economy and its attributes : trade, tourism, services exports, technical education
- Impact on Ethnic Identity - Positive - Cultural representation; Enhanced economic opportunities ; Tourism; Social mobility.
- Negative - Development induced displacement, conservation led displacement, economic disparity, language threatened.
- Impact on Communalism : Positive - Emphasis on Economic Development, Development of Cosmopolitan identity,
- Negative : Inequality, Migration, Ghettoization, Social Media led misinformation.
- Conclusion-Counter the feeling of relative deprivation with inclusive growth.

20) Why is caste identity in India both fluid and static?

Approach

- Define Caste Identity
 - Social Construct – Hierarchy and Ascription-based Status
 - Roles, Privilege & Restriction
- Reasons behind the Fluidity and Static nature
- Conclude

Brahma and the origins of caste

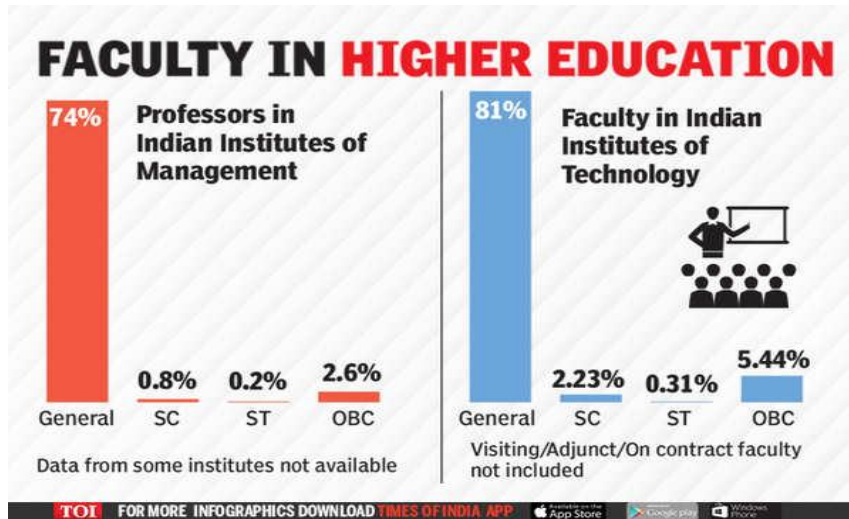


Source: Alamy

BBC

Fluidity and Static nature

Fluid Nature	Static Nature
Affirmative Policies – Reservation > Social Mobility	Historical Roots – Preservation of Caste Endogamy
Education and Urbanization	Discrimination in Urban Areas
Sanskritization**	Rigid Customs and Norms
Diverse > Division of Labour in Urban Area	Occupational identities
Inter Caste Marriages	Social stigma
Challenges to Traditional Norms and Practices	Caste Based Politics – Strengthened Jats in Haryana and Patidars in Gujarat



- **Sanskritization** – Lower caste in the caste hierarchy seek upward mobility by adopting the rituals and practices of the dominant castes or upper castes

Conclusion

- Caste identity in India is a complex interplay of historical legacies, socio-economic factors, and cultural norms.
- However social norms, political interests, and discrimination still contribute to the static aspects of caste identity.
-