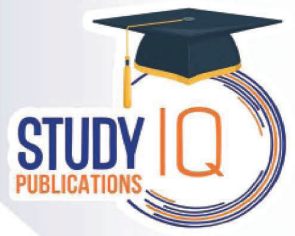


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GEOPOLITICS AT GLANCE

SHEIKH HASINA RESIGNS- END OF SHONALI ADHYAYA?

RELEVANCE

□ Syllabus:

- PSIR: India and South Asia
- GS2: India and its Neighborhood- Relations



INTRODUCTION

In a shocking turn of events, Sheikh Hasina has resigned as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh and left the country, bringing an abrupt end to her 15-year reign. The old order in Bangladesh, with Sheikh Hasina at the helm, has changed irreversibly, necessitating India's adjustment to this new reality. The political vacuum and ouster of Sheikh Hasina are likely to have serious implications for India-Bangladesh relations.

REASONS BEHIND SHEIKH HASINA'S EXIT

Peaceful Student Demonstration Evolving into a Nationwide Movement: The peaceful

student protest against the 30% freedom fighter reservation in civil services escalated into a nationwide movement due to the government's heavy-handed approach. Actions such as attacks by the Awami League's student wing (Bangladesh Chhatra League), strict curfews with 'shoot-on-sight' orders, and labelling demonstrators as 'Razakars' (a term for collaborators during the 1971 war) further inflamed tensions.

Slowing Down of Economic Growth: While Bangladesh made rapid economic progress under Sheikh Hasina, with per capita income tripling in a decade and over 25 million people lifted out of poverty, the pandemic in 2020 and subsequent global economic slowdown severely impacted

the garment industry. This led to increased unemployment, inflation, and growing discontent among the Bangladeshi population.

Eroding Democratic Values: Parliamentary elections in 2014, 2018, and 2024 were controversial, marked by low turnout, violence, and boycotts by opposition parties. These issues undermined the perception of democratic governance under Hasina's regime.

Reliance on Hard Power to Maintain Control: Hasina's government increasingly relied on hard power to maintain control, creating a climate of fear and repression. The Digital Security Act of 2018, for example, became a tool for silencing critics and stifling freedom of online expression.

Increasing Economic Inequality: Despite overall economic progress, the proliferation of bank scams, expanding lists of defaulters, and rampant corruption fueled public discontent. Notable examples include companies like CLC Power, Western Marine Shipyard, and Remex Footwear, which topped the list of defaulters with bad loans ranging from 965 crore to 1,649 crore Bangladeshi Taka.

HOW DID INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS PROSPER UNDER SHEIKH HASINA'S REGIME?

Sheikh Hasina's tenure has significantly strengthened the relationship between New Delhi and Dhaka, deepening ties during her 15 years in power.

- 1. Eradication of Anti-India Terror Groups:** Under Sheikh Hasina's leadership, anti-India terror groups and their supporters, such as Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, which operated from safe havens during the BNP-Jamaat rule (2001-2006), were eliminated.
- 2. Increase in Bilateral Trade:** Bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh flourished, reaching \$13 billion in FY 2023-24. Bangladesh became India's biggest trade partner in the

subcontinent, and India became Bangladesh's second-largest partner in Asia after China. Since 2011, India has provided duty-free quota access to Bangladesh on all tariff lines except tobacco and alcohol under the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA).

- 3. Increased Connectivity Projects:** Numerous infrastructure and connectivity projects were developed, including:
 - The inauguration of the Akhaura-Agartala cross-border rail link and Khulna-Mongla Port rail line in November 2023.
 - Five operational bus routes between India and Bangladesh, connecting Kolkata, Agartala, and Guwahati to Dhaka.
 - An agreement for using the Chittagong and Mongla ports to facilitate cargo movement between mainland India and the Northeast.
 - India extending three lines of credit to Bangladesh since 2016, amounting to \$8 billion for road, rail, shipping, and port infrastructure development.
- 4. Discussions on FTA:** Under Sheikh Hasina's regime, India and Bangladesh began negotiations for a free trade agreement to reduce or eliminate customs duties on traded goods and ease norms to promote further trade and investment.
- 5. Land Boundary Agreement (2015):** India and Bangladesh swapped disputed territories, allowing inhabitants to choose their country of residence, thus resolving a major longstanding dispute.
- 6. Energy Cooperation:** Energy cooperation deepened, with Bangladesh importing nearly 2,000 megawatts of electricity from India. The India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline will transport one million Metric Tonnes Per Annum (MMTPA) of high-speed diesel to Bangladesh.
- 7. Defence Cooperation:** India and Bangladesh conduct joint military exercises such as Exercise

Sampriti (Army) and Exercise Bongosagar (Navy), enhancing defense ties along their 4,096.7 km border.

- 8. Tourism Sector:** Bangladeshis comprise a large portion of tourists in India. In 2017, tourists from Bangladesh outnumbered those from Western Europe.
- 9. Medical Cooperation:** Bangladesh accounts for over 35% of India's international medical patients, contributing to more than 50% of India's revenue from medical tourism.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BANGLADESH FOR INDIA?

- 1. Geo-strategic:** Bangladesh is strategically important as India's eastern neighbor, providing access to the Bay of Bengal and a crucial route for trade and connectivity with Southeast Asia.
- 2. Geo-political:** A stable and friendly Bangladesh is vital for India's security, particularly in counter-terrorism and border security. Bangladesh's support is crucial for India's bid for permanent membership in the UNSC.
- 3. Economic:** Bangladesh is a key economy for India's exports and bilateral trade. Strengthening economic ties with Bangladesh is essential for India's goal of becoming a \$5 trillion economy.
- 4. Cultural and Civilisational:** Bangladesh has a significant Hindu Bengali population and numerous religious-cultural sites associated with India.
- 5. International Cooperation:** Cooperation between India and Bangladesh is crucial for the success of regional forums such as BIMSTEC, SAARC, and COPs to UNFCCC.

WHAT CHALLENGES DOES THE EXIT OF SHEIKH HASINA CREATE IN INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS?

- 1. Resurfacing of Security Challenges:** The exit of Sheikh Hasina could lead to the re-emergence of

anti-India groups, creating security challenges for India, especially with ongoing tensions with Pakistan and the PLA in eastern Ladakh.

- 2. Threat to India's Connectivity with the Northeast:** A disruption in ties could restrict India's access to the Northeast, leaving only the narrow "Chicken's Neck" corridor. With a volatile Myanmar border, unrest in the Northeast could increase.
- 3. Jeopardized Bilateral Trade and FTA:** Her exit could jeopardize growing trade ties and potential free trade agreement negotiations between India and Bangladesh.
- 4. Deterioration of People-to-People Ties:** There is a risk of backlash from Bangladeshis and new power centers in Dhaka, some of whom may harbor past grudges against India.
- 5. Geopolitical Challenges:** Pakistan and China may exploit political changes in Bangladesh to challenge India's influence and label it as pro-Hasina.

WHAT ARE THE OTHER CHALLENGES IN INDIA-BANGLADESH RELATIONS?

- 1. Sharing of Transboundary River Waters:** Despite sharing 54 common rivers, only two water-sharing treaties exist. The Teesta river dispute remains a major contention point.
- 2. Deportation of Rohingyas:** Conflicting interests in the deportation of Rohingyas pose challenges. India prioritizes deportation from its mainland first.
- 3. Cross-Border Terrorism and Infiltration:** Terrorism and infiltration along the border raise internal security concerns, including armed dacoity, fake money transfer, cattle smuggling, and prostitution.
- 4. Drug Smuggling and Trafficking:** The 2007 INCB report highlights drug trafficking through India from Bangladesh, which serves as a transit point for heroin from South Asia to Europe.

- 5. Growing Chinese Influence in Bangladesh:** Bangladesh's participation in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and substantial Chinese investments in infrastructure pose challenges to India's regional influence.
- 6. Attacks on Minorities:** Ethnic attacks on Bangla-speaking Hindus in Bangladesh and attacks on Bangladeshis in India strain bilateral people-to-people and cultural relations.

WHAT SHOULD BE INDIA'S APPROACH TO DEAL WITH THE BANGLADESH CRISIS?

- 1. Support Popular Expression:** India should support the expression of popular will in Bangladesh, akin to its support for the people's movement in Nepal in 2006.
- 2. Expand Bilateral Ties:** India should express readiness to expand economic engagement with a successor government, avoiding branding political changes as anti-India or anti-Hindu.
- 3. Caution and Discretion:** India should be cautious and discreet in its reactions, keeping the door open for continued mutually beneficial

ties, as in the case of the hostile regime in Maldives under Mohamed Muizzu.

- 4. Establish Joint Task Forces and Smart Border Management:** Joint task forces with law enforcement agencies from both countries can effectively combat cross-border issues like drug smuggling and human trafficking.
- 5. Establish a Digital Connectivity Corridor:** Creating a digital connectivity corridor can open new trade, collaboration, and technological exchange avenues.
- 6. Early Conclusion of India-Bangladesh Free Trade Agreement (FTA):** With Bangladesh set to lose its LDC status after 2026, finalizing an FTA is crucial. India must also ensure that the FTA is not misused by China to dump goods in India through the RCEP agreement.

CONCLUSION

Resignation of Sheikh Hasina highlights the delicate balance between socio-economic progress and democratic values, resonating beyond Bangladesh to underscore the importance of these principles globally.

PM MODI'S UKRAINE VISIT

RELEVANCE

□ Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** Recent developments in Indian Foreign Policy
- **GS2:** International Relations



INTRODUCTION

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's has an upcoming visit to Ukraine, the first by an Indian PM. The visit will focus on bilateral relations, ongoing conflict, and India's stance of promoting diplomacy between Russia and Ukraine while maintaining ties with both.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VISIT

1. Historic First Visit: This marks the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Ukraine since the two countries established diplomatic relations over 30 years ago. The visit highlights a pivotal moment in the bilateral relationship, indicating India's interest in strengthening ties with Ukraine.

- 2. Diplomatic and Strategic Significance:** The visit underscores India's nuanced diplomatic stance on the ongoing Ukraine conflict. India has consistently advocated for resolving the conflict through diplomacy and dialogue while maintaining neutrality and refraining from directly criticizing Russia. This approach allows India to maintain its strategic balance between its deepening ties with Western nations and its long-standing relationship with Russia.
- 3. Balancing Act:** The visit is crucial for India as it seeks to balance its relationships amid global tensions. Western countries, particularly the U.S., have expressed concerns about India's ongoing trade relations with Russia despite sanctions imposed after Russia's 2022 invasion

of Ukraine. By engaging with Ukraine, India aims to reinforce its image as a neutral power committed to dialogue and peace, while still preserving its strategic partnerships with both Russia and the West.

4. **Bilateral Discussions:** During the visit, discussions are expected to focus on strengthening diplomatic and economic ties between India and Ukraine. Additionally, the ongoing conflict will be a significant topic, with India advocating for a peaceful resolution through dialogue, reflecting its neutral stance.

INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS

- ❑ **U.S. Concerns:** The United States has expressed concern over India's continued relationship with

Russia, particularly given its strategic interest in enhancing ties with India to counterbalance China's growing influence.

- ❑ **Global Tensions:** Western countries have imposed sanctions on Russia due to its actions in Ukraine, but India's continued trade with Russia demonstrates its independent foreign policy, which has drawn mixed reactions internationally.

CONCLUSION

This visit is a strategic move for India, allowing it to navigate complex global dynamics while reinforcing its role as a responsible global player advocating for peace and dialogue.

PM MODI'S PLANNED VISIT TO UKRAINE

RELEVANCE

- ❑ **Syllabus:**
 - **PSIR:** India and the Global Centres of Power
 - **GS2:** International Relations



INDIA - UKRAINE RELATIONS



INTRODUCTION

The section explores Prime Minister Modi's upcoming visit to Ukraine, advocating for India to re-engage with European security. It underscores the effects of the Ukraine war on India and stresses the importance of India's strategic participation in European peace and security initiatives..

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PM MODI'S VISIT TO UKRAINE?

Re-engagement with European Security: PM Modi's visit to Ukraine represents a strategic shift in India's stance towards European security, an area neglected in recent years.

Impact of Ukraine War: The Ukraine conflict has elevated Europe on India's international agenda, necessitating a strategic perspective beyond mere solidarity with Russia.

Economic and Security Interests: The war has posed multiple economic challenges for India and complicated its security environment, particularly with Beijing's growing ties with Moscow.

Broader Foreign Policy Shift: Modi's planned visit to Kyiv and his recent trip to Moscow signify a strategic move towards proactive global diplomacy, enhancing India's role in European peace and security efforts.

WHAT ARE THE GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES EUROPE IS FACING?

Internal Divisions: Europe is divided on addressing the Russian threat, with Finland and Sweden

joining NATO while Hungary and Turkey pursue independent strategies.

US Relations: The US is split on its approach to Ukraine, with varying factions within the Republican Party advocating for either escalation or de-escalation. Many in the US want Europe to take greater responsibility for its defense.

China's Role: Europe is conflicted between criticizing China for supporting Russia and seeking Beijing's assistance to restrain Moscow.

Need for Defense Capacity: Europe must build its own defense capabilities, requiring unity and a serious commitment. This is a long-term challenge in the current geopolitical context.

Economic and Security Implications: The war has introduced significant economic challenges and security uncertainties, affecting not only Europe but also countries like India.

WHY SHOULD INDIA INVEST IN PEACE EFFORTS IN UKRAINE?

Despite skepticism about India's effectiveness in peace efforts, supporting these initiatives is beneficial for India.

The conflict impacts India both economically and strategically, given India's historical ties with Russia and emerging partnerships with Western countries.

A stable Europe can help prevent China from capitalizing on conflicts between Russia and the West.

THE GREAT GAME IN INDO-PACIFIC

RELEVANCE

□ Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** Recent developments in Indian Foreign Policy
- **GS2:** India and its Neighborhood



INTRODUCTION

As per Mahan, whoever controls the Indian ocean, controls the world. Hence, the importance of Indo-pacific has become the centre of gravity in world politics.

INCREASING U.S. PRESENCE IN INDO-PACIFIC

- **Ties with Vietnam:** During President Biden's visit to Hanoi, the U.S. and Vietnam elevated their Comprehensive Partnership to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. This move strengthens ties between the two countries, especially in light of China's territorial claims in the South China Sea.
- **Ties with the Philippines:** The Philippines has enhanced its military alliance with the United States, granting the U.S. access to key bases

in the country. New guidelines outline specific commitments by the U.S. to address security threats to the Philippines, including joint patrols in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

- **Trilateral Security Framework:** The United States, Japan, and South Korea have established a trilateral security framework known as the Camp David Principles. This framework includes annual summits, a hotline among leaders, intelligence sharing, and joint military exercises, reflecting shared concerns about regional stability, including in the Taiwan Strait.
- **Multi-Tiered Security Framework:** The Indo-Pacific region features a multi-tiered security framework. It includes partnerships with countries like Vietnam, Singapore, and Thailand at the lowest level. The next tier comprises the Quad (India, U.S., Japan, and Australia). The

trilateral alliance between the U.S., Japan, and South Korea represents another level. At the apex is AUKUS, an enhanced military alliance between the U.S., the UK, and Australia, focusing on naval capabilities and regional security.

ASEAN'S APPROACH TOWARDS INDO-PACIFIC

ASEAN nations have varying approaches to the Indo-Pacific. Some, like Laos and Cambodia, align closely with China, while others are more cautious.

However, there are signs of a potential shift, as ASEAN nations conduct naval exercises in disputed areas like the Natuna Islands, signaling resistance to China's territorial claims.

INDIAN APPROACH TOWARDS INDO-PACIFIC

India is increasingly embracing its role within the evolving U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy. It has finalized foundational agreements with the U.S. to enhance military interoperability.

India has also secured master ship repair agreements, allowing American naval vessels to use Indian ports for repairs and refitment. This opens the possibility of extending these facilities to other members of the Quad (U.S., India, Japan, and Australia), strengthening security cooperation in the region.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific involves strengthening alliances, partnerships, and security frameworks to maintain regional stability and counterbalance China's influence in the region.

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INDIAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (IGP)

IMMUNITY TO PRESIDENT AND GOVERNORS

RELEVANCE

□ Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** Salient Features of the Indian Constitution
- **GS2:** Indian Constitution



INTRODUCTION

A three-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud is currently reviewing a case concerning the broad 'criminal immunity' granted to the President and Governors under Article 361 of the Constitution. The court has involved the Union government and sought input from the Attorney General of India to assess whether this comprehensive immunity, which protects the President and Governors from criminal proceedings while in office, compromises fairness, constitutional morality, and infringes on fundamental rights to equal protection under the law and a fair trial.

This issue of blanket criminal immunity under Article 361 has been raised in a petition filed by a contractual female employee at the Raj Bhavan, who has accused West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose of sexual harassment and molestation.

PROVISIONS OF IMMUNITY FOR THE PRESIDENT AND GOVERNOR UNDER ARTICLE 361 OF THE CONSTITUTION:

- **Article 361(1):** The President or Governor is not accountable to any court for the performance of their official duties. However:

- The President's conduct can be reviewed by a court or tribunal designated by either House of Parliament for impeachment under Article 61 (for constitutional violations).
- This immunity does not prevent individuals from suing the central or state government.

- ❑ **Article 361(2):** No criminal proceedings can be initiated or continued against the President or Governor during their term of office.
- ❑ **Article 361(3):** No court can issue a process for the arrest or imprisonment of the President or Governor while they are in office.
- ❑ **Article 361(4):** No civil proceedings can be initiated against the President or Governor concerning acts done in their personal capacity until two months after written notice has been given to them.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OF IMMUNITY UNDER ARTICLE 361:

- 1. Maintaining Dignity and Independence:** The immunity aims to protect the President and Governors from frivolous or malicious prosecutions, ensuring they can perform their constitutional duties without undue fear.
- 2. Preventing Misuse of Legal Process:** It guards against harassment through vexatious litigation, allowing the President and Governors to focus on their official responsibilities.
- 3. Upholding Separation of Powers:** The immunity supports the balance of power among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches by protecting the heads of the executive from constant legal challenges.
- 4. Ensuring Continuity in Governance:** By shielding them from criminal prosecution during their term, the immunity ensures stability and continuity in governance. However, this immunity is not absolute. It can be challenged in impeachment proceedings or through civil suits against the government

for personal actions. The Supreme Court is currently considering whether this immunity should be narrowed to permit criminal proceedings in cases involving fundamental rights violations.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST BLANKET CRIMINAL IMMUNITY:

- 1. Violation of Fundamental Rights:** Critics argue that immunity under Article 361(2) should not apply to actions that violate fundamental rights, such as those affecting a person's right to life under Article 21.
- 2. Impeding Justice:** The immunity can delay investigations and legal proceedings, potentially compromising evidence and leading to a denial of timely justice for victims.
- 3. Contrary to Democratic Principles:** The immunity is viewed by some as an outdated concept, akin to the idea that 'the king can do no wrong,' which clashes with modern democratic principles demanding accountability and transparency from all public officials.
- 4. Limitations on Immunity Scope:** There is a growing view that immunity should not extend to illegal acts unrelated to official duties. Actions like sexual harassment are not part of constitutional responsibilities and should not be protected by Article 361.
- 5. Impairment of Investigation Powers:** The immunity restricts the police's ability to investigate crimes or identify perpetrators in heinous offenses committed in a personal capacity.

JUDGMENTS ON THE IMMUNITY POWERS OF THE GOVERNOR AND PRESIDENT:

- ❑ **Rameshwar Prasad vs. Union of India (2006):** This pivotal judgment established that while Governors are afforded complete immunity under Article 361, judicial scrutiny is

permissible, particularly if actions are alleged to be taken in bad faith (malafides).

- ❑ **Ram Naresh vs. State of Madhya Pradesh (2015):** The High Court upheld that Governor Ram Naresh Yadav was shielded by 'absolute protection' under Article 361(2) from malicious publicity during his term. However, this immunity does not obstruct the police's ability to investigate offenses.
- ❑ **State vs. Kalyan Singh (2017):** In the context of the Babri Masjid demolition, the Supreme Court confirmed that then-Rajasthan Governor Kalyan Singh was entitled to immunity under Article 361 for actions taken while in office. It affirmed that criminal proceedings could only be initiated once he was no longer Governor, reinforcing immunity during the term.
- ❑ **Telangana High Court Judgment (2024):** The court observed that there is no explicit or implicit constitutional barrier preventing judicial review of actions taken by the Governor. It clarified that Article 361 immunity is personal and does not preclude judicial review.

SUGGESTED WAY FORWARD

1. **Appointment of Eminent Individuals:** Recommendations from the Sarkaria

Commission (1988), NCRCW (2002), and Puncchi Commission (2010) advocate for appointing individuals with distinguished public service as Governors. This measure aims to mitigate the potential misuse of immunity.

2. **Judicial Scrutiny and Interpretation:** The Supreme Court's readiness to reassess Article 361 indicates a possible shift toward a more nuanced approach. The Court is deliberating whether immunity should remain absolute or permit judicial review in cases where fundamental rights are involved. This could lead to a balanced framework that respects both the dignity of the office and the need for accountability.

The ongoing legal discussions and judicial reviews highlight the delicate balance between constitutional protections for high officeholders and the necessity for accountability in cases of alleged misconduct. The Supreme Court's decisions may establish important precedents for interpreting constitutional immunity and safeguarding individual rights against abuses of power.

SUPREME COURT ON SC AND ST SUB-CLASSIFICATION

RELEVANCE

□ Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** Caste, Religion, and Ethnicity
- **GS2:** Vulnerable Sections



INTRODUCTION

The seven-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, led by the Chief Justice of India, has issued a 6:1 verdict allowing for the sub-classification of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). This ruling permits states to establish sub-classifications within the SC and ST categories to provide broader protections in public employment and education. This decision overturns the 2004 ruling in *E.V. Chinnaiah vs. State of Andhra Pradesh*, which had previously prohibited such sub-classifications.

SUPREME COURT VERDICT ON SUB-CLASSIFICATION OF SCs AND STs:

1. Permission for Sub-Classification: The Court has ruled that states are permitted to create sub-classifications within the SC and ST

categories. This decision enables states to allocate separate quotas within the existing 15% reservation for SCs, aiming to address varying levels of backwardness among these communities.

2. Sub-classification on an Empirical Basis: The ruling emphasizes that any sub-classification must be based on empirical data and historical evidence of systemic discrimination. States are required to support their classifications with quantifiable data, rather than arbitrary or politically motivated reasons.

3. Extension of Creamy Layer Principle: The Court has extended the 'creamy layer' principle, previously applied to Other Backward Classes (OBCs), to SCs and STs. This means that states

must identify and exclude more affluent individuals within these groups from receiving reservation benefits, ensuring that assistance is directed towards those who are genuinely disadvantaged.

4. **Sub-classification Decisions Subject to Judicial Review:** The Court has stressed that decisions regarding sub-classification are subject to judicial review to prevent misuse for political purposes.
5. **Generational Limit to Availing Reservation:** The ruling notes that reservation benefits should be confined to the first generation of beneficiaries. If a family member has already benefited from reservations and achieved a higher social status, subsequent generations may not be eligible for these benefits.

ROOTS OF THE CASE DEMANDING SUB-CLASSIFICATION OF SCS AND STS:

- ❑ **State Government Efforts:**
 - **1975:** Punjab Government issued a notification dividing the 25% SC reservation into categories, reserving a portion specifically for the Balmiki and Mazhabi Sikh communities.
 - **2000:** The Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Castes (Rationalisation of Reservations) Act, 2000, provided an expansive list of SC communities in the state and allocated reservation benefits to each group.
- ❑ **Interventions and Striking Down of Sub-classification:**
 - **E.V. Chinnaiah Case (2004):** A 5-judge Supreme Court bench invalidated the Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Castes (Rationalisation of Reservations) Act, 2000, declaring that SCs form a homogeneous group and sub-classification was unconstitutional. This decision was based on the interpretation of Article 341, which empowers the President to notify SCs, suggesting that

sub-classification would violate the right to equality under Article 14.

- **Dr. Kishan Pal v. State of Punjab (2006):** The Punjab & Haryana High Court struck down the 1975 notification, reinforcing the E.V. Chinnaiah ruling.
- ❑ **Calls for Reassessment:**
 - Various states, including Punjab, argued that certain groups within the SC category were underrepresented and needed additional support. This led to calls for the Supreme Court to revisit the E.V. Chinnaiah ruling. In 2020, a Constitution Bench acknowledged the need to reassess the 2004 decision.
- ❑ **Judicial Review of E.V. Chinnaiah and New Ruling:** On August 1, 2024, the Supreme Court, by a 6-1 majority, overturned the E.V. Chinnaiah precedent. The ruling clarifies that while Article 341 provides a framework for identifying SCs, it does not create a uniform class without internal differences. The decision allows states to implement measures tailored to the unique challenges faced by different sub-groups, fostering a more nuanced understanding of social backwardness.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VERDICT:

1. **Enhanced Social Justice Through Targeted Reservations:** The ruling allows for sub-classification within SCs and STs, which is intended to better target support to the most marginalized groups. This approach aims to improve the effectiveness of reservation policies by addressing the distinct challenges faced by different sub-groups, thereby fostering greater social equity.
2. **Constitutional Validation:** The Court's decision affirms that sub-classification does not breach Articles 14 (right to equality) or Article 341 (definition of SCs) of the Constitution. It clarifies that states have the authority to identify varying degrees of social backwardness and

provide targeted reservations to address these disparities.

- 3. Acknowledgment of Social Reality:** The verdict recognizes that SCs and STs encompass a broad range of social groups with varying levels of disadvantage. For example, a recent caste survey in Bihar revealed significant disparities in educational attainment among different sub-groups within SCs, underscoring the need for targeted support.
- 4. Need for Data-Driven Policies:** The Court emphasizes that sub-classifications must be based on quantifiable and demonstrable data. This requirement ensures that classifications for affirmative actions are empirically justified, reducing the risk of arbitrary or politically motivated decisions.
- 5. Precedent for Future Cases:** The ruling establishes a new legal precedent for managing reservations in India. It paves the way for states to implement sub-classification policies, potentially leading to more effective and equitable reservation strategies in the future.

CHALLENGES IN ENSURING SUB-CLASSIFICATION:

- 1. Empirical Data Collection:** Gathering reliable data on the socio-economic conditions of different sub-castes is resource-intensive and time-consuming. Comprehensive surveys and studies are needed to obtain accurate information.
- 2. Criteria for Sub-Classification:** Establishing specific parameters and thresholds for measuring backwardness, such as educational attainment, income levels, and representation in government jobs, presents a complex challenge.
- 3. Political Considerations:** There are concerns that sub-classification criteria may be influenced by political motives, potentially

leading to misuse for electoral gains rather than addressing genuine backwardness.

- 4. Social Tensions:** The process of sub-classification might exacerbate existing tensions within SC/ST communities, leading to intra-community conflicts and divisions.
- 5. Administrative Burden:** Managing and updating sub-categories would place a significant administrative burden on government agencies, requiring efficient systems and processes.

WAY FORWARD

- 1. Consensus Building:** It is crucial to build consensus among various stakeholders, including political parties, community leaders, and civil society organizations, to ensure successful implementation of sub-classification policies.
- 2. Effective Monitoring and Grievance Redressal:** States should establish robust monitoring mechanisms and grievance redressal systems to prevent misuse and ensure that the most disadvantaged sub-groups receive appropriate support.
- 3. Maintaining Social Harmony:** Addressing the concerns of other marginalized communities who might feel excluded or threatened by sub-classification is important for maintaining social harmony and preventing conflicts.
- 4. Strengthening Administrative and Institutional Capacity:** Enhancing the capacity of states to implement sub-classification policies effectively is essential. This includes training personnel, developing data management systems, and creating dedicated agencies to oversee implementation.
- 5. Adequate Financial Resources:** Providing sufficient financial resources to states for conducting surveys, implementing sub-classification policies, and monitoring their impact is critical for the success of this initiative.

LATERAL ENTRY- THE CONTROVERSY

RELEVANCE

□ Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** Salient features of the Indian Constitution
- **GS2:** Government Policies



LATERAL ENTRY IN CIVIL SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

The union government asked the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to withdraw the recruitment of 45 mid-level specialists through the lateral entry route. This decision follows other significant moves such as the Waqf Amendment Bill and the draft Broadcast Bill, both of which have faced scrutiny and been put on hold.

Lateral entry into civil services in India refers to the recruitment of professionals from the private sector at the middle and senior management levels of the Government. This initiative aims to bring in specialized skills and expertise that may not be present within the traditional bureaucratic framework.

The lateral entry appointments are done on a contractual basis. The appointments are mainly

made to the post of Joint Secretary, Deputy Secretary and Director positions in the Central secretariat. These 'lateral entrants' become a part of the central secretariat, which, till now, had only career bureaucrats from the All India Services/ Central Civil Services.

BACKGROUND OF INTRODUCTION

1. **The Constitution Review Commission recommendation of 2002:** The commission advocated for lateral entry, suggesting that it could help in specializing some generalist roles by bringing in professionals from the private sector.
2. **The 2nd Administrative Reform Commission recommendation of 2005:** This commission recommended an institutionalized and transparent process for lateral entry at both

the Central and State levels. It highlighted the necessity of infusing new talent into the bureaucracy to enhance governance and policymaking.

- 3. NITI Aayog's 3-Year Action Agenda:** NITI Aayog supported the idea of lateral entry in its three-year Action Agenda. It emphasized that lateral entry has the potential to improve governance by incorporating specialized knowledge and skills from the private sector.
- 4. Sectoral Group of Secretaries (SGoS) on Governance:** This group endorsed the lateral entry system, arguing that it could enhance the effectiveness of public services by introducing professionals with relevant expertise.

IMPLEMENTATION OF LATERAL ENTRY IN INDIA

Process of Lateral Entry: The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) advertises vacancies for lateral entry. Applications are invited for lateral entry against these advertised posts. After a selection process instituted by the UPSC, individuals are recommended for appointment.

- 2018:** The first round of lateral entry began in 2018 for Joint Secretary-level posts. After a selection process by the UPSC, nine individuals were recommended for appointment to nine different Ministries/Departments in 2019.
- 2021:** Another round of lateral entry was made in 2021.
- 2023:** Two more rounds of lateral entry were made in 2023.

RATIONALE BEHIND LATERAL ENTRY INTO CIVIL SERVICES

- 1. Need for Specialists and Fresh Talent:** The inclusion of professionals from diverse backgrounds can help invigorate the bureaucracy with new ideas and innovative approaches.

- 2. Meeting the Shortage of Personnel at the Centre:** The Baswan Committee (2016) had pointed to the unwillingness of large states to sponsor officers for central deputation, due to a deficit of officers in their states. Lateral entry can help address this shortage.

- 3. Strengthening Participatory Governance:** Lateral entry aims to strengthen participatory governance by allowing the private sector and NGOs to participate in the governance process.

- 4. Improvement of Governance Efficiency:** The recruitment of private individuals as consultants or officers on special duty by Central government ministries has given fruitful results in the past.

- 5. Fixing the Flaw in Public Service Recruitment:** Lateral entry provides an opportunity for individuals who did not participate in government examinations during their youth to be part of the governance machinery.

- 6. Promotion of Healthy Competitive Spirit:** Lateral entry promotes a sense of healthy competition in bureaucracy, encouraging generalist civil servants to develop expertise in specific areas.

- 7. Bridging Public-Private Gap:** Lateral entry provides a platform for greater collaboration between the government and the private sector, particularly after the economic reforms of 1991.

- 8. In Line with Global Best Practices:** Countries like the United States, the UK, and Australia have institutionalized lateral entry as a permanent part of their system.

CRITICISMS OF THE LATERAL ENTRY SYSTEM

- 1. Ambiguity in Recruitment Process:** There are concerns about ambiguities in the recruitment process, including the determination of vacancies and evaluation procedures.

2. **Sidelining of Reservation Policy:** The process has been criticized for not implementing the reservation policy for vulnerable sections like SCs, STs, and OBCs.
3. **Lack of Familiarity with Bureaucratic Processes:** Lateral entrants often lack a deep understanding of the bureaucratic system and its protocols.
4. **Short Tenure and Impact:** Lateral entry positions are typically contract-based for a limited duration, making it difficult for entrants to assimilate into the bureaucratic structure.
5. **Potential Conflict of Interest:** There are concerns about potential conflicts of interest arising in policy formulation.
6. **Potentially Discouraging for Motivated Civil Servants:** Large-scale lateral induction may discourage motivated and talented officers.

WAY FORWARD

1. **Maintenance of Balance:** The government needs to maintain a balance between career civil servants and lateral entrants, keeping the number of lateral entrants optimal and minimal.
2. **Phased Implementation:** The lateral entry program should be implemented in a phased

manner with feedback and outcomes from initial recruitments.

3. **Implementation of Reservation Policy:** The lateral entry system should implement the '13 point roster system' for reservations.
4. **Clearly Defined Recruitment Rules and Procedures:** Recruitment and service rules for lateral entry posts need to be clearly defined.
5. **Steps for Assimilation with Bureaucratic Structure:** Greater weightage can be given for prior consultation work with the government.
6. **Exploration of Allocation of Cadres:** The option of allocating cadres for lateral entrants can be explored.
7. **Restriction to Few Technical Sectors:** Appointments should be restricted to sectors like finance, economy, and infrastructure.

CONCLUSION

Lateral entry can complement the Indian bureaucratic structure by bringing in new outside talents, pushing government officials to work more effectively for public welfare. However, a clear and inclusive policy is needed to ensure the system's effectiveness.

WOMEN- HOW SAFE ARE THEY IN INDIA?

RELEVANCE

□ Syllabus:

- PSIR: Gender Justice
- GS2: Vulnerable Sections



INTRODUCTION

“The day a woman can walk freely on the roads at night, that day we can say that India has achieved independence”- Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi’s assertion underscores the ongoing struggle for women’s safety in India, implying that true independence will only be realized when women can walk the streets at night without fear. The brutal rape and murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata has reignited national concern over this issue, much like the public outrage seen during the Nirbhaya case.

Despite technological and urban advancements, violence and discrimination against women persist. It’s distressing to note that nearly 88 rape cases are reported daily, with many more likely unreported.

Our rich cultural heritage and value system have unfortunately failed to safeguard those who are vital to society’s foundation.

SAFETY ISSUES FACED BY WOMEN IN INDIA

Women in India continue to face a variety of safety issues, despite the country’s progress in several areas. The major concerns include:

- 1. Rape and Sexual Assault:** The rise in reported rape cases is a significant issue. According to the NCRB Report 2023, crimes against women, particularly rape, have been increasing, with a substantial number of cases reported each day.
- 2. Domestic Violence:** Violence within the home remains widespread. Many women face abuse

from their spouses or in-laws, often with limited avenues for escape due to economic dependence or societal pressure.

- 3. Eve-Teasing and Harassment:** Women frequently face harassment in public spaces, which can range from verbal abuse to physical assault. Inadequate public safety measures, such as poorly lit streets and lack of public transportation safety, exacerbate this issue.
- 4. Child Marriage and Dowry Cases:** Despite legal prohibitions, child marriage and dowry-related violence persist, particularly in rural areas, contributing to the ongoing vulnerability of women and girls.
- 5. Lack of Financial Independence:** Economic dependence on male family members increases women's vulnerability to various forms of abuse and limits their ability to seek help.

DATA ON WOMEN SAFETY IN INDIA

- NCRB Report 2023:** The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported a 4% increase in crimes against women in 2022, with cases rising from 4,28,278 in 2021 to 4,45,256 in 2022. The crime rate per lakh women population increased from 64.5 in 2021 to 66.4 in 2022.
- Types of Crimes:**
 - **Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives:** 31.4% of cases.
 - **Kidnapping and Abduction:** 19.2% of cases.
 - **Assault on Women:** 18.7% of cases.
 - **Rape:** 7.1% of cases.
- Women's Safety Indices:** India ranked 128th out of 177 countries in the Women, Peace, and Security Index 2023, with a score of 0.58, placing it in the fourth quintile for women's safety.
- NFHS-5 Survey:** The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) revealed that about 30% of women in India between the ages of 15-49

have experienced physical, sexual, or domestic violence.

REASONS FOR LACK OF WOMEN'S SAFETY

- 1. Patriarchal Culture:** Deeply rooted patriarchal norms contribute to the normalization of violence against women, perpetuating a culture of male dominance and entitlement.
- 2. Objectification in Media:** The portrayal of women in media as objects of desire contributes to the normalization of harassment and violence.
- 3. Cultural Stigma:** Many women hesitate to report crimes due to fear of societal backlash and stigmatization, leading to underreporting of violence.
- 4. Economic Dependency:** Women's financial dependence on men often traps them in abusive relationships, with limited options for escape.
- 5. Inadequate Public Safety:** Poor infrastructure, such as poorly lit streets and unsafe public transportation, increases women's vulnerability to crime.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

- 1. Legal Protections:** Various laws have been enacted to protect women, including the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, the Domestic Violence Act, and amendments to criminal laws to ensure stricter penalties for sexual offenses.
- 2. Nirbhaya Fund:** This fund supports projects aimed at enhancing women's safety and security.
- 3. One Stop Centers:** These centers provide integrated support to women affected by violence, including medical, legal, and psychological assistance.
- 4. Mission Shakti:** Launched by the UP government, this initiative aims to improve

women's safety and reduce violence against them.

CHALLENGES

- ❑ **Delayed Justice:** The slow judicial process and lenient punishments often undermine public confidence in law enforcement.
- ❑ **Laxity in Conviction Procedures:** The lack of prompt FIR registration and time-bound investigations often leads to delays in convicting offenders.
- ❑ **Half-hearted Implementation:** The ineffective implementation of laws like the Sexual Harassment Act hinders the protection of women's rights.

WAY FORWARD

1. **Police and Judicial Reforms:** Gender-focused recruitment and training in the police force,

the establishment of fast-track courts, and increased women's representation in the judiciary are crucial.

2. **Training and Capacity Building:** Enhanced training for law enforcement and medical officers, along with gender-sensitive monitoring, is essential.
3. **Rape Crisis Centers:** Setting up centers that provide comprehensive support to rape victims could significantly improve the response to sexual violence.
4. **Civil Society Participation:** Active involvement of civil society in combating violence against women and assisting law enforcement is vital.

These measures, if effectively implemented, can significantly improve the safety and well-being of women in India.

HALF DECADE TO THE ABROGATION OF ARTICLE 370

RELEVANCE

- ❑ **Syllabus:**
 - **PSIR:** Salient features of the Indian Constitution
 - **GS2:** Amendments



INTRODUCTION

On August 5, 2024, the nation marked five years since the abrogation of Article 370. On this day in 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the revocation of Article 370, effectively ending the special status previously granted to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Following this, Parliament exercised its authority under Article 3 of the Constitution for the first time, to revoke the state's

status and establish two Union Territories. The Supreme Court subsequently upheld this decision with a unanimous 5-0 verdict, affirming the legality of the Centre's actions.

As we reach the five-year milestone since the abrogation, it is an opportune moment to reflect on whether the intended objectives behind the removal of Article 370 have been achieved and to consider the challenges that still lie ahead.

WHAT WAS ARTICLE 370 OF THE CONSTITUTION? HOW WAS IT REMOVED?

Article 370: Article 370 was a provision in the Indian Constitution added on October 17, 1949, that granted special autonomy to the state of Jammu & Kashmir. It allowed Jammu & Kashmir to have its own Constitution and limited the Indian Parliament's powers to make laws for the state. The Constituent Assembly of Jammu & Kashmir had the authority to decide which provisions of the Indian Constitution would apply to the state.

Article 35A: Article 35A, introduced in 1954 through a Presidential Order under the powers given by Clause 3 of Article 370, allowed the Jammu & Kashmir legislature to define who were

considered "permanent residents" of the state and to grant them special rights and privileges.

Presidential Proclamation Abrogating Article 370:

On August 5, 2019, the President of India used the powers conferred by Clause (1) of Article 370 to issue the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019. This order effectively abrogated Article 370, making all laws of the Indian Parliament applicable to the state of Jammu & Kashmir. Additionally, Parliament used its powers under Article 3 of the Constitution to revoke the statehood of Jammu & Kashmir and reconstitute it into two Union Territories: Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh.

WHAT WAS THE RATIONALE FOR THE ABROGATION OF ARTICLE 370?

- 1. Promotion of National Integration:** Article 370 allowed Jammu & Kashmir to have a separate constitution and flag, which fostered a sense of a distinct identity among its residents, leading to demands for separatism. The abrogation was seen as a step to integrate Jammu & Kashmir fully with India.
- 2. Aid in the Fight Against Terrorism:** The special status of Jammu & Kashmir under Article 370 was perceived as an obstacle to effectively

combating terrorism. The removal of Article 370 allowed the application of stringent anti-terror laws like the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

- 3. Reduction of Corruption:** Article 370 was viewed as enabling corruption by limiting the jurisdiction of national anti-corruption agencies in Jammu & Kashmir. The abrogation allowed for the application of laws like the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and Foreign

Exchange Management Act (FEMA), aimed at curbing corruption and illegal financial activities.

- 4. Promotion of Economic Development:** Under Article 370, land ownership in Jammu & Kashmir was restricted to permanent residents, discouraging outside investment. The removal of these restrictions was intended to boost economic development by attracting investments from across the country.

- 5. Effective Implementation of Affirmative Policies:** Several central laws related to education, information access, and social justice, such as the Right to Education and the Right to Information, were not applicable in Jammu & Kashmir. The abrogation allowed for the full implementation of these affirmative policies, benefiting marginalized communities in the region.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS POST-ABROGATION OF ARTICLE 370?

- 1. Improvement in Governance:** The abrogation has led to better governance with improvements in the delivery of public services, digitalization of utilities, and the near completion of major projects under the Prime Minister's development package.
- 2. Improved Economic Situation:** The improved governance and removal of restrictions have attracted investments worth Rs 6,000 crores. Tourist visits to Jammu & Kashmir significantly increased from 3.4 million in 2020 to 21.1 million in 2023.
- 3. Increased Trust in the Political System:** Despite the initial detention of political leaders, voter turnout in the 2024 general elections in Jammu & Kashmir was the highest in 35 years, indicating growing trust in the electoral process.
- 4. Absence of Counter-Hegemonic Views:** There has been a political consensus across major parties supporting the abrogation of Article 370, with no significant incidents of civil unrest, bandhs, or stone-pelting in Kashmir since the abrogation.
- 5. Social Stability:** With a decline in violence and restoration of normalcy, public life in Jammu & Kashmir has stabilized. Events promoting peace and development are now being held in areas previously considered unsafe.

What are the prevailing challenges after the abrogation of Article 370?

- 1. Changing Theater of Conflict:** The focus of infiltration and conflict has shifted more towards the Jammu sector. Increased collaboration between Pakistan and China, along with Pakistan's continued sponsorship of terror, has intensified security concerns.
- 2. Erosion of Social Capital:** The changes following the abrogation have centralized power in Jammu & Kashmir, leading to a perceived erosion of social capital and trust in the region.
- 3. Political Challenges:** The abrogation has marginalized traditional political entities, leading to a vacuum in local governance. Mainstream political parties like the National Conference and Peoples Democratic Party are struggling to regain influence.
- 4. Social and Human Rights Concerns:** Reports of human rights violations, including civil liberties restrictions, internet blackouts, and detentions of political leaders, have raised concerns about the region's social and human rights situation.
- 5. Diplomatic Challenges:** The abrogation has strained India's diplomatic relations, particularly with Pakistan, complicating the regional geopolitical landscape.

What Should be the Way Forward?

- 1. Restoration of Political Engagement:** Reintegration of local political parties into the governance process is essential. This can be achieved through dialogue between the central government and regional leaders to address grievances.
- 2. Enhancing Security and Community Trust:** Building trust between security forces and local communities is necessary to restore normalcy.

Community policing initiatives can help reduce tensions and foster cooperation.

- 3. Cultural and Educational Programs:** Promoting cultural exchange and educational initiatives can bridge divides within Jammu & Kashmir, fostering unity and social cohesion.
- 4. Addressing Human Rights Concerns:** The government should ensure transparency in its actions and be responsive to concerns about security measures and civil rights in the region.

WAQF AMENDMENT BILL

RELEVANCE

□ Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** Parliament
- **GS2:** Government Policies



STUDY IQ IAS

WAQF ACT AMENDMENT BILL 2024

INTRODUCTION

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill 2024 was recently introduced in the Lok Sabha by the Union Minister of Minority Affairs. This Bill proposes significant

amendments to the Waqf Act of 1995, aiming to overhaul the governance and regulation of Waqfs—endowments made by Muslims for religious, educational, or charitable purposes—in

India. The amendments suggest broad changes to the existing Waqf management structures, potentially altering how Waqf properties are administered and protected.

However, the Bill has sparked strong opposition from various political parties. Critics argue that the proposed amendments are **unconstitutional, divisive, and anti-minority**. The opposition's primary concern is that the changes might undermine the autonomy of Waqf institutions and could be perceived as an infringement on the rights of the Muslim community.

In light of the controversy, the Bill has been referred to a **Joint Committee of Parliament** for further examination and detailed deliberation. This referral is a standard legislative procedure in India, allowing for a thorough review and discussion of the Bill's provisions before any further action is taken in the Parliament. The Committee will likely hear from various stakeholders, including legal experts, community leaders, and members of civil society, to ensure that the Bill is well-considered and balanced in its approach.

WAQF PROPERTY AND ITS GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

Waqf Property: A Waqf, also known as *habs* or mortmain property, is an inalienable charitable endowment established under Islamic law. It involves a Muslim donating personal property for religious, charitable, or private purposes. Once a property is designated as Waqf, its ownership is considered to be with God, though the benefits of the property are used for specific purposes as intended by the donor. The status of a Waqf property is permanent and irreversible, meaning once it is declared as Waqf, it retains that character forever.

Formation of Waqf: A Waqf can be created through a formal deed, instrument, or even an oral declaration. A property that has been used for religious or charitable purposes for a long time can also be considered a Waqf, even without a formal

declaration. Once established, the Waqf status of the property cannot be revoked.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE FOR WAQFS IN INDIA

Pre-Colonial Governance: The legal governance of Waqfs in India dates back to the Muslim Waqf Validating Act of 1913, which was later replaced by the Mussalman Wakf Act of 1923.

Post-Independence: After India gained independence, the Central Waqf Act of 1954 was enacted to regulate Waqfs, which was later replaced by the Waqf Act of 1995 to further streamline Waqf administration.

Key Provisions and Institutional Structure under the Waqf Act, 1995:

- ❑ **Survey Commissioner:** Appointed under the Waqf Act to maintain a comprehensive list of Waqf properties by conducting local investigations, summoning witnesses, and requisitioning public documents.
- ❑ **Mutawalli (Caretaker):** Acts as a supervisor or manager of Waqf properties, ensuring their proper maintenance and use.
- ❑ **Waqf Boards:**
 - **Composition:** Each state has a Waqf Board under its government, often separate for Shia and Sunni communities. These boards are typically headed by a chairperson and include members such as state government nominees, Muslim legislators, scholars of Islamic theology, and Mutawallis of prominent Waqfs.
 - **Powers and Functions:** The Waqf Boards are responsible for the administration of Waqf properties, recovering lost properties, and sanctioning the transfer of immovable Waqf properties, with the approval of at least two-thirds of the board members.
- ❑ **Central Waqf Council (CWC):** Established in 1964, the CWC supervises and advises state-level Waqf Boards. It can require Waqf Boards

to provide performance information, including financial records.

- ❑ **Waqf Tribunal:** Constituted by state governments to resolve disputes related to Waqf properties. Decisions made by the tribunal are final in disputes over a property's Waqf status.

2013 Amendment to the Waqf Act, 1995: This amendment gave Waqf Boards the authority to designate properties as Waqf, prescribed penalties for encroachment on Waqf properties, and explicitly prohibited the sale, gift, exchange, or transfer of Waqf properties.

KEY CHANGES INTRODUCED BY THE WAQF (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

- ❑ **Name Change:** The act will be renamed as the Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development Act, 1995.
- ❑ **Mandatory Registration:** Waqf properties must be registered with the District Collector's Office.
- ❑ **Creation of Waqf:** A new provision requires that only lawful owners can create Waqfs.
- ❑ **Recognition of Government Properties:** Government properties identified as Waqf before or after the act's commencement will not be considered Waqf properties.
- ❑ **Dispute Resolution:** The District Collector will resolve disputes over whether a property is Waqf or government land, with their decision being final.
- ❑ **Oral Recognition:** Oral declarations will no longer suffice for a property to be considered Waqf.
- ❑ **Audit of Waqfs:** The Central government will have the authority to order audits of Waqf properties.
- ❑ **Composition of Waqf Boards:** The Bill allows the inclusion of non-Muslims and women in Waqf Boards, with at least two non-Muslim members and a non-Muslim CEO.

RATIONALE FOR THE AMENDMENTS

- ❑ **Mismanagement and Corruption:** The amendments aim to increase transparency and reduce corruption in Waqf Boards.
- ❑ **Reduction of Property Disputes:** By providing clear definitions and mandatory property verification, the government seeks to reduce disputes.
- ❑ **Streamlining Legal Disputes:** The amendments align jurisdictional issues with the principles of natural justice.
- ❑ **Women Representation:** Including women on Waqf Boards is a step toward gender empowerment.

CONCERNS ABOUT THE WAQF (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

- ❑ **Violation of Religious Rights:** Critics argue that the bill infringes on the freedom of religion and the Muslim community's autonomy.
- ❑ **Increased Government Control:** The bill grants significant power to government officials, which could lead to bureaucratic delays and overreach.
- ❑ **Inclusion of Non-Muslims:** Critics believe this undermines the integrity of Waqf Boards.
- ❑ **Increased Disputes:** Removing the Waqf Tribunal's authority could lead to more disputes.
- ❑ **Lack of Community Consultation:** The bill has been criticized for insufficient consultation with the Muslim community.

WAY FORWARD

- ❑ **Adequate Deliberations:** The government must address concerns in the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC).
- ❑ **Broader Consultation:** Engage with stakeholders, including Muslim community leaders and legal experts.
- ❑ **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Educate the community about the Waqf system and proposed changes.

MENSTRUAL LEAVE POLICY

RELEVANCE

□ Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** Women Movements
- **GS2:** Government Policies



INTRODUCTION

The Supreme Court of India recently dismissed a writ petition requesting directives for the implementation of menstrual leave policies for women. The petitioner sought to have menstrual leave provisions included under the Maternity Benefits Act, 1961. The Court highlighted that menstrual leave is a policy issue that falls under the purview of the executive branch, not the judiciary.

The demand for menstrual leave in India has been increasing. However, there are numerous challenges to implementing such a scheme effectively. This article will explore the intricacies and hurdles associated with the issue of menstrual leave in India.

WHAT IS MENSTRUAL LEAVE POLICY?

A menstrual leave policy allows female employees or students to take paid leave when experiencing menstrual pain or discomfort. It also provides options like remote work, more comfortable working spaces, and longer breaks during the workday. The aim is to increase women's work performance after menstruation and enhance their overall well-being.

INTERNATIONAL CASES OF MENSTRUAL POLICY

Spain: Spain is the first European country to pass legislation granting paid menstrual leave, allowing women three days of leave per month, expandable to five days.

Other Countries: Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea, Zambia, and Vietnam also have menstrual leave policies in place.

MENSTRUAL POLICY INITIATIVES IN INDIA

State Initiatives: The Bihar government introduced a menstrual leave policy in 1992, allowing employees two days of paid leave each month. In January 2023, the Kerala government issued an order granting menstrual leave for students in all state-run higher education institutions.

Corporate Initiatives: In 2017, Mumbai-based companies Gozooop and Culture Machine introduced menstrual leave. In 2020, Zomato introduced menstrual leave for up to ten days a year for its women and transgender employees. Other private companies like Swiggy and Byju's have since followed suit.

Legislative Attempts: The Menstruation Benefits Bill, introduced in 2018 as a private member bill, provided for two days of paid menstrual leave, four days leave for students in Class VIII, and rest periods for women. The bill lapsed with the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. Since 2018, there have been five private member bills on menstruation-related issues, including access to hygiene products and menstrual leave, all of which have lapsed. The latest was the Right of Women to Menstrual Leave and Free Access to Menstrual Health Products Bill, 2022.

WHAT IS THE NEED FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF MENSTRUAL LEAVE POLICY IN INDIA?

Fulfillment of Constitutional Mandates: Articles 15(3) and 46 of the Indian Constitution provide for special provisions to ensure the equality and dignity of women. Menstrual policies help fulfill these constitutional mandates.

Breaking Gender Stereotypes: A menstrual policy is a step towards shattering taboos associated

with menstruation, such as being considered 'dirty' and 'impure'. Historically, discussions around menstruation have been stigmatized, making it difficult for women to communicate their experiences and needs.

Reducing Female Dropouts: Menstrual leave can help reduce dropout rates of female students from government schools in rural India, where there is often a lack of clean toilets, running water, and sanitary pads.

Increase in Productivity: Providing leave to women during menstruation is likely to increase their productivity post-menstruation.

Promotes Inclusion and Equity: Menstrual leave accommodates the needs of those who menstruate, promoting inclusion and equity in the workplace.

Mental and Physical Well-Being: Allowing menstrual leave can alleviate the mental stress associated with managing work responsibilities while dealing with painful physical symptoms, leading to improved overall well-being for women.

Fulfillment of Draft National Menstrual Hygiene Policy, 2023: Menstrual leave can help fulfill the objectives of the draft policy, which includes addressing social taboos, breaking barriers, eliminating stigma, and fostering an inclusive and supportive environment.

CONCERNS WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

Non-availment of Leaves Due to Shame and Cultural Taboos: In Japan, where menstrual leave was introduced in their labor law in 1947, only 0.9% of women in the workforce avail these leave days. This low percentage is attributed to cultural taboos and the stigma surrounding menstruation.

Reinforcement of Stereotypes: Women's rights activists express concerns that menstrual leave may reinforce stereotypes that women are weaker or require special treatment. After years of struggle

to be seen beyond their reproductive biology, this policy could revert perceptions of women being primarily defined by their menstruation.

Disincentivizing Women's Employment Opportunities: The policy might further stigmatize menstruation, making employers hesitant to hire or promote women. This could fortify the glass ceiling effect, making women appear as liabilities due to perceived additional leave requirements.

Health View: Opponents argue that menstruation is not a handicap warranting special leave but should be managed like any regular health issue, thereby opposing the need for a separate leave policy.

Stigma and Embarrassment: Special leave policies could inadvertently reinforce the stigma around menstruation, making it a publicly known issue and potentially causing discomfort for women.

Further Widening the Gender Gap: According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, the global gender gap has widened. The addition of mandatory paid menstrual leave may exacerbate this gap, creating further disparities in the workplace.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE WAY FORWARD?

Addressing Primary Issues First: The lack of proper sanitary facilities in schools and workplaces, especially in the informal sector, must be addressed as a priority. This foundational step can improve the conditions under which women manage their menstrual health.

Employer's Duties: Employers should allow women employees to work from home during menstruation. They must also provide menstrual hygiene products in office spaces and create an environment where menstruation is not treated as a taboo subject.

Need for 'Period Education': Period education classes must be conducted at the grassroots level to educate the masses about menstruation. This includes men, children, and coworkers, fostering a supportive dialogue in both personal and professional settings.

Extensive Consultations: The Supreme Court's suggestion for the government to undertake consultations to formulate a model menstrual leave policy should be followed promptly. Menstrual leave should be integrated into broader conversations about self-care and workplace policies, ensuring comprehensive and inclusive policy formulation.

THE FISCAL FIGHT OF FEDERALISM

RELEVANCE

□ Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** Federalism
- **GS2:** Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the Federal Structure



FISCAL FEDERALISM - ONGOING ISSUES



INTRODUCTION

Recently, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin alleged that the Union government was withholding funds necessary for the completion of the State's Metro rail and other essential projects. States in Southern India have also raised concerns about reduced fiscal devolution, despite their higher contributions to the Gross Tax Revenues. Several state governments have criticized the Central Government's tax policies, arguing that these policies have reduced aggregate financial transfers to the States and have weakened cooperative fiscal federalism in India.

FISCAL FEDERALISM

Fiscal Federalism refers to the division of financial powers and responsibilities between the central

government and state governments in a federal system. In India, this involves the distribution of taxation powers and expenditure responsibilities between the Union and the States.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS FOR FISCAL FEDERALISM IN INDIA

- **Seventh Schedule:** The Constitution divides tax bases between the central and state governments through the Union List and the State List.
- **Article 270:** Provides for the distribution of net tax proceeds collected by the Union government between the Centre and the States.
- **Article 280:** Establishes the Finance Commission, a constitutional body that

recommends the sharing of tax revenues and grants-in-aid to the states.

- ❑ **Article 275:** Provides for grants-in-aid from the Centre to states for specific purposes.

EXAMPLES OF COOPERATIVE FISCAL FEDERALISM

Introduction of GST:

- ❑ The Goods and Services Tax (GST), introduced through the 101st Constitutional Amendment, transformed India's indirect tax system and fostered Centre-State cooperation.

Passage of FRBM Act:

- ❑ The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003, promotes fiscal discipline at both central and state levels. States enacted their own FRBM Acts, incentivized by debt and interest rate relief provided by the 12th Finance Commission, demonstrating centre-state cooperation in maintaining fiscal prudence.

Performance-based Grants:

- ❑ These grants incentivize states to achieve developmental targets, promoting competitive and cooperative federalism in finances and public expenditure.

CHALLENGES TO FISCAL FEDERALISM IN INDIA

Reduced Financial Transfers to the States:

- ❑ The share of states in gross tax revenue has decreased from 35% in 2015-16 to 30% in 2023-24.

Disproportionate Growth between Union and State Revenues:

- ❑ From 2015-16 to 2023-24, the Union government's tax revenue increased by 2.3 times, whereas the states' share only doubled, indicating disproportionate growth.

Decrease in Grants-in-Aid to the States:

- ❑ Direct financial support to states declined from ₹1.95 lakh crore in 2015-16 to ₹1.65 lakh crore in 2023-24.

Increase in Non-devolvable Cess and Surcharge:

- ❑ The share of collected cess and surcharge, which are not shared with states, increased from ₹85,638 crore in 2015-16 (5.9% of Union tax revenue) to ₹3.63 lakh crore in 2023-24 (10.8% of Union tax revenue).

Centralisation of Public Expenditure:

- ❑ In 2023-24, only ₹4.25 lakh crore out of ₹19.4 lakh crore allocated for Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and Central Sector Schemes (CSec Schemes) was devolved to states, limiting states' autonomy in planning expenditure.

Interstate Inequality in Public Finances through CSS Schemes:

- ❑ Wealthier states can leverage Union finances more effectively, while less wealthy states may increase their liabilities by committing borrowed finances to CSS, creating inter-state inequality in public finances.

Increase in Conditional Transfers:

- ❑ Several grants to states are contingent on fulfilling certain conditions, imposing Union government preferences over state priorities.

Erosion of State Taxation Autonomy due to GST:

- ❑ The implementation of GST has significantly diminished states' ability to set tax rates on their own revenue sources.

Issues with GST:

- ❑ Compensation for revenue loss to states due to GST implementation has not been adequately addressed, exemplified by the discontinuation of the GST compensation cess.

SIGNIFICANCE OF FISCAL FEDERALISM

- 1. Addressing Diversity and Disparities:** Fiscal federalism allows the central and state

governments to address regional imbalances through mechanisms like tax sharing, grants-in-aid, and performance-based incentives.

- 2. Promotes Cooperation and Consultation Between States:** Fiscal federalism encourages cooperation and coordination between the Centre and states. For example, the GST Council brings together the Centre and states to jointly administer the Goods and Services Tax.
- 3. Ensuring Fiscal Discipline:** Frameworks like the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act promote fiscal discipline at both the central and state levels, helping maintain macroeconomic stability and sustainability.
- 4. Enabling Decentralized Governance:** Fiscal federalism supports decentralization by empowering state and local governments with financial autonomy and resources, strengthening grassroots democracy and responsive governance closer to the people.
- 5. Undertaking Economic Reforms:** Fiscal federalism helps adapt to changes like the shift towards a market-oriented economy (1991 economic reforms) and undertake taxation reforms like the introduction of GST.

FINANCE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FISCAL FEDERALISM

- 1. Vertical Tax Devolution:** The 14th Finance Commission increased the share of states in the central divisible pool of taxes from 32% to 42%, enhancing the fiscal autonomy and resources of state governments.
- 2. Horizontal Distribution Formula:** The 15th FC used criteria like income distance (45%), population (2011) (15%), area (15%), demographic performance (12.5%), and forest and ecology (10%) to determine each state's share. This helps equalize fiscal capacities and addresses horizontal imbalances between states.

- 3. Grants-in-Aid:** The Finance Commissions provide grants-in-aid to specific states or sectors in need of assistance or reform, promoting competitive and cooperative fiscal federalism.
- 4. Fiscal Consolidation:** The finance commissions have suggested maintaining fiscal prudence by the states. The 12th FC recommended a multi-dimensional restructuring aimed at both qualitative and quantitative aspects of managing government finances.

WAY FORWARD TO STRENGTHEN FISCAL FEDERALISM IN INDIA

- 1. Enhanced Devolution by the 16th Finance Commission:** The 16th Finance Commission should enhance the states' share in net taxes from 41% (currently awarded by the 15th FC). The principles of vertical and horizontal devolution should be re-evaluated to ensure equitable distribution of taxes among the states.
- 2. Rationalisation of Public Expenditure by Central Govt:** A mechanism must be instituted for thorough financial rationalisation of the Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored schemes, in collaboration with state governments.
- 3. Addressing GST-Related Concerns:** Anomalies in GST, like the Integrated GST which favors consuming states over producing states, must be corrected. Efforts should be made to broaden the scope of GST to include petrol, diesel, etc.
- 4. Revisiting Article 246 and the Seventh Schedule:** The taxation powers listed in the seventh schedule must be re-evaluated in the context of fiscal federalism.
- 5. List of Taxation for Third Tier of Government:** Specific taxation powers should be devolved to local self-governments to help them raise their

own resources and reduce their dependence on grants-in-aid, achieving true fiscal federalism.

6. **Reduction of Borrowing Constraints on States:** The Union government should revisit the borrowing constraints placed on state investment funds, as suggested by Kerala.
7. **Reduction in Cesses and Surcharges:** The Union government should reduce the use of cesses and surcharges to expand its share of tax collections.
8. **Minimisation of Discretionary Transfers to States:** Some transfers can be made

automatic. For other transfers, clear and non-discriminatory methods should be followed to ensure fairness and transparency.

CONCLUSION

Strengthening fiscal federalism in India requires a collaborative approach between the Centre and the states, addressing structural and policy issues that affect financial autonomy and equitable resource distribution. Enhanced devolution, rationalisation of public expenditure, addressing GST anomalies, and empowering local governments with specific taxation powers are critical steps in this direction.



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MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q. “Indian Constitution was prepared by the few for the few”. In the light of the given statement, analyse the representational character of the constituent assembly. (15 Marks)

Granville Austin’s work, ‘The Indian Constitution: The Cornerstone of a Nation,’ discusses various aspects of India’s constitution-making process, particularly the role of the constituent assembly. He argues that a small group of dominant Congress leaders, including Nehru, Patel, Prasad, and Azad, formed an ‘oligarchy’ that played a significant role in finalizing the constitution. Austin contends that due to their status as heroes of the freedom movement, these leaders wielded significant political influence and shaped the views of the assembly.

Austin further criticizes the constituent assembly for its limited representation. The assembly was partially elected and partially nominated, with only a fraction of the adult population having the right to vote. The majority of seats were allocated to British India and filled through indirect elections, while the remaining seats were filled by nominated members from princely states. This led to allegations that the assembly was unrepresentative and did not reflect the aspirations of the masses. Critics, including JP Narayan and Churchill, argued that the assembly primarily represented the Congress and only one major community in India. Austin concurred, describing the assembly as a one-party body in an essentially one-party country. He stated that Congress dominance influenced the entire constitution-making process and shaped the constitution based on its own ideology.

However, despite these criticisms, Austin acknowledges the inclusion of several non-Congress members in the assembly to broaden its representative character. Leaders like B.R. Ambedkar and Munshi brought diverse perspectives, and the assembly also included prominent figures representing different sections of Indian society. Ambedkar represented the depressed classes, Hamsa Mehta represented the All India Women’s Conference (AIWC), and Frank Anthony represented the Anglo-Indian community. Additionally, the assembly had a significant representation of minority communities, with 37% of provincial membership belonging to minority groups.

Regarding the issue of indirectly elected representatives, it can be argued that given the critical circumstances surrounding the partition of the country, conducting elections based on universal adult franchise was impractical for a newly independent nation focused on framing a suitable constitution. The decision to opt for indirect elections was driven by practical difficulties rather than theoretical considerations.

Austin suggests that the smooth functioning of the Indian Constitution for over half a century can be attributed to the purity of the constitution-making process. However, it can be contended that if the constituent assembly and the constitution-making process were genuinely unrepresentative of the entire spectrum of Indian aspirations and interests, the constitution would have faced significant challenges from unrepresented communities in India’s diverse society.

Overall, Granville Austin’s work raises valid concerns about the representation and dominance of the Congress party in the constituent assembly. However, it also acknowledges efforts to include diverse perspectives and argues that the constitution’s stability can be attributed to the inclusive nature of the process.

Q. Examine the significance of Comparative Politics in political analysis.

Comparative Politics (CP) traces its roots back to Ancient Western Political Thought, with its foundations established by the renowned philosopher Aristotle. He is considered one of the early pioneers of the discipline, employing a traditional institutional approach to comparative politics. Aristotle's groundbreaking work involved the comparison of 158 different constitutions, leaving a significant impact on the effectiveness of political analysis within the field of comparative politics.

The scope of Comparative Politics (CP) has undergone significant evolution, transitioning from the study of political systems using traditional approaches such as Historical, Philosophical, Institutional, and Systems approach (as advocated by David Easton) to more advanced analyses involving cross-regional comparisons of political systems and study of political processes. This progression has led to the development of various models of CP, including the Structural Functional Approach proposed by Gabriel Almond and Powell, as well as the Political Sociology approach and the Political Economy approach. These models have played a crucial role in establishing the groundwork for comparative analysis of political processes and politics in emerging and developing societies.

Significance of Comparative Politics

1. Better understanding of Political Systems

- Comparative Politics has broadened the horizon of political science by devising new methodologies to understand state, institutions and other political entities by way of comparisons.
- Post WWII, even developing societies came to be analysed through the Modern Comparative Politics approaches. The Political sociology approach included various methods like Political culture, political development etc.

2. Systematic analysis of Political processes

- For example -Structural Functional approach gives a more detailed view of political systems with focus on seven Input-Output functions as devised by Gabriel Almond and Powell.

3. Help in understanding the developmental needs of different regions/states.

For example-Political Economy approach led to the study of economic policies of the state, with different schools like Classical Liberalism (Adam Smith), Marxist and Neo-Marxist, Keynesian School, Public Choice, etc tried to bring in quantitative methods by producing testable theories. This helped in analysing the developmental models and economic policies of states.

4. Theory building and generalisation

Comparative politics helped in developing various theories, for example Prismatic society model (F.W Riggs), overdeveloped state model (Hamza Alavi) etc.

Limitations of Comparative Politics in political analysis

- The traditional comparative politics due to its excessive normative and value laden approach made comparative politics lose its relevance in political analysis.
- Similarly the modern approaches due to its mad craze for scientific theories made comparative politics lose track from normative questions.

However Post behavioralism has led to reestablishing the centrality of comparative politics in political analysis by developing creative theories which are a blend of both scientific method and normative analysis.

Hence the examination of politics in developing regions, the analysis of political modernization, and the shift away from behavioralism have led to a more cross-national and regional approach in studying political systems. This has enhanced the efficacy of Comparative Politics (CP) in studying both historical and future aspects. Furthermore, it has enabled policymakers, leaders, and the public to appreciate the significance of this field of study in a more comprehensive and versatile manner.

Q. Is it evident that contemporary democracy is confronting a crisis, particularly considering the growing public discontent and the limitations of the global democratic framework in effectively addressing the Russian-Ukrainian Crisis?

The global decline in democracy has become a concerning trend, challenging the principles of government by the people. According to Larry Diamond, we are currently experiencing a phase of democratic recession, with setbacks and popular protests occurring worldwide.

The rise of authoritarian trends and identity politics has led to democratic setbacks across the world. Notable events include China's imposition of new security laws in Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and continued mass demonstrations in Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan due to alleged election rigging.

The military coup in Myanmar, which was emerging from decades of military control, and the fall of the people's government in Afghanistan, following a war fought in defense of democratic principles, are significant blows to democracy. Even the United States, often considered a stronghold of democracy, has witnessed the erosion of democratic practices.

One of the reasons behind the global decline in democracy is attributed to the double standards of Western countries, as highlighted by Dani Rodrik. For instance, Western nations have been seen supporting autocratic regimes while undermining democratic movements, whether it be in Egypt or Bahrain. These double standards have allowed leaders like Putin and Xi to question the West's commitment to democracy. Furthermore, the failure of the West to prevent the Russian invasion of Ukraine has significantly eroded public trust in the global democratic order.

There are several other reasons for the decline in global democracy. The failure to reform global governance institutions, which could have promoted inclusive growth, has undermined democracy. In European countries, the refugee crisis and job losses to immigrants have fueled populism and anti-democratic sentiments.

However, amidst this despair, there are glimpses of hope. Countries worldwide had united to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating unprecedented global collaboration. Protests for better governance in nations like Sudan and Chile have resulted in significant improvements. Landmark rulings, such as the overturning of rigged election results in Malawi, signify the triumph of independent institutions over government pressure. Election victories in Montenegro and Bolivia, as well as protests against government corruption in Bulgaria, have highlighted the resilience of democracy.

Moving forward, it is crucial to prioritize democratic reforms in global governance processes and institutions, as well as to strengthen the democratic credentials of nations. Only through these efforts can we reverse the decline in global democracy and restore faith in democratic principles within the world order.

Q. Elaborate on Plato's ideal state. (15 Marks)

Demand of the question: This question expects the candidate to give a detailed view on Plato's idea of Ideal State.

Structure:

- ❑ **Introduction:** give a general introduction about Plato, his time, space and context in which he built upon his concept of ideal state.
- ❑ **Body:** Elaborate on how Plato developed his Theory of ideal state and the underlying reasons for that.
- ❑ **Conclusion:** Give Criticism of Plato's conception of Ideal State.

Plato, often regarded as the father of political philosophy, presented his theory of the "ideal state" in his renowned work "The Republic." This theory emerged from the tumultuous circumstances Athens faced during a period of political crisis and instability. The city had suffered defeat at the hands of Sparta, experienced inequalities in wealth distribution, and encountered various problems associated with its democratic system. Plato, perceiving democracy as the "rule of ignorance," sought to address these issues and construct an ideal state.

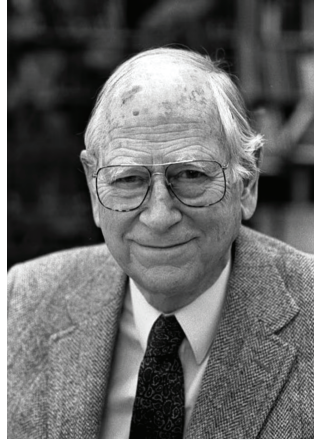
According to Plato, the foundation of the ideal state lies in the principle of justice. He views justice as the concept of "functional specialization," wherein every unit of society performs its designated task. This arrangement fosters interdependence among different segments of society, leading to social cohesion. Plato asserts that knowledge should hold the highest position in society, as he equates virtue with knowledge itself. Consequently, he proposes the establishment of the "Philosopher King" institution, whereby states are governed by rulers who possess a spirit of philosophy, resulting in virtuous governance. Plato maintains that resolving the problems of political life is contingent upon philosophers ruling or rulers adopting a philosophical mindset.

Plato emphasizes the pivotal role of education in achieving excellence and constructing an ideal state. He considers education as the primary responsibility of the state. Individuals would become eligible to become philosopher kings after completing 50 years of educational training. Plato also criticizes the prevalent corruption in Athens, identifying the institutions of family and private property as the root causes. Consequently, he advocates for a system of communism of property and family specifically for the Guardian Class.

Criticism of Plato's ideas has been significant, with Karl Popper labeling him the chief totalitarian theorist of the ancient world. In modern times, figures like Nassim Nicholas Taleb have expressed their discontent with Plato's mode of philosophizing. However, despite these criticisms and the utopian nature of Plato's theory of the ideal state, he continues to hold a significant place in the history of Western Political thought. Ralph Waldo Emerson goes so far as to declare, "Plato is philosophy and philosophy is Plato," emphasizing the profound impact of Plato's contributions to the discipline of politics.

SCHOLAR DIGEST: KNOW YOUR SCHOLARS

ROBERT DAHL



EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Robert A. Dahl, born on December 17, 1915, in Inwood, Iowa, embarked on a scholarly journey that would significantly impact the field of political science. Raised in a small Midwestern town, Dahl's upbringing influenced his curiosity about societal organization and governance. His academic pursuits led him to the University of Washington and later to Yale, where he earned his Ph.D. in political science.

CONTEXT OF POST-WWII AND COLD WAR

Dahl's academic career unfolded against the backdrop of post-World War II and the emergence of the Cold War. These transformative global events shaped his perspectives on power, governance, and the intricacies of democratic systems.

PLURALISM AND "WHO GOVERNS?"

A pivotal moment in Dahl's career came with the publication of "Who Governs?" in 1961. This work challenged prevailing elitist notions about power distribution within societies. Dahl introduced the concept of "polyarchy," positing that power is dispersed among various groups and individuals in modern democracies. His pluralist perspective

shifted the focus from a concentration of power in the hands of a few to a nuanced understanding of power dynamics among diverse societal elements.

POLYARCHY AND POWER DISPERSION

Dahl's pluralist model emphasized the existence of multiple centers of power, including interest groups, political parties, and societal organizations. This departure from traditional elitism encouraged scholars to explore the dynamics of power in civil society, beyond formal political institutions.

DEMOCRACY AND ITS CRITICS

"Dahl's book "Democracy and Its Critics" (1989) delved into the intricacies of democracy. Evaluating various democratic theories, Dahl argued for an ideal democracy where citizens have significant opportunities for participation. Acknowledging the challenges of full participation in large societies, he introduced the concept of "polyarchy" as an ideal form of democracy, balancing representation with inclusivity and citizen engagement.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Beyond academic realms, Dahl's ideas influenced policymakers and activists, contributing to debates

on electoral systems, political participation, and the role of civil society in fostering democratic values. His emphasis on the responsiveness of political institutions to citizen preferences shaped discussions on the dynamic relationship between rulers and the ruled in a democratic society.

CONDITIONS FOR DEMOCRATIC STABILITY

Dahl's exploration of the conditions necessary for democratic stability became evident in "Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition" (1971). Here, he emphasized the crucial role of opposition in a democratic framework, asserting that effective opposition is vital for democracy to thrive. Opposition provides citizens with meaningful choices and ensures accountability of those in power.

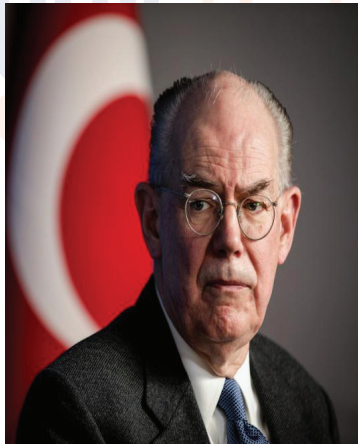
LEGACY AND ACADEMIC IMPACT

Robert Dahl's legacy extends beyond his written works. His role as an educator at Yale University played a crucial part in nurturing the next generation of political scientists. Dahl's intellectual rigor, commitment to democratic ideals, and openness to evolving theories left an indelible mark on the discipline of political science.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Robert Dahl's ideas have significantly impacted political science and democratic theory. His pluralist perspective challenged conventional elitist views, and his insights into democracy continue to shape discussions on governance, participation, and political institutions. Dahl's work remains foundational for scholars, students, and policymakers striving to understand the complexities of modern political systems and the pursuit of democratic governance.

JOHN JOSEPH MEARSHEIMER



INTRODUCTION

John Joseph Mearsheimer, born on December 14, 1947, in New York, New York, is a distinguished American academic specializing in international relations. He is most renowned for developing the concept of offensive realism within this field.

MAJOR WORKS

John Mearsheimer is well known for his work "The Tragedy of Great Power Politics". In 2007, John Mearsheimer collaborated with Stephen M. Walt on a book titled "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy," which garnered significant attention but also sparked controversy. The book argued that a influential lobby had a distorting

effect on U.S. foreign policy, leading it to prioritize unwavering support for Israel over the nation's own interests. While some critics dismissed the work as propagating conspiracy theories or lacking in factual accuracy, supporters commended the authors for their willingness to address a significant policy matter.

Mearsheimer's body of work also encompassed other notable titles such as "Conventional Deterrence" (1983), "Liddell Hart and the Weight of History" (1988), "Why Leaders Lie: The Truth About Lying in International Politics" (2011), and "The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities" (2018).

INFLUENCES

Much like many scholars specializing in international relations from his era, Mearsheimer was significantly shaped by the ideas of Kenneth Waltz, the originator of neorealism in the field. While classical realists like Hans Morgenthau attributed global conflicts to the inherent drive of political leaders to enhance their own power, neorealists (also called structural realists) such as Waltz attributed the root cause of war to the arrangement of international relations. In Waltz's framework, the absence of a higher authority governing states (referred to as anarchy) compels them to form alliances as a means of containing potential threats emanating from competing powers. Essentially, the global order is shaped by the equilibrium of power among states. According to Waltz, the pursuit of security prompts states to support the existing state of affairs and to assume a defensive stance towards their rivals.

THEORY OF OFFENSIVE REALISM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Mearsheimer's alternative perspective, termed "offensive realism," posits that the pursuit of security and, fundamentally, survival drives states to aggressively seek to maximize their power. Rather than cooperating extensively, states

predominantly engage in temporary alliances while consistently striving to weaken rivals and strengthen themselves.

Mearsheimer's theory rests on five fundamental assumptions:

1. The international system operates without a central authority to mediate state conflicts.
2. All states possess some degree of military capability, regardless of its extent.
3. States are unable to definitively discern the intentions of other states.
4. Survival ranks as the paramount concern for states.
5. States act rationally to advance their own interests.

According to Mearsheimer, these conditions generate strong incentives for states to adopt aggressive behavior towards one another. Since states cannot accurately predict the intentions of others, it becomes rational for them to bolster their military strength and adopt assertive stances to counteract potential aggression.

MEARSHEIMER'S CRITICISM OF IRAQ WAR AND USA'S FOREIGN POLICY

While Mearsheimer acknowledged war as a viable tool of statecraft, he held reservations about its blanket justification. He notably expressed strong disapproval of the Iraq War (2003–2011), viewing it as an instance where the United States sought to exert global policing authority. Concerning U.S. foreign policy, his stance favored a strategy of "global balancing" over "global hegemony." He believed that powerful nations, like the U.S., should refrain from imposing their dominion across all continents, intervening selectively when a major rival poses a threat to a strategically significant region.

Mearsheimer applauded U.S. involvement in World War II, deeming it appropriate due to the ambitions of Nazi Germany and imperial Japan to establish

dominance in their respective regions. However, he criticized the post-Cold War U.S. foreign policy for overestimating its military prowess and its ability to exert force at its discretion. A notable aspect of Mearsheimer's viewpoint was his proposition

for the complete withdrawal of U.S. forces from Europe, contending that their continued presence lacked rationale given the absence of any current dominant threat to the continent.

HENRY KISSINGER



Henry Kissinger, born on May 27, 1923, in Fürth, Germany, is a towering figure in U.S. foreign policy and international relations. A Jewish refugee who fled Nazi persecution in 1938, Kissinger's early experiences deeply shaped his worldview and approach to diplomacy. He is best known for serving as the U.S. Secretary of State and National Security Advisor under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford during the 1970s.

Kissinger's academic career began at Harvard University, where he earned a Ph.D. in 1954 with a dissertation on the Congress of Vienna and its impact on international diplomacy. His academic work established him as a leading thinker on realpolitik, a pragmatic approach to foreign policy focused on power and practical interests rather than ideological or moral considerations. This approach would later define his political career.

In 1969, Kissinger was appointed National Security Advisor by President Nixon, and in 1973, he became Secretary of State. His tenure was

marked by significant achievements that reshaped global geopolitics. One of his most notable accomplishments was the policy of détente with the Soviet Union, which sought to reduce Cold War tensions through diplomacy and arms control agreements, including the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT).

Kissinger is perhaps most famously associated with the opening of diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China. In 1971, he secretly visited Beijing, paving the way for Nixon's historic visit in 1972. This realignment dramatically altered the global balance of power, isolating the Soviet Union and shifting the dynamics of the Cold War.

Another key aspect of Kissinger's legacy is his role in the Vietnam War. He was instrumental in negotiating the Paris Peace Accords, which led to a ceasefire and the eventual withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam. For his efforts, Kissinger was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973, a decision

that was highly controversial due to the continued fighting in Vietnam after the accords were signed.

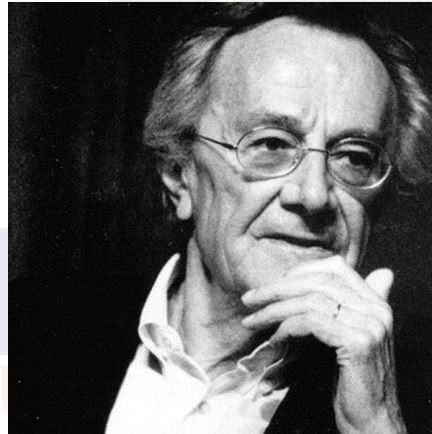
Kissinger's foreign policy approach was not without criticism. His support for authoritarian regimes in countries like Chile, Argentina, and Indonesia, often in the name of anti-communism, has been condemned by human rights advocates. His involvement in the 1973 Chilean coup, which led to the overthrow of democratically elected President Salvador Allende and the rise of General Augusto Pinochet, remains particularly contentious.

Despite the controversies, Kissinger's influence on U.S. foreign policy is undeniable. After leaving

government, he continued to be an influential voice in international affairs through his consulting firm, Kissinger Associates, and as an author and commentator. His numerous books on diplomacy and international relations, including "Diplomacy" and "World Order," have been widely read and studied.

At over 100 years old, Kissinger remains active in public life, contributing to debates on global issues. His legacy is a complex one, characterized by both groundbreaking diplomatic achievements and contentious moral questions, but his impact on the world stage is enduring.

JEAN-FRANÇOIS LYOTARD



INTRODUCTION

Jean-François Lyotard, a renowned French philosopher, made significant contributions to postmodern philosophy. His ideas challenged traditional notions of truth, power, and narratives, influencing various fields such as philosophy, sociology, and cultural studies. This article delves into Lyotard's main ideas and their implications, highlighting his concept of incredulity towards metanarratives, critique of grand narratives, and the relationship between language and knowledge.

INCREDULITY TOWARDS METANARRATIVES

Lyotard questioned the legitimacy of metanarratives, which are overarching narratives claiming to provide comprehensive understandings of the world. Metanarratives include concepts like progress, enlightenment, or Marxism. Lyotard argued that these narratives had lost credibility, as society became increasingly skeptical of their claims to truth and universality. He advocated for embracing micro-narratives, recognizing the diversity and incommensurability of different perspectives and experiences.

CRITIQUE OF GRAND NARRATIVES

A central aspect of Lyotard's work was his critique of grand narratives and their connection to power. He argued that grand narratives often functioned as tools of domination, allowing those in power to legitimize their control over society. By imposing a singular narrative, those in authority marginalize alternative viewpoints and suppress dissent. Lyotard believed that by dismantling grand narratives, we create space for a multiplicity of voices and foster a more democratic and inclusive society.

LANGUAGE AND KNOWLEDGE

Lyotard explored the relationship between language and knowledge, emphasizing the limitations and complexities of linguistic representation. He rejected the idea that language could provide an objective and transparent representation of reality. Instead, he argued that language is inherently unstable, fragmented, and subject to different interpretations. Knowledge, according to Lyotard, is contingent upon language games, which are socially constructed systems of meaning. These language games shape our understanding of reality, but they are not universally valid or comprehensive.

THE POSTMODERN CONDITION

Lyotard's ideas were influential in defining the postmodern condition. He described the postmodern era as characterized by a skepticism towards grand narratives, a celebration of diversity, and a recognition of the fragmentation of knowledge. In the postmodern condition, truth becomes a matter of individual interpretation and

subjective experience. This challenges traditional notions of authority and encourages a constant reassessment of knowledge and its foundations.

IMPLICATIONS AND CRITICISMS

Lyotard's ideas have both positive and negative implications. On one hand, his emphasis on the plurality of narratives and the rejection of grand narratives allows for a more inclusive and democratic society, where diverse perspectives are valued. It promotes critical thinking, as individuals are encouraged to question dominant narratives and engage in dialogue. On the other hand, critics argue that Lyotard's ideas can lead to a relativistic stance, where all narratives are considered equally valid, undermining the pursuit of objective truth.

Furthermore, some critics argue that Lyotard's work lacks concrete solutions or a coherent alternative to grand narratives. They suggest that while skepticism towards metanarratives is valuable, it is essential to find a balance between acknowledging the limitations of overarching narratives and maintaining a shared understanding of the world.

CONCLUSION

Jean-François Lyotard's ideas have left a significant impact on postmodern philosophy and the understanding of knowledge, power, and narratives. His skepticism towards metanarratives and emphasis on the plurality of narratives challenged established notions of truth and authority. While his ideas have faced criticism, they continue to stimulate intellectual debates and encourage critical engagement with dominant discourses.



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ENRICH YOUR ANSWER

Q. India should reconsider its stated position of shared interest with CHina in view of CHina's repeated rebuffs in international fora. Comment

Q: "India should reconsider its stated position of shared interest with China in view of China's repeated rebuffs in international fora" - Comment.

Approach

Intro

Talk about India - China relationship & India's stated position.

Body

Tell about repeated rebuffs of China in International fora for India.

→ Issues w.r.t NSG membership

→ Issues with respect to India's UNSC membership.

→ Issues with respect to Pakistan.

Analyse whether India should reconsider its position vis-a-vis China and its strategy

Conclusion

Suggest some strategies and foreign policy ideas to tackle China.

Q. Examine communitarian critique of Rawls theory of Justice.

Introduction:

→ Start with key tenets of Rawlsian theory:

- i) Individualism
- ii) Original position
- iii) Justice as fairness
- iv) Veil of ignorance

→ Mention Rawls book - "A theory of Justice"

→ Communitarian critique of key tenets

→ use Michael Sandel

↳ book - Liberalism & the limits of justice "

→ Michael Walzer

↳ book → "spheres of justice"

Conclusion

→ Rawls accepted reasonable pluralism as pre-condition in book 'Political Liberalism'

→ gave concept of overlapping consensus.

Q. Discuss the features of asymmetrical federalism.

Q: Discuss the features of Asymmetrical federalism

Approach

(Intro): Define federalism and Asymmetrical federalism.

(Body) Give features of Asymmetrical federalism

- Article 371 to 371J in Part XXI of Constitution contain special provisions for eleven states.
- Special responsibility of Governor for the development of certain areas of particular states.
- Presence of Union Territories in India.
- Unequal representation of States in Rajya Sabha (eg UP 31 seats, Goa-1 seat)
- Presence of 5th and 6th schedule to accommodate scheduled and tribal areas.

(Conclusion): Give justification of Asymmetrical federalism.

eg: to protect diversity without sacrificing unity or imposing uniformity.

Q. Compare Gandhi and Ambedkar's views on social justice.

Q1) Compare Ambedkar and Gandhi's views on Social Justice.

Intro: Start answer by defining social justice.
Also give general introduction about Gandhi & Ambedkar

Body

A) Mention the differences between views of Gandhi & Ambedkar

- ① Ambedkar was critic of Manusmriti (Manuvad) while Gandhi believed in varna system.
- ② Ambedkar held Vedas and Manusmriti responsible for social injustice while Gandhi didn't believe in it.
- ③ To achieve social justice
→ Ambedkar emphasised on Affirmative Actions
→ Gandhi emphasised on social reforms (raising the conscience of people)
- ④ Ambedkar preconditioned social justice to Nationalism while Gandhi believed that freedom struggle will result into social justice.

B) Mention similarities

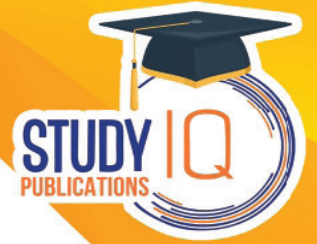
- ① Both believed in social justice and eradication of poverty.
- ② Both have vision of egalitarian society.
Ambedkar → a society free of contradictions
Gandhi → Ramrajya.

Conclusion

Can mention that both Gandhian and Ambedkar's ideas on social justice found place in Indian Constitution

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