

### The institutionalised sluggishness of the legal system

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1  
Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

**Mains:** General Studies - 2  
Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary—Ministries

#### 1. Crisis of Judicial Delays

- Indian judiciary faces **massive pendency** (over **5 crore cases**), making justice slow and ineffective
- “**Justice delayed is justice denied**” has become a reality rather than a warning
- Frequent **adjournments** and **procedural bottlenecks** prolong cases for decades
- The system turns into “**process as punishment**”, harming dignity, livelihood, and rights
- Under laws like **UAPA**, accused often face **long pre-trial detention** without bail

#### 2. Structural and Technological Reforms Needed

- Need for **strict timelines** for trials or granting bail to uphold **constitutional liberty**
- Courts still rely on **colonial-era practices** like physical files and in-person hearings
- Adoption of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **data-driven case management** is essential
- Technology can help in **case tracking, legal research, and reducing delays**
- Shift towards **digital courts and virtual hearings** to improve efficiency

#### 3. Inclusivity, Accessibility, and Affordability

- Judiciary lacks **diversity**, often seen as an “**old boys’ club**”
- Need better representation of **women and marginalized communities** for fair justice
- High **cost of litigation** makes justice a **luxury**, excluding the poor
- Strengthening **legal aid systems** is crucial for equal access
- Establishing **regional benches** and expanding **virtual access** can reduce geographic barriers

#### 4. Need for Systemic Overhaul and Accountability

- Judicial reform must be treated as a **national emergency**, not incremental change
- Emphasis on **speedy, fair, and citizen-centric justice delivery**
- Ensure **judicial independence** along with **accountability and transparency**
- Measures like **live-streaming cases** and **transparent appointments** can rebuild trust
- Reform is essential for achieving “**Viksit Bharat 2047**” and preserving the **rule of law**

### India’s rural models are shaping development diplomacy

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1  
Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

**Mains:** General Studies - 2  
Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

#### 1. Objectives and Vision of NRLM

- **National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)** launched in **2011** under Ministry of Rural Development
- Aims to reduce **multidimensional poverty** through **self-employment** and **sustainable livelihoods**
- Focus on **financial inclusion, skill development, and women empowerment**
- Promotes **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** as the core institutional model

## 2. Achievements and Impact in India

- Reached over **100 million households** across **742 districts**
- Created more than **9 million SHGs** with strong **community institutions**
- Over **50 million women accessed bank credit**, boosting **female labour participation**
- Enabled **₹12 lakh crore bank linkage** and **₹51,368 crore capital support**
- Strengthened by **₹19,200 crore allocation** in Union Budget 2026-27

## 3. Global Influence and Adaptability

- NRLM model spreading to **Global South**, especially **African countries** like Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda
- Countries attracted by **low-cost, scalable, community-driven model**
- Focus on **women's collective empowerment** and **informal economy support**
- Emphasises **institution-building** rather than short-term schemes
- Promotes **South-South cooperation** and peer learning

## 4. Role in India's Development Diplomacy

- NRLM represents shift from **financial aid** to **institutional knowledge sharing**
- Strengthens India's role in **global development leadership**
- Boost this progress by creating a **Rural Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Platform** to share its rural development expertise and connect state agencies, training institutions, and African countries.

- Encourages **training, fellowships, and joint projects** with partner countries
- Positions India as a provider of **sustainable, scalable development models**

## On the Sabarimala temple entry case

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1  
Current events of national and international importance

**Mains:** General Studies - 2  
Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

## 1. Context: Sabarimala Review and Constitutional Debate

- A **nine-judge Bench** of the Supreme Court of India, led by CJI Surya Kant, is hearing petitions on **discrimination against women in religious places**.
- The case revisits the **2018 ruling** in Indian Young Lawyers' Association vs. State of Kerala.
- A **5-judge Bench (4:1 majority)** struck down the ban on women aged **10–50 years** entering Sabarimala Temple.
- **Rule 3(b), Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Rules, 1965** was declared **unconstitutional**.
- The exclusion violated **Articles 14, 15 and 21 (equality, non-discrimination, dignity)**.
- The Court held that **Ayyappa devotees are not a separate religious denomination** and the practice is **not an Essential Religious Practice (ERP)**.

## 2. Constitutional Framework: Religion vs Equality

- **Article 25** guarantees **freedom of conscience and religion** to all persons, subject to **public order, morality, health and other fundamental rights**.
- **Article 26** grants **autonomy to religious denominations** in managing religious affairs.
- In **Sri Lakshmindra Thirtha Swamiar of Shirur Mutt(1954) case**, the Court held that **religion includes essential practices**, while **secular aspects can be regulated**.
- The **Essential Religious Practices (ERP) doctrine** determines whether a practice is **integral to religion**.

- In **Acharya Jagdishwarananda Avadhuta vs Commissioner of Police(2004)**, only practices **fundamental to religion** were protected.
- This doctrine balances **religious autonomy** with **constitutional accountability**.

### 3. Union Government's Arguments

- **"Constitutional morality"** is **subjective** and not a valid ground for judicial review.
- The **judiciary should not act as a social reformer**; reform must come from **legislature and society**.
- Courts are **not competent to determine ERPs**; religion should decide its own essentials.
- Article 26 includes **"any section thereof"**, extending protection to **sub-groups within religions**.
- **Gender-based exclusions may be religion-specific**, not necessarily patriarchal (e.g., temples excluding men or requiring men to dress as women).
- **Article 17 applies to caste-based untouchability**, not to **menstruation-based exclusion**.

### 4. Evolution, Role of State & Judiciary, and Denomination Debate

- Earlier cases like **Mahant Sri Jagannath Ramanuj Das case (1954)** and **Seshammal vs State of Tamil Nadu (1972)** **broadly protected rituals, ceremonies and modes of worship** under Article 25.
- Later cases like **Adi Saiva Sivachariyargal vs State of Tamil Nadu (2015)** and **Sabarimala (2018)** **narrowed protection to core essential practices**.
- **Article 25(2)(a)** allows regulation of **secular aspects**, while **Article 25(2)(b)** enables **social reform (mainly caste-based)**.
- Based on Constituent Assembly debates (views of B. R. Ambedkar and K. M. Munshi), **gender equality is better grounded in Articles 14 and 15**.
- Courts can intervene when practices violate **public order, morality or health** (e.g., **witchcraft, human sacrifice**), but have a **limited role in reform** compared to the State.
- A **religious denomination** requires **common faith, organisation and a distinct name (Shirur Mutt test)**.
- The Court denied **denominational status to Ayyappa devotees** as they are part of the broader Hindu faith.

- Article 26 is influenced by the **Irish Constitution**, but **Hinduism's fluid structure complicates denomination**.
- The phrase **"any section thereof"** allows **sub-groups within religions** to claim denominational rights.

### Perils of selective political reporting: the case of Tamil Nadu's finances

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1

Current events of national and international importance

**Mains:** General Studies - 2

Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

### 1. Context: Selective Political Reporting in Social Media Era

- Social media has shifted political reporting from **nuanced analysis to emotional and selective narratives**.
- Indian journalist **Pamela Philipose** in her book **Media's Shifting Terrain**, argues that middle-class mediated discourse has created distrust in political institutions, fostering **a belief that governments cannot address everyday crises**.
- The shift began with the **India Against Corruption movement** and culminated in **Narendra Modi's rise in 2014**.
- Political discourse became **hollow**, dominated by **anti-corruption rhetoric**.
- Earlier, global discourse focused on **nuanced development measures** like the **multi-dimensional poverty index**.

### 2. Media and Decline of Political Analysis

- Media **highlights welfare promises** while ignoring ideological and governance aspects.
- Examples:
  - ➔ **Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam: ₹8,000 coupon** for homemakers.
  - ➔ **All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam: free appliances, LPG, ₹2,000 assistance**.
- This is **"information without context"**.

- DMK's **50-chapter manifesto** (State Rights, Social Justice, Fiscal Management, etc.) offers a **comprehensive roadmap**, but it is ignored.
- Political reporting has become **sensational and shallow**, equating **half-truths with facts** in the name of neutrality.

### 3. Case Study: Tamil Nadu Fiscal Debate

- Piyush Goyal (Minister of Commerce and Industry of India) claimed Tamil Nadu's debt is at a historic high and questioned ₹80,000 crore GST compensation.
- Media failed to provide **economic context**.
- CM M. K. Stalin responded:
  - ➔ **Funds are used for welfare**
  - ➔ Highlighted **unequal Union allocations**
- **Key Economic Facts Ignored**
  - ➔ Debt must be seen relative to GSDP, not absolute value
  - ➔ GSDP doubled: ₹20 lakh crore → ₹40+ lakh crore
  - ➔ State follows Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act limits
  - ➔ Strong revenue growth: 14% (tax), 18% (non-tax)

### 4. Economic Reality and Structural Issues

- Despite contributing **about 9% to India's economy**, Tamil Nadu gets only **around 4% of tax devolution**.
- **Declining Union Support**
  - ➔ Transfers growing <4% annually
  - ➔ Grants shrinking ~7% yearly
  - ➔ Total transfers: 3.5% → ~2% of GSDP
- Rising debt reflects **reduced Union transfers, not fiscal mismanagement**.
- Highlights the need for **strengthening fiscal federalism and restoring fact-based, analytical media discourse to improve democratic accountability**.

## KEYWORDS

### Press Information Bureau (PIB)

- The **PIB** is the **nodal agency** of the Government of India responsible for **disseminating information** to the **print and electronic media** regarding **government policies, programmes, initiatives, and achievements**.
- It acts as an **interface between the government and the media** and also provides **feedback to the government** based on **public reactions reflected in media coverage**.
- PIB shares information through various **communication modes** such as **press releases, press notes, explainers, factsheets, feature articles, photographs, videos, and infographics**, along with **social media platforms**.
- The information is released in **English, Hindi, and Urdu**, and later **translated into other Indian languages** to reach nearly **8400 media organisations** across the country.
- PIB conducts **press conferences, press briefings, and interviews** of **Ministers, Secretaries, and senior officials** to **inform and sensitise media** about key **government initiatives**.

### Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)

- The **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)** is a landmark environmental policy of the **European Union** designed to impose a **fair carbon price on imports** of **carbon-intensive goods**.
- Its primary objective is to prevent **"carbon leakage"**—a situation where industries shift production to countries with **weaker climate regulations**, undermining global emission reduction efforts.
- Under this system, **EU importers** must purchase **carbon certificates** equivalent to the **EU carbon price**, ensuring imported goods face the same **carbon cost as domestic production**.
- The policy initially targets **high-emission sectors** such as **iron and steel, cement, fertilizers, aluminium, electricity, and hydrogen**, where the risk of leakage is highest.

- CBAM entered a **transitional reporting phase in 2023** and will **fully take effect in 2026**, pushing global partners toward **greener production practices** and **carbon pricing adoption**

