

FWD

FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST



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EDITOR'S NOTE

As UPSC aspirants, it is essential to stay updated on current affairs to excel in the examination. This **Fortune Weekly Digest (ForWarD)** brings you the latest news and developments from around the world, carefully curated and analyzed to help you prepare for the Civil Services (Main) Examination.

We understand that time is precious, and we have made sure to present the information in a concise and easy-to-understand manner.

The magazine is divided into different sections. Mains relevant topics have been covered in detail with a UPSC previous year question perspective. The jot downs are examples and interesting facts to enrich your answer writing. Cherrypicks has some key words from the week, helpful again in answer writing and essay. We have also included essay topics and sample questions to help you gauge your preparation.

We have designed this magazine to best supplement the daily current affairs notes we have launched by the name of **FIND (Fortune IAS News Daily)** and **FINDER (Fortune IAS News Daily Explainer)** and the **Fortune Prelims Precise** monthly compilation. This magazine will be explained in detail and your queries addressed in a live class we conduct.

At a time when there is no dearth of current affairs materials, our hope is help you get a one-stop solution for all your current affairs needs.

This magazine is a work in progress and your feedback will be appreciated.

We hope that this magazine will serve as a valuable resource for your exam preparation and contribute to your success in the UPSC examination.

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**FIRST ATTEMPT TOPPERS FROM
OUR PRELIMS CUM MAINS BATCH**



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BULLDOZER INJUSTICE

The chilling sight of a bulldozer demolishing a building, when authorities have failed to follow the basic principles of natural justice and have acted without adhering to the principle of due process, reminds one of a lawless state of affairs, where "might was right"- Supreme Court

Syllabus: GS II - Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

PYQ MAPPING

Q1) Judicial Legislation is antithetical to the doctrine of separation of powers as envisaged in the Indian Constitution. In this context justify the filing of large number of public interest petitions praying for issuing guidelines to executive authorities. (2020)

Q2) "Right of movement and residence throughout the territory of India are freely available to the Indian citizens, but these rights are not absolute. " Comment (2021)

WHY IN NEWS

The Supreme Court of India issued **guidelines** on November 13, 2024, **mandating due process in demolitions**, emphasising the rule of law and accountability. The case, **In Re: Directions in the matter of Demolition of Structures** follows petitions challenging the increasing use of "bulldozer justice" as an extrajudicial form of punishment.

INTRODUCTION

"Bulldozer justice" has emerged as a controversial term symbolising the use of **demolitions as a punitive tool, bypassing legal procedures and constitutional safeguards**. This practice, often criticised for targeting marginalised groups, raises significant questions about the misuse of state power and the erosion of due process in a democratic society.

SHORT TAKES

- **Retributive Justice:** A system of justice based on punishment for wrongdoing, often involving disproportionate or immediate measures such as demolitions.
- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):** Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1966, is a multilateral treaty that commits nations to respect the civil and political rights of individuals. It came into force in 1976. India became a party in 1979.

What is Bulldozer Justice?

Bulldozer justice refers to the punitive practice by state governments of demolishing the properties of individuals accused of serious crimes, such as communal riots, rape, or murder, using bulldozers as an immediate form of punishment.

Statistics

Housing and Land Rights Network Report 2024: Over 153,820 homes were demolished, displacing 738,438 individuals across India in 2022-23.

Amnesty International Report: Between April and June 2022, 128 structures, primarily owned by Muslims, were demolished.

ABOUT THE ISSUE

- **Nature of the Case:** The case dealt with petitions against bulldozer demolitions carried out by state authorities in **Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan**, where properties of individuals accused of criminal offences were demolished without due process.
 - o Allegations of communal targeting were also raised.
- **Recent Incidents:**
 - o **Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh (June 2024):** A family's ancestral home was demolished after the owner's son was arrested for cow slaughter.
 - o **Udaipur, Rajasthan (August 2024):** A tenant's house was demolished, allegedly for encroaching

on forest land, soon after the tenant's son (15 years old) was arrested for a communal stabbing incident.

→ **Link Between Arrests and Demolitions:** In both cases, the demolitions appeared **directly connected to criminal allegations against the occupants**, raising concerns about retributive justice.

→ **Response of the Court:**

- o The Court emphasised that demolitions **without**

following the basic principles of natural justice and due process are akin to lawlessness.

- o The Court invoked its extraordinary powers under **Article 142** of the Constitution **to issue binding directives** to fasten accountability.
 - Article 142 of the Constitution of India gives the Supreme Court of India the power to pass orders and decrees to **ensure complete justice** in any pending matter

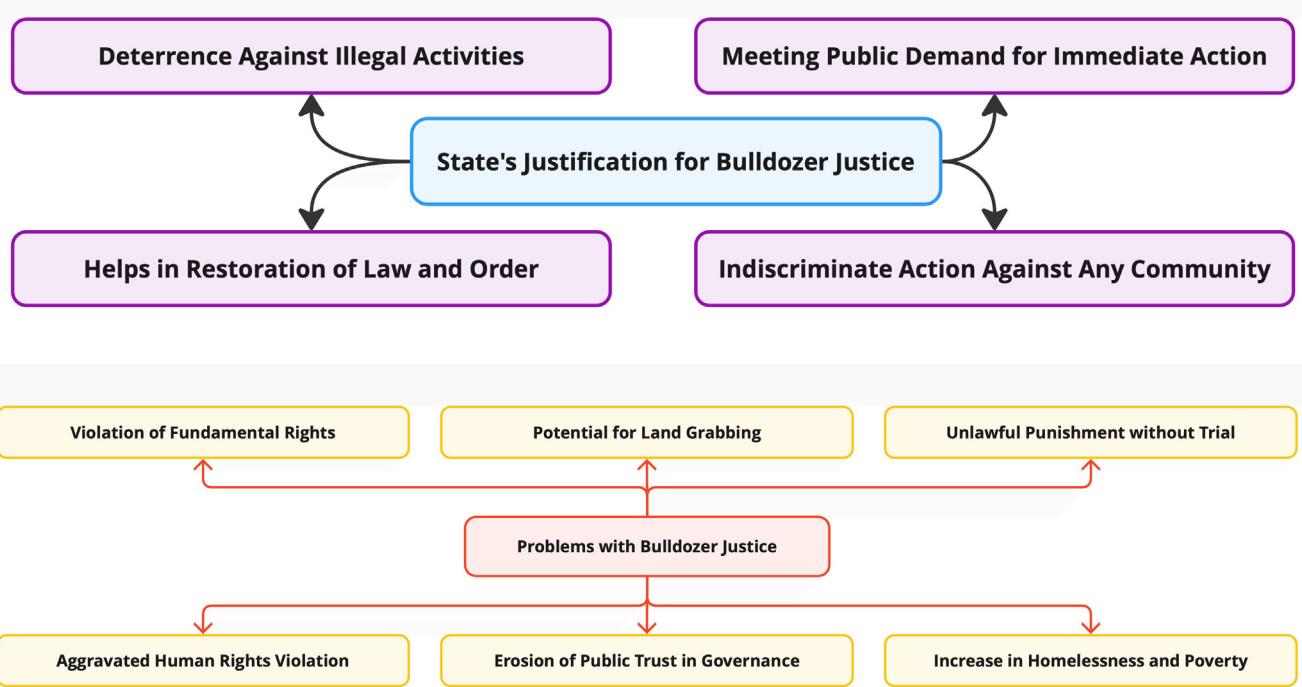
RECENT GUIDELINES ISSUED BY SC

- Q **Scope:** The guidelines focus on **transparency and giving adequate time** for the accused and their families to respond.
- Q **Exceptions:** They do not apply to **unauthorised structures on public places** (e.g., roads, streets, footpaths, near railway lines or water bodies) or **demolitions ordered by a court**.

Providing Notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum Period: Affected persons must receive a minimum of 15 days to respond to the notice. • Content: The notice must detail the structure, reasons for demolition, and a date for a personal hearing. • Notification to Authorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The local Collector or District Magistrate must be informed via email immediately after serving the notice. o An auto-reply acknowledgment must confirm receipt to avoid allegations of backdating
Hearing and Final Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Hearing: A hearing must be conducted, and minutes of the proceedings properly recorded. • Mandatory Details in the Final Order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Arguments presented by the owner or occupier. o Reasons why the authority cannot settle the issue. o Whether partial or full demolition is warranted. o Justification for choosing demolition as the only option.
Post-Order Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting Period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o After the final order is served, authorities must wait another 15 days before implementing demolition. o This period allows the owner or occupier to either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Remove the construction voluntarily. » Challenge the order in court and seek a stay.
Execution of Demolition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If No Stay or Removal Occurs: Demolition can proceed after the second 15-day period. • Mandatory Documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A video recording of the demolition must be made. o Authorities must prepare an inspection report before demolition and a demolition report listing the personnel involved. o All details, including notices, replies, and final orders, must be uploaded to a designated digital portal within three months, as per the court's direction.
Consequences for Violation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violation of these guidelines could lead to contempt proceedings and prosecution • Authorities will be held personally liable for restitution of demolished property and payment for damages.

ANALYSIS OF SC GUIDELINES: KEY PRINCIPLES

- ♣ **Separation of Powers:** The judiciary alone is responsible for determining guilt and imposing penalties and the SC deemed it “wholly impermissible” for the state to inflict punishment without a legal trial.
- ♣ **Public Trust and Transparency:** Public officials must be held accountable for punitive demolitions, as these actions violate public trust.
- o Guidelines are intended to ensure the **government's actions are transparent** and open to public scrutiny
- ♣ **Test for Discrimination in Demolitions:** The SC stated that selective demolitions, where **some structures are targeted while others remain untouched**, indicate discriminatory intent and must be scrutinised for fairness.
- ♣ **Violation of Right to Shelter:** Demolitions that deprive individuals of their shelter violate **Article 21** of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to life with dignity, including the right to shelter.



PROVISIONS VIOLATED BY BULLDOZER DEMOLITIONS

Constitutional Provisions

- ♣ **Article 14 - Right to Equality:** Arbitrary and selective demolitions based on religion, community, or other discriminatory factors violate the principle of equality before the law.
- o **Example:** Homes of Muslims targeted during riots in Khargone, Madhya Pradesh, while similar structures nearby were left untouched.
- ♣ **Article 19(1)(e) - Right to Reside and Settle Anywhere in India:** Forced evictions through demolitions infringe upon the freedom to reside and settle in any part of the country.
- ♣ **Article 21 - Right to Life and Personal Liberty:** The right to shelter, an integral part of the right to life, is violated by demolitions carried out without adherence to due process.
- ♣ **Article 300A - Right to Property:** Demolishing homes without legal procedures deprives individuals of their property.

International Obligations

- ♣ **Article 17 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):** Protection against arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honour and reputation.
- ♣ **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR):** The right to security of tenure and freedom from the threat of forced eviction.

Pros	Cons
★ Protection of Rule of Law: Ensures demolitions are conducted in compliance with constitutional principles and natural justice , avoiding arbitrary actions by the executive.	☒ Administrative Burden: Additional steps like serving notices, waiting periods, and digital intimation may slow down legitimate demolition processes.
★ Accountability of Public Officials: Erring officials in cases of unlawful demolitions are held personally liable , reinforcing accountability within the system.	☒ Ambiguity in Application: Lack of clarity on what constitutes " disproportionate actions or "compoundable" constructions " could lead to varied interpretations and disputes.
★ Preservation of Fundamental Rights: Safeguards the right to shelter under Article 21, protecting innocent residents and accused persons from unjust deprivation of housing.	☒ Increased Litigation: Allowing affected parties time to contest demolition orders could delay municipal actions and lead to court backlogs .
★ Prevention of Misuse of Power: Prohibits executive overreach by reiterating the separation of powers , ensuring the judiciary remains the sole authority to decide guilt and penalties.	☒ Delayed Intervention: The judgement comes after years of unchecked demolitions, such as the Jahangirpuri demolitions in 2022 and Nuh demolitions in 2023 , questioning the judiciary's timeliness.
★ Transparency in Procedures: Introduces mandatory protocols (e.g., prior notice, time to contest decisions) to minimise arbitrariness and enhance trust in governance.	☒ Potential Delays in Development Projects: Adherence to procedural requirements like land acquisition might slow down urgent infrastructure initiatives such as road widening.
★ Balanced Approach: Recommends proportional actions like partial demolition or compounding, reserving full demolition for extreme cases.	☒ Exclusion of Vulnerable Groups: The judgement exempts structures on public lands, excluding slums and informal settlements , which house the most marginalised sections of society.
★ Institutional Reforms: Directs the designation of nodal officers and digital systems to streamline processes and avoid malpractice, like backdating notices.	☒ Lack of Retrospective Redress: The judgement provides no clarity on how victims of past illegal demolitions will receive compensation or justice.

WAY FORWARD

- ✿ **Strengthen Legal Safeguards:** Implement clear guidelines for property demolitions, ensuring adherence to due process and allowing citizens to challenge orders in court.
- ✿ **Hold Public Officials Accountable:** Create independent oversight bodies to investigate and penalise unlawful demolitions by public officials.
- ✿ **Ensure Transparency in Demolition Orders:** Require officials to provide clear, advance notice and justification for demolitions, ensuring uniformity and fairness.
- ✿ **Promote Public Awareness:** Educate citizens about their constitutional rights and provide legal support for those affected by arbitrary demolitions.
- ✿ **Promote Speedy Judicial Redress:** Establish **fast-track tribunals** for resolving disputes related to demolitions and encroachments, ensuring justice without stalling development.
- ✿ **Ensure Equitable Compensation:** Authorities must provide adequate compensation to victims of unlawful demolitions to deter high-handedness and ensure justice.
- » **Example:** Supreme Court directed the Uttar Pradesh government to pay ₹25 lakh to a man whose house was demolished without due notice for a road-widening project.

CONCLUSION

The Supreme Court's intervention highlights the importance of upholding the rule of law and constitutional rights in cases involving property demolitions, ensuring that executive actions do not bypass judicial oversight. While the guidelines provide crucial safeguards against arbitrary actions, their effectiveness will depend on rigorous enforcement and accountability mechanisms at the local level.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Examine the concept of 'bulldozer justice' in India, its impact on citizens' right to shelter (Article 21), and the role of the judiciary in safeguarding constitutional rights. **(10marks)(150 words)**

CARE ECONOMY

Syllabus: GS II - Social Justice

PYQ MAPPING

Q1 Comment on the challenges for inclusive growth which include careless and useless manpower in the Indian context. Suggest measures to be taken for facing these challenges. (2016)

Q2 "Though women in post-Independent India have excelled in various fields, the social attitude towards women and the feminist movement has been patriarchal." Apart from women education and women empowerment schemes, what interventions can help change this milieu? (2021)

INTRODUCTION

- The **care economy** encompasses activities and relationships addressing the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of people across all age groups, including direct care (e.g., nursing, childcare) and indirect care (e.g., cooking, cleaning).
- Spanning industries like health, education, and social work, care work—whether paid or unpaid—is vital for economic stability and human well-being.



WHY IN NEWS

The **International Labor Organization (ILO)** recently published a new report titled "**Care at Work: Investing in Care Leave and Services for a More Gender-Equal World of Work**," which urged targeted policy support for the care economy and care work.

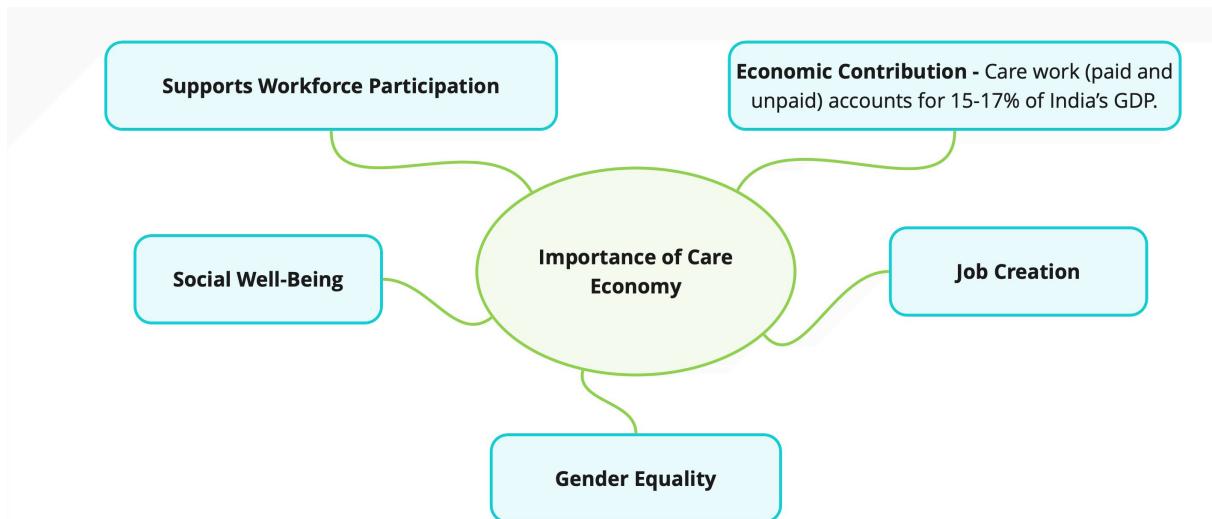
SHORT TAKES

➤ Mission Poshan 2.0:

- It is an umbrella scheme covering the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) (Anganwadi Services, Poshan Abhiyan, Scheme For Adolescent Girls, National Creche Scheme).
- It was announced in **Union Budget 2021-22** by merging supplementary nutrition programmes and the POSHAN Abhiyaan.
- Key Initiatives:**
 - Anganwadi Services:** Improves early childhood nutrition and development.
 - Scheme for Adolescent Girls:** Addresses nutritional needs of adolescent girls.
 - Poshan Abhiyaan:** Promotes better nutrition practices nationwide.

➤ Saksham Anganwadi Scheme

- Revitalization and improvement of Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) to enhance child development and nutrition services.
- Key Features:**
 - Renovation and modernization of 2 lakh AWCs across India.
 - Upgrade infrastructure, including internet connectivity, water purifiers, and smart learning aids.
 - Promote child development through cognitive, emotional, and social growth.
- Focus Areas:**
 - Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) with improved resources.
 - Support for the "Jal Shakti Abhiyaan" through Rainwater Harvesting Systems.



NEED FOR CARE ECONOMY STRATEGY IN INDIA

☀️ Changing Demographics:

- o India's population is undergoing a **demographic transition**, requiring increased elderly and childcare.

o Ageing Population:

- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) predicts that by 2050, **20.8%** of the population (~347 million) will be elderly, while children will still constitute ~18% (~300 million).

Childcare Demands:

- o Childcare remains critical for healthy child development and balancing family and work

responsibilities.

Gender Inequality in Care Work:

- o Women's economic participation is vital to reducing gender inequality, yet India's **Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR)** stands at **37% (2022-23)**, well below the global average of **47.8%** (Economic Survey 2023-24).
 - A major factor is the disproportionate caregiving burden on women within families.
 - Women spend **three times more time** on unpaid domestic work than men, hindering their economic participation.

ISSUES WITH INDIA'S CARE ECONOMY

▼ Marginalisation of Care Work

- o Care work remains undervalued and largely ignored.
- o India lacks a formal system to identify care economy workers.
- o Public spending on the care economy is less than **1% of GDP**, significantly lower than global standards.

implementation.

- o A **2019 survey** found only **49% of employers** had creche services, with widespread non-compliance due to unclear guidelines and weak enforcement.

▼ Insufficient Compensation for Care Providers

- o **2.5 million** frontline care workers (e.g., Anganwadi workers, nurse-midwives, ASHAs) are often not recognized as formal workers and lack regular salaries.
- o The **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour (2020)** urged the Ministry of Labour to set fair wages for care employees.

▼ Impact of Climate Change

- o Rural water shortages and food insecurity, worsened by climate change, increase caregiving demands on women and children.
- o Excessive unpaid care responsibilities reduce the quality of care and burden caregivers further.

INDIA'S INITIATIVES TOWARDS THE CARE ECONOMY

Maternity and Paternity Leave:

- India offers **26 weeks of maternity leave**, exceeding the ILO standard of 14 weeks.
- Central government employees receive **15 days of paternity leave**, though no formal policy exists for the private sector.

Childcare as a Priority

- To boost women's workforce participation, childcare support is being enhanced.
- Some State governments are leveraging the Anganwadi network, and the **2024-25 Budget** increased funding for the **Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 scheme** by 3%.

Domestic Worker Protections:

- Domestic workers are covered under the **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act** and **minimum wage laws**.

- The **Labour Bureau's All-India Survey on Domestic Workers** aims to gather data on their employment, wages, and socio-economic conditions.

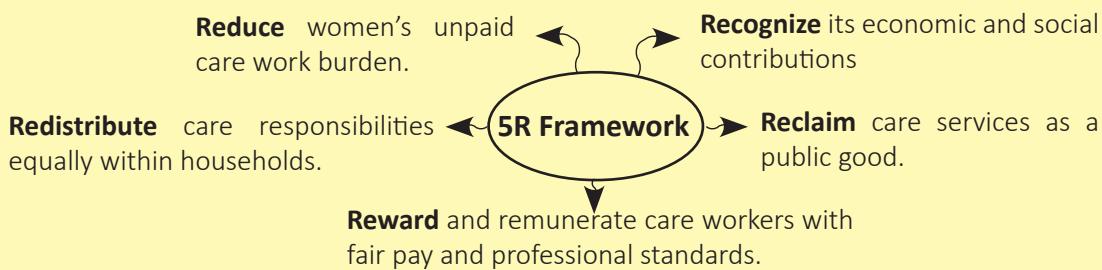
Elderly Care:

- The **National Program for Health Care for the Elderly (NPHCE)**, launched in 2010-11, addresses senior citizens' health needs.
- It aligns with commitments under the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**, **National Policy on Older Persons (1999)**, and the **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act (2007)**.

WAY FORWARD

Addressing Care Work with the 5R Framework

- The **5R Framework** of International Labour Organization highlights strategies to improve the recognition and value of care work:



Other Key Policy Recommendations

Social Care Infrastructure

- Invest in accessible, affordable childcare and eldercare services to formalise unpaid care work and create job opportunities for women.
- Reduce unpaid caregiving burdens, enabling women to join the workforce or pursue education, boosting **female labour force participation (FLFP)**.

into the formal economy.

Valuing Unpaid Work in Macroeconomic Policies

- Leverage data from tools like the **2019 Time Use Survey** to estimate and incorporate the economic value of unpaid care work into national accounts.
- Use this data to design gender-sensitive policies, reducing women's unpaid work burden and fostering opportunities for paid employment.

Challenging Social Norms

- Promote campaigns and education to dismantle gender stereotypes around caregiving.
- Encourage men's participation through policies like paternity and parental leave, fostering shared caregiving responsibilities.

Fair Compensation and Worker Rights

- Introduce minimum wages and formal recognition for care workers to ensure fair pay and better working conditions.
- Provide pensions, health insurance, and maternity benefits to informal caregivers, integrating them

CONCLUSION

The care economy goes beyond statistics; it emphasises acknowledging the significance of caregiving and establishing an accessible, affordable, and high-quality care system. By alleviating the care burden and offering adequate support, we can empower women, bridge gender disparities, and foster a more equitable and inclusive society.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Discuss the importance of the care economy in India's social and economic development. How can the creation of a comprehensive care ecosystem contribute to reducing gender inequality and promoting inclusivity in the country? **(15marks)(250 words)**

SC VERDICT ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

Syllabus: GS II - Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

PYQ MAPPING

Q1 Discuss the role of land reforms in agriculture development. Identify the factors that were responsible for the success of land reforms in India. **(2016)**

Q2 What was held in the Coelho case? In this context, can you say that judicial review is of key importance amongst the basic features of the Constitution? **(2016)**

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of property rights in India reflects the **dynamic interplay between individual freedoms and collective welfare**. From the original protection of property as a fundamental right to its reclassification as a constitutional right, the journey underscores India's socio-economic transitions and the enduring tension between fundamental rights and Directive Principles of State Policy.

WHY IN NEWS

The Supreme Court by a 8:1 majority in the **Property Owners Association & Ors v State of Maharashtra** case clarified the status of Article 31C and examined whether Article 39(b) allows the state to acquire private property as "material resources of the community."

SHORT TAKES

➤ **Market-Based Economy:** An economic system where decisions regarding investment, production, and distribution are driven by the market (supply and demand) rather than by state control.

TIMELINE OF CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS RELATED TO RIGHT TO PROPERTY

- **Article 31 (Original) - 1950**
 - The **right to property was a fundamental right** under Article 31, which protected individuals from being deprived of their property without compensation and outlined procedures for acquiring property.
- **1st Amendment Act, 1951**
 - **Article 31A:** Empowered the **state to acquire or alter property rights without challenge** on the grounds of violating fundamental rights, particularly for agrarian reforms.
 - **Article 31B:** Protected laws in the **Ninth Schedule from judicial review**, even if they conflicted with fundamental rights.
 - Ninth Schedule contains a list of central and state laws which cannot be challenged in courts. E.g., land reform laws.
- **25th Amendment Act, 1971**
 - **Article 31C:** It had two parts. One, it said that laws **aimed at resource distribution under Article 39(b) and (c)** will not be void even if they infringed upon the right to property or other fundamental rights.
 - Secondly, it made such laws **not subject to judicial scrutiny**.
 - **Article 39(b):** Directs the state to **distribute the material resources** of the community in a way that **promotes the common good**, ensuring equitable access to resources.
 - **Article 39(c):** Aims to **prevent the concentration of wealth and means of production** in a few hands, fostering greater economic equality in society.
- **42nd Amendment Act, 1976**
 - **Expanded the scope of Article 31C:** Expanded **Article 31C** to include all **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSPs)**, ensuring that laws promoting public welfare were protected from being struck down under Articles 14 (equality) and 19 (freedoms).
- **44th Amendment Act, 1978**
 - **Abrogation of Article 31:** The original right to property as a fundamental right was removed.
 - **Removal of Article 19(1)(f):** This article, which protected the right to acquire, hold, and dispose of property, was also abrogated.

- o **Addition of Article 300A:** The **right to property became a constitutional right**, meaning property can only be acquired or deprived by law, but it no longer had the status of a fundamental right.

IMPORTANT CASE LAWS RELATED TO PROPERTY RIGHTS IN INDIA

Q Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973):

- o The Supreme Court **introduced the basic structure doctrine**.
- o It also **struck down the second part of Article 31C, which prevented judicial review** of laws aimed at resource distribution under Article 39(b) and (c).
- o The **first part of Article 31C, however, was upheld**, allowing laws promoting **Articles 39(b) and 39(c)** to stand even if inconsistent with certain fundamental rights.

Q State of Karnataka v Shri Ranganatha Reddy (1977)

- o A seven-judge Bench ruled by a 4:3 majority that **privately owned resources do not fall under "material resources of the community"** under Article 39(b).
- o **Justice Krishna Iyer's Dissenting Opinion** : Justice Iyer argued for a broader interpretation and believed that "**material resources of the community**" in Article 39(b) **includes all resources**, whether public or private, that serve material needs.

Q Minerva Mills Ltd. v. Union of India (1980):

- o The Supreme Court **struck down the 42nd**

Amendment's expansion of Article 31C to cover all DPSPs.

- o The Court ruled that this expansion **conflicted with the Constitution's balance** between fundamental rights and DPSPs.

Q Sanjeev Coke Manufacturing Company v Bharat Coking Coal (1983)

- o The case involved central laws passed in the 1970s **that nationalised coal mines and coke oven plants** which two owners challenged in SC.
- o Interestingly, the five-judge Bench upheld Justice **Krishna Iyer's broader interpretation of Article 39(b) in Ranganatha Reddy case**.
- o It held that the expression "material resources of the community" could not be confined to natural resources or public owned material resources, and **included private resources also**.
- o They stated that the "constitutional goal" was to establish a "a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic."
- o This was later also upheld in a **seven-member bench in Mafatlal Industries Ltd. v Union of India case in 1997**.

ANALYSIS OF THE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION CASE

Q Context of the Case:

- o The case involved a **Maharashtra law of 1976 (amended in 1986)** allowing the state acquisition of **dilapidated private buildings** when 70% of tenants consented, citing its alignment with Article 39(b) of the Constitution.
- o The **Bombay High Court had in 1991 upheld the amendment**, stating it was protected under Article 31C.
- o Appeal was filed in the SC which in **2002 referred to a nine-member bench** since it contested with 7-member Mafatlal bench verdict.

Q Petitioner's Argument in Case:

- o The petitioners argued that the **Minerva Mills verdict (1980)** struck down Article 31C entirely, leaving the **Maharashtra law open for challenge** based on Article 14 (Right to Equality).

Q Supreme Court's clarification:

- o The Supreme Court ruled that the **original version of Article 31C**, as upheld in **Kesavananda Bharati**, remains valid.
- o The court further clarified that **only the expanded**

scope (from 42nd Amendment) had been struck down by Minerva Mills.

Q Court Ruling

Majority Opinion :

- o **Regarding Article 31C:** The Supreme Court's ruling reaffirms that laws enacted to give effect to **Articles 39(b) and 39(c)** are protected from challenges under **Articles 14 and 19**, as per the position established after the **Kesavananda Bharati case (1973)**.

- o **Regarding the Interpretation of Article 39(b): The majority stated that** not all private property qualifies as a "material resource of the community," **as the Constitution would have explicitly stated so**.

- o **It highlighted the evolution of India's economy, now incorporating both public and private investments.**
- o **The Court's majority opinion is also in disagreement with Justice Iyer's broad interpretation of 1977.**
- o **Four Factors:** The majority established that to determine if private property qualifies as a "material resource of the community," the following **four factors** must be considered:

- The **nature and characteristics** of the resource.
- The **impact** of the resource on the community's well-being.
- The **scarcity** of the resource.
- The consequences of the resource being concentrated in **private hands**.

Dissenting Opinion:

⦿ **Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia's Dissent:** Justice Dhulia disagreed, supporting the view that **all private**

resources can be considered material resources of the community, citing the **inequality** that still persists and emphasising the need for welfare measures under **Article 39(b) & (c)**.

⦿ **Justice Nagarathna:** In her partial dissent, agreed that privately owned property **could become a material resource in certain circumstances**. She disagreed with the majority's view that **Justice Iyer's observations** were incorrect, emphasising that those observations were made in a **different political context and should not be criticised**.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SUPREME COURT's RULING

- ⦿ **Clarification of Article 31C:** Reaffirms the *Kesavananda Bharati* (1973) ruling, ensuring **laws under Article 39(b) are protected from fundamental rights challenges, but courts decide which laws are covered**.
- ⦿ **Corrected Interpretation of Article 39(b):** Rejects the broader interpretation that all private property is a "material resource," preventing the endorsement of a specific economic ideology.
- ⦿ **Reflection of Economic Policy Shift:** Acknowledges India's transition from a **state-controlled to a market-based economy** since the 1990s, accommodating private sector growth and globalisation.
- ⦿ **Encouraging Judicial Prudence:** The judgement reflects judicial prudence, clarifying the court's role in interpreting laws rather than dictating economic policies, reinforcing the separation of powers.
- ⦿ **Impact on Future Legislation:** Provides clarity for future legal decisions on private property and resource distribution, aligning with constitutional principles.
- ⦿ **Socio-Economic Development:** Ensures that state policies on resource distribution are in tune with evolving economic realities, promoting equitable growth.

CONCLUSION

The Supreme Court's recent ruling reaffirms the delicate balance between resource redistribution for public welfare and safeguarding constitutional rights. While the debate on interpreting "material resources of the community" persists, the judgments highlight the ongoing pursuit of equity within a changing economic framework.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Assess the Supreme Court's role in balancing property rights with the Directive Principles of State Policy, especially in relation to Articles 39(b) and 39(c), and its impact on India's socio-economic development. **(10marks) (150 words)**

FOREIGN INSTITUTIONAL INVESTORS OUTFLOW

Syllabus: GS III - Economy

PYQ MAPPING

Q1 Though India allowed foreign direct investment (FDI) in what is called multi brand retail through joint venture route in September 2012, the FDI even after a year, has not picked up. Discuss the reasons. **(2013)**

Q2 Foreign direct investment in the defence sector is now said to be liberalised. What influence is this expected to have on Indian defence and economy in the short and long run? **(2014)**

WHY IN NEWS

- It was reported that foreign investors have pulled out ₹22,420 crore from the Indian equity market so far this month, owing to high domestic stock valuations, increasing allocations to China, and the rising US dollar as well as Treasury yields.
- With this sell-off, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have recorded a **total outflow of ₹15,827 crore in 2024 so far**.

INTRODUCTION

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) have been a significant driver of India's stock market for many years. However, in recent weeks, there has been a notable trend of FII outflows from the Indian market. This has raised concerns about the impact on Indian equities.

SHORT TAKES

➤ FPI (Foreign Portfolio Investment)

- FPI** refers to investments made by foreign entities or individuals in financial assets such as stocks, bonds, or other securities of a country, **without gaining significant control** over the businesses or assets in which they are investing.
- FPIs are a form of **indirect investment** in the economy, typically aimed at earning returns on financial instruments rather than participating in the management of the entities.
- FPI is typically **short- to medium-term** and offers benefits like international portfolio diversification and access to foreign credit.
- However, it faces risks such as **higher volatility** and lack of control over operations.

➤ FII (Foreign Institutional Investor)

- While FPI is the broader category that includes all foreign investments in financial securities, whether by institutional investors or individuals, FIIs refer to **institutional entities (e.g., hedge funds, mutual funds, pension funds)** that invest in financial markets of a foreign country..
- FIIs are typically **larger, more stable** investments compared to FPIs and generally **less volatile** due to institutional decision-making processes..
- The **SEBI (Foreign Portfolio Investor) Regulations**,

2014 merged FIIs, sub-accounts, and Qualified Foreign Investors (QFIs) under the broader category of FPIs to simplify the framework.

➤ Large-cap stocks

- These are companies with a market capitalization typically above ₹20,000 crore (in India) or \$10 billion globally. They are industry leaders and tend to be stable and less volatile.
- Market Capitalisation (Market Cap)** is the total value of a company's outstanding shares in the stock market.
- Market Capitalisation = Share Price × Total Number of Outstanding Shares**
- If market capitalisation is less than ₹5,000 crore in India they are called **small-cap stocks**.
- Between them there are the **mid-cap stocks**.

➤ Blue-chip stocks

- These are well-established companies known for reliability, consistent earnings, and long-term stability. They are usually large-cap but specifically recognized for their **quality and reputation**.
- They are typically leaders in their industries and are known for their ability to withstand economic downturns.

The term comes from poker, where **blue chips** are the highest-value chips.

REASONS BEHIND THE EXIT

→ Economic factors:

- Rising **interest rates in developed economies** like the U.S. and the European Union are attracting foreign capital, offering higher returns compared to India, where rates remain relatively lower.
- The U.S. Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank have raised rates to combat inflation, making investments in these regions more appealing.
- This **shift in investor preference** leads to capital flight from India, where inflation and a depreciating rupee add to perceived risks, further weakening the domestic economy

→ China's Stimulus Measures:

Price to Earnings (P/E) Ratio

- ↳ It is a key financial metric used to assess the valuation of a company's stock.
- ↳ It tells you how much investors are willing to pay for ₹1 of a company's earnings.
- ↳ It's a quick way to check if a stock is cheap or expensive compared to its profits.

↳ Formula:

- **P/E Ratio** = **Stock Price / Earnings per Share (EPS)**
 - **Stock Price:** The current price of one share.
 - **EPS:** The profit the company makes per share.
 - Example, if the stock price of a company is ₹100 and If the company earns ₹10 crore and has 1 crore shares, $EPS = ₹10$, then, $P/E = 100/10 = 10$
 - This means investors are paying ₹10 for every ₹1 the company earns.

↳ Interpretation:

- ↳ A **high P/E ratio** indicates that the stock is expensive relative to its earnings, often suggesting high growth expectations from investors.
- ↳ A **low P/E ratio** suggests that the stock is undervalued or that the company is facing challenges, potentially making it an attractive investment if earnings improve.

- While a higher PE ratio indicates that **Investors expect strong future growth** from the company and are ready to pay the premium price for stock, it may also indicate that the stock is **overvalued**, especially if the company's future growth prospects don't justify the high price.
- If the company doesn't meet expectations, its stock price could drop, leading to a **correction** in stock price as investors will start selling.
- FIIs always prefer markets with more attractive valuations, prompting a shift of capital elsewhere.

→ High Inflation in India:

- Inflation rose to 5.49% in September 2024, marking the highest level this year.
- Example, Consider a foreign investor who has invested in Indian stocks.
- If inflation rises significantly in India, the **Indian rupee** could depreciate against the US dollar.
- This would mean that when the foreign investor repatriates their profits, they would receive fewer US dollars than they originally invested, even if their returns in India were nominally high.
- In response, the foreign investor might decide to move their funds to a country with lower inflation and a stronger, more stable currency, such as the US or Switzerland.
- This outflow of capital is an example of **capital flight**.

- o **Impact of Inflation on Markets:**

- Erodes purchasing power, reducing consumer spending.
- Diminished corporate profits due to higher costs and lower margins.
- Leads to weaker earnings growth, **negatively impacting investor sentiment and stock prices.**

- ➡ **Weak Q2 FY25 Earnings:**

- o Indian companies reported the **slowest profit growth in 17 quarters at 3.6% for the September quarter.**

IMPACT OF FII OUTFLOWS ON INDIAN STOCK MARKET

- ⌚ **Increased Volatility:**

- o FII exits cause sharp stock price declines and unpredictable market swings.
- o Retail investors face concerns despite domestic institutional investors (DIIs) providing some relief.

- ⌚ **Downward Pressure on Stock Prices:**

- o Large-cap and blue-chip stocks with significant FII stakes witness sell-offs, pulling down indices like NIFTY and Sensex.
- o Negatively affects overall investor sentiment and wealth.

- ⌚ **Currency Depreciation:**

OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

- ☀ **Attractive Valuations:**

- o Lower stock prices due to FII selling have made high-quality stocks more affordable, presenting lucrative buying opportunities for domestic investors.

- ☀ **Long-Term Investment Potential:**

- o Domestic and retail investors with a long-term horizon can benefit from discounted valuations, potentially leading to higher future returns.

- ☀ **Focus on High-Quality Stocks:**

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the recent FII outflows are primarily a short-term tactical shift rather than a long-term concern. India's strong economic fundamentals, including robust domestic demand, structural reforms, and a growing middle class, ensure a compelling long-term growth story. While short-term challenges persist, domestic investors are helping stabilise the market. As global conditions normalise, FII interest is likely to return, driven by India's enduring economic potential.

- o Factors include sluggish revenue growth, increased interest costs, higher depreciation, and rising total expenses.

- o Such disappointing earnings weaken investor confidence in India's economic growth prospects.

- ➡ **Uncertainty Due to US Presidential Elections:**

- o The approaching US elections introduce global market volatility and uncertainty.
- o Investors are concerned about potential shifts in US economic policies, trade relations, and interest rates post-election, causing risk aversion and reallocation of assets globally.

IMPACT OF FII OUTFLOWS ON INDIAN STOCK MARKET

- ⌚ **Increased Volatility:**

- o FII outflows increase demand for foreign currencies, weakening the Indian rupee.
- o A depreciating rupee raises import costs and fuels inflation.
- o RBI had to **use its Forex reserves** to stabilise Rupee this led to a drop in India's forex reserves to \$657.892 billion (Nov 24, 2024), still healthy enough to cover one year of imports.

- ⌚ **Reduced Liquidity and Sentiment:**

- o Lower market liquidity makes trading large volumes challenging.
- o Domestic sentiment dampens if fears of continued FII outflows persist.
- o Blue-chip and fundamentally strong companies are now available at appealing price levels, enabling value-driven investments.

- ☀ **Market Entry for Retail Investors:**

- o Retail investors can build or expand their portfolios during this period without the fear of overpaying.

- ☀ **Opportunity to Strengthen Domestic Influence:**

- o Reduced FII dominance opens the door for domestic institutional investors (DIIs) to play a more significant role in stabilising and shaping the market.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) have recently pulled out significant funds from the Indian stock market, leading to increased volatility and concerns over the country's economic prospects. Analyse the short-term and long-term implications of recent FII outflows on India's economic growth. How can India sustain investor confidence amidst global financial shifts? **(10 marks) (150 words)**

SUPREME COURT VERDICT ON MINORITY CHARACTERS OF INSTITUTIONS

Syllabus: GS II - Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure

PYQ MAPPING

Q) Whether National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) can enforce the implementation of constitutional reservation for the Scheduled Castes in the religious minority institutions? Examine. (2018)

SHORT TAKES

- **Aligarh Muslim University(AMU):** Founded in 1877 as the Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, AMU has played a pivotal role in shaping modern education in India. Often called a 'mini-India,' it epitomises cultural inclusivity, with its motto rooted in the pursuit of knowledge.
- **Article 30:** Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions
 - All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. (1A) they shall have rights against compulsory acquisition of property
 - The state shall not discriminate in giving grants

WHY IN NEWS

The Supreme Court of India, in a significant ruling in the case **Aligarh Muslim University Through Its Registrar Faizan Mustafa vs. Naresh Agarwal**, has clarified the **criteria for determining the "minority character" of an institution**. A seven-judge Constitution Bench, by a **4:3 majority**, outlined the 'indicia' or indicators for identifying a minority institution, drawing on precedents while adding its own insights.

INTRODUCTION

The status of minority educational institutions under Article 30(1) reflects India's commitment to cultural diversity and equitable opportunities. However, debates on their autonomy, reservation policies, and alignment with constitutional values remain crucial.

MINORITIES IN THE COUNTRY

- The Indian Constitution does not define "minority" but recognises religious and linguistic minorities.
- The Central Government has notified **six religious minority communities** viz. Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Parsi and Jain.

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR MINORITY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (NCMEI) ACT, 2004

- **Purpose:** The NCMEI Act was enacted to safeguard the educational rights of religious and linguistic minorities under Article 30(1) of the Constitution.
- **Quasi-Judicial Role:** The Commission operates as a **quasi-judicial body** with the **powers of a Civil Court** for adjudicatory, advisory, and recommendatory functions.
- **Composition:** The Commission consists of a **Chairperson and three members** nominated by the Central Government from minority communities.
- **Term of Office:** Members, including the Chairperson, hold office for a term of **five years** from the date they assume office.
- **Powers and Functions**
 - **Determination and revocation of Minority Status:** Decides on the minority status of educational institutions.
 - **Appellate Authority:** Resolves disputes concerning the refusal of Minority Status Certificates or No Objection Certificates (NOCs).
 - **Complaint Investigation:** Addresses complaints of violations or deprivation of minority educational rights and recommends corrective measures.

BACKGROUND OF THE CASE

- **1920** - The Aligarh Muslim University Act of 1920 was passed by the British Indian Parliament that converted the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College and another Muslim University Association into a single University named the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU).
 - According to the AMU Act, the governing body of the university called the Court of the University, must only consist of persons belonging to the Islamic faith.
- **1951** – AMU Act was amended to remove the compulsory Islamic education in the university, removed the criteria that Court of the University could only have those following Islamic faith and brought in further government control
- **1965** - Further amendments reduced the power of the Court of the University and increased the power of the executive council which had government nominees.
- **1967 – S. Azeez Basha v Union of India:**
 Petitioner argued that the amendments of AMU Act violated the minority's right to establish and administer educational institutions under **Article 30 (1)** of the Constitution of India along with institution's right to carry out religious and charitable causes (**Article 26(a)**), the freedom of religion (**Article 25**), the right to conserve culture and language (**Article 29**), and the right to acquire property (**Article 31**).
 - However, the Supreme Court ruled that **Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) was not a minority institution** under Article 30 of the Constitution because it was not established or administered by the Muslim minority as the university was created by an Act of the central legislature in **1920**.
- **1981 – Amendment to the AMU Act:**
 The government amended the AMU Act, 1920, to **state that the institution was established by the Muslim community** to promote the cultural and educational advancement of **Muslims in India**.
 - Also, in **Anjuman-e-Rahmania v. District Inspector of Schools (1981)** case a two-member SC bench referred the Azeez Basha case to a 7 member bench.
- **2005 – Reservation Policy:**
 AMU introduced a **50% reservation for Muslims** in postgraduate medical programs.
- **2006 – Allahabad High Court Ruling:**
 The Allahabad High Court **struck down the university's order and the 1981 amendment**, arguing that AMU was not a minority institution as per the earlier Supreme Court decision in S. Azeez Basha. Appeal filed to **SC which was taken up by a division bench** which stayed the reservation policy of AMU and referred the matter to a higher 3-member bench.
- **2019 – Referral to a Seven-Judge Bench:**
 The matter was referred to a **seven-judge Bench** of the Supreme Court to lay down parameters to identify a minority educational institution, which will then be applied by the regular 3-member bench to decide the AMU case. Referral to 7-member bench was since the case may challenge the 5 member Azeez Basha verdict.
- **2024 - Verdict delivered.** In a 4-3 majority ruling, the Supreme Court **overturned the 1967 judgement**. The court ruled that the minority character of an institution should be determined by analysing the administrative framework, including the representation of the community's interests. The court also ordered that a new bench decide on AMU's minority status.

RIGHTS OF MINORITY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (MEI)

② Constitutional Provisions:

- **Article 15(5):** Exempts Minority Educational Institutions (MEIs) from providing reservations for SCs and STs.
- **Article 30(1):** Grants minorities the right to

establish and administer educational institutions of their choice

- **Administrative Autonomy:** MEIs can reserve up to 50% of seats for minority students and make independent decisions regarding the hiring of teaching and non-teaching staff.

ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT JUDGEMENT

♣ Ruling

- **Majority Opinion:** The majority, led by **Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, Justices Sanjiv Khanna, J.B. Pardiwala, and Manoj Misra** held that a minority institution's character remains intact despite its statutory incorporation as a university, emphasising the importance of its founding purpose and administrative structure.
- **Minority Opinion:** The dissenting opinion, led by **Justice Dipankar Datta, Justices Surya Kant and S.C. Sharma**, held that AMU is not a minority institution, criticising the improper referral process by a two-judge bench to a larger bench, which they argued set a dangerous precedent and arguing that minority status requires administrative control by the minority community and strict criteria for establishment.
 - **Justice Dipankar Datta** dissented, declaring AMU is not a minority institution, and criticised the legality of a two-judge bench in 1981 referring cases to larger benches, citing risks of setting dangerous precedents.
 - Datta wrote that - "A two-judge bench tomorrow may say 'I doubt the basic structure (basic structure test in Kesavananda Bharati v State of Kerala (1973)). I refer it to a 15-judge bench' and this is what exactly would happen if we accept the majority opinion."
 - **Justice Surya Kant** also disagreed with the 1981 referral's process, emphasising the need for minority communities to administratively control institutions to claim minority status under Article 30.
 - **Justice S C Sharma**, expressing a personal opinion, laid down criteria for minority status, stating institutions must be predominantly established and administered by the minority community with the purpose of serving their interests.

♣ Core Essentials of Minority Character:

The majority decision outlined the core essentials

- **Purpose of Establishment:** A minority institution's purpose should focus on preserving language and culture, but this need not be its sole objective.
- **Admission of Non-Minority Students:** Admitting non-minority students does not strip the institution of its minority character.
- **Secular Education:** Minority institutions can offer secular education without losing their minority status.
- **Religious Instruction and Government Aid:** If a minority institution receives government aid, students cannot be forced to partake in religious instruction. However, the institution remains a minority institution even if fully funded by the state, but cannot provide religious instruction.

♣ Test Laid Down by the Supreme Court:

The court established a two-fold test to determine minority character, focusing on the institution's establishment and administration.

- **Establishment:**
 - The idea's origin must **trace back to a minority community** or its members.
 - The purpose must predominantly be for the **benefit of the minority**, supported by evidence such as correspondence or speeches.
 - **Implementation of the idea** involves who funded the institution, acquired land, and managed construction.
- **Administration:**
 - The minority institution **does not have to be administered exclusively by members of the minority community**.
 - Courts can examine the administrative setup to confirm if it promotes and protects the interests of the minority.
 - For institutions established before 1950 (e.g., AMU), the court will assess **how the administration functioned as of January 26, 1950**.

IMPORTANCE OF MINORITY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

☀ Preservation of Cultural and Religious Identity

- Minority institutions provide a space for preserving and promoting the **language, culture, and traditions of minority communities**, fostering a sense of belonging and identity.

☀ Access to Quality Education for Minority Communities

- They offer educational opportunities specifically tailored to the needs of minority groups, helping them overcome barriers to mainstream education.

Autonomy in Educational Administration

- o Minority institutions enjoy the freedom to design curricula and administer education in line with the values and needs of their community, ensuring a more **inclusive approach** to education.

Social and Economic Upliftment

- o These institutions play a key role in empowering minority communities by providing education that leads to better job prospects, social mobility, and economic upliftment.

CONCLUSION

Minority institutions are vital in **empowering underrepresented communities and promoting pluralism**, but they must balance autonomy with broader societal goals. A nuanced approach that respects historical context while addressing contemporary needs is essential to uphold their significance in a diverse democracy like India.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Does the recognition of minority institutions conflict with the principles of equality and secularism enshrined in the Constitution? Discuss (10 marks) (150 words)



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ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) The rapid expansion of the internet and information technology has brought unintended consequences, including increased exposure to pornography and adultery. This phenomenon is creating serious issues across various aspects of society. Provide a detailed analysis of this problem, focusing on the socio-economic, emotional, and cultural factors that contribute to it, and discuss its broader implications.

Also, distinctly bring out—

- What effects does it have on people across different age groups?
- What should be the role of the government in this regard?
- What feasible steps can be suggested to effectively address and control this issue among juveniles

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

- Conflict of Interest:** Residents of Goa's heritage wards, Fontainhas and Sao Tome, are protesting against unregulated tourism, citing privacy invasions, noise, and damage caused by tourists conducting photoshoots. They have sought intervention from authorities to preserve their cultural heritage and maintain peace in their neighbourhoods.
- Environmental Ethics:** 10000 Civil defence volunteers, whose services as bus marshals were terminated last year, will now be deployed by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA). Their new roles include monitoring pollution control, curbing open burning, managing construction waste, and responding to complaints via the Green Delhi app.
- Abuse of Power:** Haryana Civil Services officer Kulbhushan Bansal was arrested following allegations by a Dalit contractual worker of sexual exploitation at gunpoint and casteist remarks. He faces charges under IPC Sections 377, 506, and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.
- Business Ethics:** The Competition Commission of India (CCI) found that Zomato and Swiggy violated competition laws by favouring certain restaurant chains. Zomato offered "exclusivity contracts" for lower commissions, while Swiggy promised business growth to exclusive partners, limiting market competitiveness.
- Innovation:** Bhubaneswar's public transport system, particularly the Mo Bus and Mo E-Ride services, has been recognized for its sustainability, inclusivity, and accessibility, significantly improving urban mobility while creating jobs and fostering social inclusion.
- Sustainability:** Bhutan is set to develop the \$100 million Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC), focusing on eco-tourism, mindfulness, and sustainable business, set to connect South and Southeast Asia. Spanning 2,500 sq km, the city is based on Buddhist values and Gross National Happiness.
- Consumer Rights/Professional Ethics:** The Union Consumer Affairs Ministry has issued guidelines to prevent misleading advertisements by coaching institutes, focusing on accurate course details, fees, and faculty qualifications. It also warns serving civil servants against endorsing coaching centres, in line with service rules.
- Animal Ethics:** The Kerala High Court has issued guidelines to regulate the use of elephants in festivals, limiting parade time to three hours and mandating rest periods between exhibitions, following concerns about the wellbeing of captive elephants.
- Ethics in Governance:** Norway's Parliament has formally apologised to the Sami, Kven, and Forest Finn peoples for the harmful effects of the country's "Norwegianization" policies, which sought to erase their cultures and languages, and pledged 17 resolutions to address ongoing discrimination.
- Gender Justice:** Anjana Goswami's work with the Equal Community Foundation in Pune aims to shift societal norms by engaging young boys in underprivileged communities to challenge toxic masculinity and promote gender-equitable behaviours, addressing the root causes of domestic abuse and violence against women.

MODEL ESSAY

"Man is the only creature who refuses to be what he is"

Introduction

- Quote by French Philosopher Albert Camus
- Explore how this statement can be understood in terms of human nature, self-awareness, and personal development.
- Explain self-awareness: Discuss how humans possess the ability to reflect on their existence, unlike other animals.

Benefits of Self-Awareness

- **Improved Decision-Making:** Helps in making better choices by understanding personal values, emotions, and goals.
- **Enhanced Emotional Regulation:** Allows better control over reactions and emotions, leading to calmer responses in challenging situations.
- **Stronger Relationships:** Promotes empathy and understanding, improving communication and connection with others.
- **Increased Confidence:** Fosters a better understanding of strengths and weaknesses, boosting self-esteem and assurance.
- **Personal Growth and Development:** Encourages continuous self-reflection, leading to improvement in skills, habits, and mindset.

Challenges

- **Societal Expectations and Conformity:** Rigid norms and standards that pressure individuals -expense of their true identity -identity suppression a- lack of self-acceptance
- **Fear of Judgment and Rejection:** Discourages people from embracing their true selves-results in anxiety-insecurity
- **Perfectionism and Unrealistic Standards:** Fueled by media and social comparisons, -individuals feel inadequate- causes dissatisfaction and burnout
- **Influence of Social Media:** Exacerbates comparison culture, creating unrealistic standards of beauty, success, and happiness

-encourages the rejection of one's true self

- **Inner Conflict and Identity Crisis:** Disconnect between how individuals perceive themselves and how they are perceived by society- leads to mental health struggles and confusion

Way Forward

- **Promoting Self-Acceptance:** Initiatives such as self-awareness workshops, therapy, and media campaigns focused on body positivity and mental health.
- **Challenging Societal Norms:** Foster inclusivity and diversity by challenging traditional norms and celebrating individuality.
- **Reducing the Influence of Social Media:** Promote digital literacy to help individuals critically assess the content they consume online
- **Emphasising Inner Growth Over External Validation:** Shift the focus from external approval to internal fulfilment
- **Providing Mental Health Support:** Offer accessible mental health resources to help individuals navigate identity crisis **Eg:** Expand counselling services in schools, workplaces, and communities, and provide platforms for open discussions

Conclusion

- Emphasise the need for embracing one's true identity to achieve a sense of fulfilment and inner peace.
- End with a philosophical reflection -the importance of accepting oneself in a world full of external pressures and idealised norms.

Sample Quotes

- *A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor a man perfected without trials - Seneca*
- *Justice delayed is justice denied- William E Gladstone*
- *Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all the darkness- Desmond Tutu*

MAINS JOT DOWN



GS- I - ART AND CULTURE

- ➡ An archaeological discovery attributed to the megalithic period has been made in Kerala's Kasaragod, featuring rock-cut carvings created with iron tools.
- ➡ These carvings include depictions of human figures representing both children and adults.
- ➡ **About Megalithic Culture:**
 - » **Period:** Iron Age (1500–500 BC).
 - » **Megaliths:** Burial structures made of large stones.
 - » **Sites:** Adichanallur, Kodumanal (Tamil Nadu); Thrissur, Kunnattur (Kerala).
 - » **Features:** Agricultural and pastoral economy; craft industries (metal, wood, ceramic); religious practices like Animism.



GS- II - GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS

- ➡ The Over **10 lakh senior citizens**, including **4 lakh women**, enrolled in the **Ayushman Vaya Vandana Scheme** within three weeks of its launch in **October 2024**.
- ➡ **About the Scheme:**
 - » Part of **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)**.
 - » Provides **free healthcare** for senior citizens aged **70+**.
 - » Covers a range of medical treatments under issued **Ayushman Vaya Vandana cards**.
 - » Supports the vision of **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** under AB-PMJAY, launched in 2018.



GS- III - ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION; RENEWABLE ENERGY

- ➡ The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** has begun excavations at **Ramgram** to uncover Buddha's eighth relic.
- ➡ **About Buddha's Relics:**
 - » Cremated remains of Lord Buddha.
 - » **Stupas Locations:** Constructed at **Rajagriha, Vaishali, Kapilavastu, Allakappa, Ramgrama, Vethadipa, Pava, Kushinagar, and Pippalvina**.
 - » Buddha attained **Mahaparinirvana** in **Kushinagar** (U.P.) and was cremated by the Mallas of Kushinagar.



GS- I - GEOGRAPHICAL PHENOMENA

- ➡ Study published in *Scientific Reports* finds that mangrove dieback in Maldives is linked to sea level rise and extreme Indian Ocean Dipole.
 - » Record-high sea levels, caused by the **Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)**, inundated mangroves with salt-laden water, leading to salinity stress and decline.
 - » **Impact (2017–2020):** Sea levels rose by **30 mm**, drowning mangroves

- ➡ The Ministry of Jal Shakti launched the "**Bhu-Neer**" portal during India Water Week 2024.
 - » A unified platform for managing and regulating groundwater resources at state and national levels.
 - » **Developed by:** Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) and the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
 - » **Role:** Established under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, to oversee the development and management of groundwater resources.
- ➡ **Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2025**, released by **Germanwatch, New Climate Institute, and Climate Action Network International**, ranks countries on their climate action progress.
 - » The top three ranks are vacant, with Denmark at 4th place.
 - » India is ranked **10th**.
 - » **Scope:** Evaluates 63 countries and the EU on **GHG emissions, renewable energy, energy use, and climate policy**.



GS- II - INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- India and Italy held a bilateral meeting during the G20 Summit in Brazil and launched a **5-year Joint Strategic Action Plan** for collaboration in key sectors.

Key Highlights:

- » **Economic Cooperation:** Boosting trade and investment in green technologies, pharmaceuticals, and food processing through joint mechanisms.
- » **Connectivity:** Collaboration on the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC) to enhance trade and connectivity.
- » **Science & Technology:** Expanding cooperation in AI, digitalization, and launching the **2025-27 Executive Programme** and **Indo-Italian Innovation Exchange Programme**.
- » **Energy Transition:** Hosting tech summits and strengthening ties in global alliances like the Global Biofuels Alliance and International Solar Alliance.
- » **Defence Cooperation:** Annual Joint Defence Consultative meetings, Joint Staff Talks, and plans for a Defence Industrial Roadmap to enhance defence manufacturing ties.



GS- III - SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- The **Ministry of Science and Technology** launched India's first **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Data Bank**.

- » **Objective:** Provide researchers, startups, and developers access to diverse, high-quality datasets for scalable AI solutions.

Key Features:

- » Supports national security with real-time analytics of satellite, drone, and IoT data.
- » Aims to leverage AI for predictive analytics in disaster management and cybersecurity.

- The **VISION (Viksit Bharat Initiative for Student Innovation and Outreach Network)** portal was inaugurated by the Union Minister of Science and Technology.

About the Portal:

- » **Objective:** Foster education, skill development, and innovation among underprivileged children.
- » **Access:** Provides mentorship and training opportunities for students in remote areas.
- » **Significance:** Supports aspirations under **Vision India 2047**



GS- III - ECONOMY

- India ranked **23rd** on the **Sustainable Trade Index 2024**, created by the **IMD World Competitiveness Center** and **Hinrich Foundation**.

About the Index:

- » **Objective:** Assesses the readiness of 30 economies for global trade, focusing on economic, environmental, and societal pillars.
- » **Definition:** Sustainable trade ensures mutually beneficial outcomes while balancing economic, social, and environmental goals.
- » **Top Performers:** New Zealand, followed by the UK and Australia.

CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK

BACTERIAL COMPUTER

- Researchers in Kolkata have engineered **bacteria to perform computational tasks** by integrating Genetic Circuits—biological systems enabling cells to interact and execute logical functions.
- These engineered bacteria, termed "bactoneurons", function as artificial neurons within a network, simulating neural processes.
- Applications:**
 - » Early disease detection and treatment
 - » Enhanced carbon sequestration using cell-based biocomputers
 - » Accelerated computing capabilities

BIOLEACHING

- A biological process to **extract metals** (e.g., copper, gold) from minerals and waste **using microorganisms** like Pseudomonas, Thiobacilli, Aspergillus, and Penicillium.
- Advantages:**
 - » Eco-friendly: Reduces air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.
 - » Cost-effective: Suitable for low-grade ores.
 - » Energy-efficient: Consumes less energy than traditional methods like smelting or hydrometallurgy.

AROTRACK: PORTABLE WATER-POLLUTANT DETECTOR

- Developed by IIT Bombay, AroTrack is a low-cost, battery-powered device that uses a protein-based MopR biosensor to detect toxic aromatic pollutants like phenol, benzene, and xylenols in water.
- It employs an engineered protein-DNA sequence and a LED phototransistor to provide results via light intensity, offering an affordable solution for water quality testing.

BOMB CYCLONE

- Also known as **bombogenesis**, it refers to a **rapidly intensifying mid-latitude cyclone with a pressure drop of at least 24 millibars in 24 hours**.
- Typically forming over oceans, these can be tropical or non-tropical and often cause extreme weather like blizzards, heavy rainfall, and thunderstorms.

SPREAD BETTING

- It refers to speculating on the direction of a financial market **without actually owning the underlying security**.
- It involves placing a bet on the price movement of a security.
- A spread betting company quotes two prices, the bid and ask price (also called the spread), and investors bet whether the price of the underlying security will be lower than the bid or higher than the ask.