

Solved Paper 2023

General Studies

Paper II

There are twenty questions. All Questions are Compulsory.

Questions 1-10 are 10 marks each

Questions 11-20 are 15 marks each

1. **“Constitutionally guaranteed judicial independence is a prerequisite of democracy”. Comment.** *(Answer in 150 words)*

Ans. Constitutionally guaranteed judicial independence has its several advantages. Judiciary cannot become subservient to other bodies. Such independence is in line with the doctrine of separation of powers too.

The Indian Constitution, in conformity with the idea to give judiciary the independence and the stature, has provided for many articles ensuring that it is truly insulated.

Article 124 provides for the establishment of the Supreme Court, and Article 214 for High Courts. Cases of appointment and transfer of judges are to be through National Judicial Appointments Commission (Art 124).

The salaries of judges and attending privileges are guaranteed under Article 125. Importantly, salaries of judges and of the officers and others are paid from the Consolidated Fund to ensure that the executive has no hold over it.

With the said provisions the judiciary has been guaranteed its insulation and independence. The parliament can legislate and act but the Supreme Court has put its seal of finality that “basic structure” of the Constitution cannot be altered. (*Kesavananda Bharati vs State of Kerala, 1973*). In *Minerva Mills Case (1980)*, the Supreme Court held independence of judiciary to be a basic feature of the Constitution. **(192 words)**

2. **Who are entitled to receive free legal aid? Assess the role of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) in rendering free legal aid in India.**

(Answer in 150 words)

Ans. Article 39-A (inserted by the 42nd Amendment, 1976) of the Indian Constitution provides for “equal justice and free legal aid”. In pursuance of this, National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has been set up.

Free Legal Aid is available to the following categories of people.

- (i) A member of scheduled caste or scheduled tribe.
- (ii) A victim of human trafficking or a beggar.

- (iii) A woman or a child.
- (iv) A mentally ill or otherwise disabled person.
- (v) A person in custody or in protective custody home.
- (vi) A juvenile in juvenile home.
- (vii) An individual whose annual income is less than the amount prescribed by the respective government.

National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has been doing a commendable job since its inception. Its role in providing free legal assistance to Senior Citizens is particularly noteworthy; its record of handling assistance in more than one lakh cases in 2020 is ample testimony to its work.

Equally remarkable is NALSA's work in providing free legal assistance to women who are victims of domestic violence and abuse.

Undertrials and prisoners too have been benefitting from the assistance provided by NALSA.

However, it is in the realm of spreading awareness in the society that NALSA has excelled itself. (203 words)

3. **“The states in India seem reluctant to empower urban local bodies both functionally as well as financially.” Comment.** (Answer in 150 words)

Ans. Urban Local Bodies are usually starved of funds; they do not have much leverage to generate funds either. Equally, they are powerless too; most of the powers are either with the Union Government or with the State Government.

Functionally, Urban Local Bodies owe their existence to the 74th Amendment to the Constitution (1992). Some select areas have been identified for their operations but the ground reality is that the State Governments are prime and powerful; political interests run counter to encouraging or enriching these bodies. Priorities demand attention of State Governments only where votes matter. Bureaucracy has its own agenda and ambitions; it does not want any risk or change to be taking place. Finances are the main problem. Finance Commission (15th) recommended the instrument of “Grants-in-Aid” to help the Urban Local Bodies. Some states are in a position to do so. Introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST) has taken the taxes to the Union Government thereby further constraining the Urban Local Bodies in generation of finances. (165 words)

4. **Compare and contrast the British and Indian approaches to Parliamentary sovereignty.** 10

Ans. British and Indian approaches to Parliamentary sovereignty differ in many ways; some of these differences are basic in a manner and some not so. British Parliamentary System has the Parliament as Supreme and in the Indian Parliamentary System, the Constitution is Supreme.

The British Parliamentary System has a unitary structure with Central Government and Local County Councils whereas Indian Parliamentary System has a federal structure with Union Government at the centre and governments in the States/Union territories.

Under the Parliamentary System in Britain, there's no scope for judicial review of its decisions whereas in India the judicial review is feasible if the basic structure of the Constitution is altered. British sovereign has lesser role or authority compared to Indian President. The main point however is that India's Rajya Sabha, a permanent body, relates to states; even British House of Lords has no such connect with people. The British Constitution is largely unwritten being based on norms and practices whereas the Indian Constitution is written in whole. (166 words)

5. **Discuss the role of Presiding Officers of state legislatures in maintaining order and impartiality in conducting legislative work and in facilitating best democratic practices.** (Answer in 150 words)

Ans. The Presiding Officers in State Legislatures are charged with the duty to maintain order and decorum in the House; in this, they are also expected to be fair and just. They are to follow and implement the rules governing the proceedings. The unruly members are called to order, at times named to caution and in extreme cases suspended or ordered out. The minority party members are protected by giving attention.

Anti-defection provisions as enshrined in the 10th Schedule to the Constitution are implemented fairly by the Presiding Officers. Great care is taken by them to be neutral. They abstain from voting; nor do they participate in debates. They ensure just and fair distribution of time for all opinions across party lines.

Presiding Officers promote goodwill and cooperation in the House. In this, facilitating and ushering in of best democratic practices is vital. Holding meetings with all parties before the session of the House to ensure smooth transaction of business is one practice of merit. "Once a speaker, always a speaker," a practice that speaker elect follows by resigning from his party position in Britain is well worth emulating. (188 words)

6. **The crucial aspect of development process has been the inadequate attention paid to Human Resource Development in India. Suggest measures that can address this inadequacy.** (Answer in 150 words)

Ans. Development process has Human Resources at its centre, inadequacies either in quality or quantity can affect it. India has much more to be concerned; for the resources are limited. There are many challenges; the numbers are mind boggling; the disparities are shocking; the neglect shameful, and the elitist basis so sad.

Education which is the vital part of Human Resource Development is in the concurrent list (item 25) of the Indian Constitution (7th Schedule, Article 246) making it the "plaything" between the Union and the States. Budget allocations of both are inadequate. Matters are furthered worsened by poor infrastructure, shortage of teachers and lack of quality.

Technical education, the quintessential part of skill development, is also afflicted with many ills. Jobs are available aplenty but few are suitable given their poor skills. New Education Policy (2020) has attempted to find the right path addressing the issues at hand. Right to Education (RTE) has gone some way to take education to all; Mid-Day Meals Scheme has served well to meet nutritional requirements.

Measures to bring improvement in Human Resource Development must involve more allocations in budgets, widening the base of skill development and attune the same to job needs. (198 words)

7. **Discuss the role of the Competition Commission of India in containing the abuse of dominant position by the Multi-National Corporations in India. Refer to the recent decisions.** (Answer in 150 words)

Ans. Competition Commission, a statutory body established in 2009 to enforce the provisions of the Competition Act 2002, performs quasi-judicial functions. It gives its opinion on competition issues and seeks to eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition. It aims at protecting the interests of the consumers by ensuring that competition is done in a fair and just manner. In particular, the Commission seeks to curb dominance by enterprises by unfair practices.

The Commission has the powers to investigate and impose penalties in cases of unfair practices being indulged in by enterprises. It reviews mergers and acquisitions to see if any adverse impact is being created on competition. Besides these, the Commission spreads awareness about the rules of the game and the need to be fair and free.

The Commission has taken action against some dominant Multi-National Companies for indulging in unfair trade practices. It has fined WhatsApp for its privacy policy, Google for its Play Store practices and Amazon for its abuse of its dominant position in on-line marketing. Three beer manufacturing companies were fined for unethical cartelization. Google has been slapped with a hefty penalty for abusing its dominant position. (191 words)

8. **E-governance, as a critical tool of governance, has ushered in effectiveness, transparency and accountability in governments. What inadequacies hamper the enhancement of these features?** (Answer in 150 words)

Ans. E-governance has, no doubt, brought in effectiveness, transparency and accountability in governance but it has its' inadequacies too. E-governance in its feature to be effective has to reach all of the society but it is seen to fail owing to lack of awareness, costs involved and general fear of technology. Rapid technological changes too add to the discomfort. As for transparency, e-governance scores well but the fact remains that complicated hardware and cumbersome software impede. Well intended features remain difficult to access and operate. Regarding accountability, e-governance ensures it well with its transparency as well as accuracy. What is of the essence is that e-governance provides for verifiability; any number of times. Even so, people prefer manual hard copies, especially if legal matters are involved.

E-governance sure has its positive and productive features but there are obvious obstacles too. Data protection and cyber security rank high among these. Cases of frauds are on the rise, redressal takes a long time. Glitches and system failures are galore. Perhaps the worst that can be said about e-governance is that it is open to attacks from viruses and hackers. (186 words)

9. **'Virus of Conflict is affecting the functioning of the SCO'.**

In the light of the above statement point out the role of India in mitigating the problems. *(Answer in 150 words)*

Ans. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is facing problems, both among its members as also from outside. India and China have border disputes with occasional flare ups; Pakistan and India too have unresolved issues on Kashmir; Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have border disputes. Pakistan and Afghanistan have dispute on Durand Line. Russia and Ukraine are at war.

China is seen to be dominating with its economic push raising suspicions; its "Belt and Road" drive has India in deep distrust. China's expansion into African countries with its strangulating loan schemes is raising suspicions.

There's no unity of purpose among SCO member countries on terrorism. China's stand on terror groups in Pakistan is ambiguous. Russia too has been showing uncertainty in the matter, its soft pedaling on Taliban is so disconcerting.

Notwithstanding all these, the prime aim of countering domination of US dollar needs to be pursued by SCO; for this, economic cooperation must increase. India can play its part by working hard to place infrastructural projects in front. A dispute resolution mechanism is the need of the hour.

People to people contact, cultural exchanges, and expansion in tourism and trade fairs can bond the countries in SCO together. **(193 words)**

10. **Indian diaspora has scaled new heights in the West. Describe its economic and political benefits for India.** *(Answer in 150 words)*

Ans. Indian diaspora in the west has been growing rapidly, both in stature as well as in strength. Its stature has got enhanced due to its willing contribution to the economies of the west, and its strength due to its skills. Its hard work, discipline and adjusting outlook have endeared it to all.

The Indian diaspora contributes very significantly and steadily to the economic and social well-being of the countries in the west. Skilled yet cheap labour with no demands brings lot of benefits to the economy. Growing number of professionals and entrepreneurs are providing employment to the ever increasing number of youths. Equally significantly Indian diaspora is excelling with its impacting spending boosting the economies of the west.

Politically, Indian diaspora is making its impact too; its leaders are rapidly gaining great acceptance. Many are now in the mainstream politics in the countries of the west. Their experience and expertise are of immense help in raising the standard of political debates. Their monetary donations are much in demand, notably in the United States. **(173 words)**

11. **"The Constitution of India is a living instrument with capabilities of enormous dynamism. It is a constitution made for a progressive society". Illustrate with special reference to the expanding horizons of the right to life and personal liberty.** *(Answer in 250 words)*

Ans. The Constitution of India is indeed a document that is fair, farsighted and flexible. It has been instrumental in bringing tectonic changes in the society with its fairness; it has shown remarkable farsightedness with its separation of powers avoiding both rigidity as well as regimentation, and it has permitted of amendments showing flexibility in all its working.

In all of these, fundamental rights lie at the heart. They are both justifiable as well as justiciable. Article 21 of the Constitution says, “No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.” This article though never amended has been totally transformed by judicial pronouncements.

Maneka Gandhi vs Union of India (1978) case had the Supreme Court declare that “procedure must not only be established by law but that it must be just, fair and reasonable.” Subsequent judicial rulings and pronouncements have spelt out the operation of this principle in different situations covering both protection of life as well as personal liberty. Right to live with human dignity has been recognized by the Supreme Court in *State of Maharashtra vs Chandrabhan* where a subsistence allowance of only one rupee was provided to a convicted employee pending his appeal as per Bombay Civil Service Rules, 1959.

In *Olga Tellis Case (1985)*, Supreme Court recognized right to livelihood as right to life within the scope and meaning of Article 21. Right to sleep and freedom from noise have also been held to be repugnant to right to life as envisaged under Article 21.

Data Privacy too has been held to be a fundamental right under Article 21 in *K. S. Puttaswamy vs Union of India (2017)* case paving way for decriminalization of homosexuality in *Navtej Singh Johar vs Union of India (2018)* and of adultery in *Joseph Shine vs Union of India case (2018)*.

The understanding of personal liberty too has been broadened by judiciary.

In *Joginder Kumar vs State of UP (1994)*, the Supreme Court laid down guidelines against illegal arrest, detention and custodial death. Similarly, in *D K Basu vs State of West Bengal (1997)* the Supreme Court issued detailed guidelines for Central and State agencies to be followed in cases of arrest and detention.

Violation of personal liberty has been seen by the judiciary from varying angles; delays in disposal of cases to narrow view of granting of bail to solitary confinement to inhuman conditions in jails. (403 words)

12. Explain the constitutional perspectives of Gender Justice with the help of relevant Constitutional Provisions and case laws. (Answer in 250 words)

Ans. Gender justice is one of the corner stones of Indian Constitution; it runs through it like a golden thread encompassing the ideas of liberty, equality and freedom. Very significantly, the Constitution has stressed on it in fundamental and incorporated it in Directive Principles of State Policy too. What is even more significant is that the Constitution has created pioneering institutions to protect, preserve and promote the ideals of gender justice.

The Constitution covers three very vital aspects; one, gender rights of equality, freedom and liberty; two, the establishment of a fair and just society; and three of making provisions for women. The first one is adequately covered in fundamental rights, the second in Directive Principles of State Policy and the third in Election Commission and Panchayati Raj Institution representation.

The Preamble itself covers the ideals of justice, liberty, equality for all to be achieved. Fundamental Rights with Articles 14, 15, 16 pound;

Art.14: Equality before law.

Art.15: Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

Art.16: Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.

Fundamental Rights with Article 21 offer protection of life and personal liberty.

Art.23: Regarding right against exploitation covers prohibition against trafficking of human beings.

The Directive Principles of State Policy have guidelines which are Central to governance.

Art.39: Prescribes that “citizens men and women equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood”.

Art.39 (d): provides that, “there shall be equal pay for equal work for both men and women.”

While the Constitution has set the frame for Gender Justice, the Supreme Court has added to it with relevant guidelines to further the cause. *Vishaka Case (1997)* saw Supreme Court issuing guidelines on sexual harassment at work place. Supreme Court in *Mary Roy's case (1986)* upheld women's right to inheritance. (300 words)

13. **Account for the legal and political factors responsible for the reduced frequency of using Article 356 by the Union Governments since mid 1990s.** (Answer in 250 words)

Ans. Since mid-1990s the Union Government has been making reduced usage of Article 356 of the Constitution; the said Article provides for imposition of Central rule over the state in certain exigencies. The reasons, both legal as well as political, are many; the former are directly linked to judicial rulings and the latter are rooted in political developments.

The Supreme Court in its landmark judgement in *S. R. Bommai vs Union of India (1994)* case ruled that floor test has to be done inside the State Assembly. This effectively put an end to all manipulations outside the House. The judgement created a lot of awareness all round and appreciation for the new dispensation.

Provisions of anti-defection law as listed in the 10th schedule began to be enforced rigidly by the courts. The decision of Uttaranchal Assembly speaker in 2022 to disqualify nine rebel members was upheld by the High Court.

Political factors are equally significant. The era of coalition governments, both at the centre as well as the states, ushered in the need to be cautious. Dependence on political parties, a reality, became a harsh fact.

Equally important it is that Union government's rule under Article 356 is seen as an affront to the spirit of cooperative federalism. It becomes a point of contention.

The one big reason traced to political conditions is that imposition of Central rule under Article 356 allows all the opponents to unite. It becomes overwhelming and overpowering to combat. (243 words)

14. **Discuss the contribution of civil society groups for women's effective and meaningful participation and representation in state legislatures in India.** (Answer in 250 words)

Ans. Civil Society groups in India are up against many challenges; some of these are deep seated and are near insurmountable. Some other challenges are comparatively less daunting but nevertheless irksome. In the former category are issues emanating from patriarchy and discrimination, the latter category are restrictions on dress, openings in certain jobs.

Civil society groups see the issue of women's representation as a major matter and rightly so; in particular, the representation of women in state legislatures as of enormous consequence. To be part of process of law making has substantial benefits; for one, the voice is heard and secondly, a steady watch could be kept over implementation of critical issues. Needless to add, matters concerning women could be taken forward from the society.

While reservation of seats in the Parliament is an issue hanging fire for many years, reservation of seats to the extent of one-third became a reality in Panchayats and Municipalities consequent upon 73rd/74th amendments to the Constitution getting through. The move has proved to be a success largely.

Currently, India ranks 147th out of 193 countries in terms of women's representation in politics. The representation of women stands at 14.3 percent in the Parliament, the position in State Assemblies being far worse. It is a cause for concern as one half of humanity finds itself less represented.

The reasons for such imbalance are not far to seek. Political parties do not field women candidates owing to their chances of winning be less. Women themselves do not come forward to join politics or be in public life. There exists a feeling, howsoever unfounded, that women are soft and not suitable for rough and tumble of Indian politics. Moreover, politics is perceived as a dirty game where only the corrupt and the cunning can thrive; women are not meant to be in it.

Notwithstanding all the odds that are stalked against them, civil society groups have been active in raising the levels of awareness for due and desired representation of women in state legislatures. The need to sensitise the society is paramount and urgent too.

Civil society groups are working with a multi-pronged approach addressing the vital issues of policy reforms, capacity building and training and also awareness campaigns. Showcasing successful women legislators is inspiring women across the country. What is equally important is networking and research; the former can bring about much needed mobility and the latter the much necessary direction. The danger however is that women should never get restricted to their own issues. (418 words)

15 Explain the significance of the 101st Constitutional Amendment Act. To what extent does it reflect the accommodative spirit of federalism? (Answer in 250 words)

Ans. The 101st Constitutional Amendment Act 2017 introduced Goods and Services Tax in India bringing destination based indirect tax completely overhauling the previous system of multiple indirect taxes levied by Central and State governments separately. The previous system was complex, confusing and had a cascading effect on the economy. Its multiple points of levying and documentation brought in delays and duplication.

The introduction of Goods and Services Tax across the country has simplified indirect tax regime by doing away with of multiple indirect taxes with a single, unified tax to facilitate ease of doing business.

Inter-state trade and commerce has got a boost with the creation of a unified national market eliminating trade barriers and cascading taxes.

Goods and Services Tax System has brought about increased compliances and bigger revenue. The tax buoyancy is helping the government to spend more money on social welfare schemes and developmental activities.

Goods and Services Tax offers relief by way of compensation at the rate of 14 percent to affected states as also it comes as a progressive measure to consumer states without manufacturing base.

Goods and Services Council set up to oversee matters of implementation is democratic in orientation with due representation of both the Union as well as the States/UTs. GST council is a Constitutional body giving it the stature and standing needed.

All in all, Goods and Services Tax was a much needed measure to streamline indirect taxes in the country. Almost all the countries have reformed their tax base. The benefits now accruing show how much the country could have gained had it been introduced earlier. It may be however right to say that it took a long while to bring about a consensus.

Goods and Services Tax dispensation does reflect accommodative and adjusting spirit of federalism. Although voting mechanism is permissible, yet all the decisions in the Goods and Services Tax Council are made through consensus. This reflects maturity that is of the essence and it is aided much by the transparency in the Council's working.

In an accommodative spirit of "give and take", both the Central and State governments have adjusted well. Many of the initial fears have been set to rest, in some instances taxes have been reduced too. What is especially significant is that all the brains are pooled together making best use of resources. Progressive jump in revenue collection year by year bears ample testimony to that. (400 words)

- 16. Explain the structure of the Parliamentary Committee system. How far have the financial committees helped in the institutionalisation of Indian Parliament?** (Answer in 250 words)

Ans. Parliamentary Committees are at the foundation of Democratic System wherein critical work is carried out cutting across party lines. These committees bring in talent, expertise and a level of maturity. In particular, they ensure that order and standards are maintained. They also bring about continuity and unity of purpose to curb ad-hocism.

Parliamentary Committees are of two types; one, the Standing Committees which function irrespective of whether the Parliament is in session or not. Estimates Committee, Public Accounts Committee are two examples.

In addition, there are Ad-hoc committees which are formed for a specific purpose. Joint Committee on specific bills being one example; Joint Committee on "offices of profit" was an ad-hoc committee. Article 105(4) provides the authority for Parliamentary Committees to function. Article 118 clearly lay down that rules of procedure can be made by the Parliament for conduct of its own business.

Public Accounts Committee, PAC, is by norm headed by a member of the opposition. It examines the reports made annually by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) and places the same before the Parliament after obtaining the assent from the President.

Estimates Committee, the biggest one, is made of members from the Lok Sabha only as money matters are involved. It provides scrutiny of all estimates for the budget.

In addition, there are Departmental Standing Committees for each ministry.

There are other Committees to facilitate conduct of business and bring discipline in Parliament. Business Advisory Committee, Ethics Committee are two examples.

Financial Committees have ensured that Parliament has full control over money. Departmental Committees prepare budget estimates for each of the ministries; these are examined by the Estimates Committee. The Annual Budget gets them included and passed. After the money has been spent, the CAG audits the same and places its report back in the Parliament for scrutiny. (302 words)

17. **“Development and welfare schemes for the vulnerable, by its nature, are discriminatory in approach.” Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer.**

(Answer in 250 words)

Ans. Development and welfare schemes, both intended for the vulnerable, differ in one respect; the former aims to impart knowledge, skill and application so that the beneficiaries can stand on their own feet; the latter provides help and assistance to the needy thereby ensuring that they can lead their lives with dignity and honour. Education is the prime example of development, free foodgrain allocation of welfare schemes.

Development and welfare schemes for the vulnerable are discriminatory but they discriminate positively, the discrimination is intended to help those in need but not at the cost of others. Such positive discrimination is through reservation, quotas, allocations and allotments. It identifies the intended beneficiaries through well established guidelines of economic and social yardsticks.

Developmental schemes like reservation of seats in education, posts in public sector jobs and in promotion while in service as also in housing in public sector are some ready examples of positive discrimination. They are all well intended but are often seen to fail in meeting the targets.

Welfare schemes for the vulnerable are intended for the poor, aged, sick, women and children across the society. These schemes are segment oriented with lots of need for identification properly of beneficiaries targeted. Schemes covering distribution of food grains, housing for the poor, free healthcare to the extent feasible, insurance for all, construction of toilets to ensure dignity, and free education etc are all welfare measures drawn to establish an egalitarian society. It may bring some scorn or stigma upon the beneficiaries but with all round drive for awareness, it would go away. Much would however depend on plugging the avenues for leakages and corruption. Equally important it is that the welfare schemes are well monitored covering all the beneficiaries. (287 words)

18. **Skill development programmes have succeeded in increasing human resources supply to various sectors. In the context of the statement analyse the linkages between education, skill and employment.** *(Answer in 250 words)*

Ans. Skill development is an ongoing process that has to keep pace with requirements both in terms in quantity as well as quality. The need for quality is becoming paramount given fast paced technological changes all round. Moreover, requirement for new skills is also becoming a pressing issue.

Supply of human resources has increased owing to a number of reasons, chiefly on account of new schemes launched by the Government. Secondly, due to proper alignment of all existing schemes there has been more rationalization ensuring steady supply of human resources. NEP (New Education Policy) 2020 has provided the vision and clarity with its sharp focus on vocational training.

Education is placed at no. 25 of the concurrent list of items in the Constitution. It is not working to any satisfaction. Such divergence doesn't help.

Skill Development has taken off in right earnest with the launch of Prime Minister's *Kaushal Vikas Yojna (2015)* to provide vocational training on large scale and also due to formation of National Skill Development Corporation, a public-private initiative. Youth are benefitting from these twin programmes with ready engagement under enterprises being given support through "Make in India" plans. In this endeavour the efforts of National Skill Mission are also commendable.

While education and skill are being brought together to be in consonance, it is the employability factor that is of the essence. Industry's needs are forever changing; human resource is not confined to technical expertise and never to low skills. Today's need is to be adept with digitization and automation. Soft skills are becoming pivotal.

Industry to be competitive is increasingly resorting to contract management, heavy automation and elimination of low skill jobs. Skill development is getting conditioned by these factors. Regular jobs are on the decline and those available are for specialists.

(297 words)

19. 'The expansion and strengthening of NATO and a stronger US-Europe strategic partnership works well for India.'

What is your opinion about this statement? Give reasons and examples to support your answer.

(Answer in 250 words)

Ans. In the present day "multipolar world", there are many power centres; United States of America; Russia, and China being the major ones. These countries have treaties and influence zones. Russia and China have good understanding, even as the United States of America is trifle unsettled in its arrangements with Europe.

In the current situation, US-Europe relationship is critical. A weakened Europe not getting right support from America opens avenues for Russia. President Trump had been very insistent that Europe pay for its defence.

India has much to gain from a stable and strong Europe having less expenditure on defence considering NATO's presence. Such conditions augur well for India's trade with Europe. Secondly, India's armament needs that have been dependent on Russia are facing uncertainties; it is looking for NATO weapons. With destabilised Europe, NATO supplies would halt; a frightening prospect.

The demand of modern day "realpolitik" dictates that countries be aligned with other powers, that includes at least one superpower. India could not expect to be alone. Aligning with China is out of question, with Russia is not very productive. It stands to reason that United States is cultivated.

Two issues are paramount; one, India needs to protect itself from terrorism which is spreading its tentacles; and two, India's energy supply lines have to be protected. In both of these, India would have to depend on any country with power and willingness. America with NATO set up is well positioned to be of help. The threat of terror from Pakistan, tacitly supported by China and the risk to oil supply routes under the growing menace of China are both daunting. Equally, the environmental crisis, India is particularly vulnerable to it. It needs the technology and wherewithal to combat it. A stable Europe backed by strategic support from America augurs well for India. (295 words)

20. 'Sea is an important component of the cosmos'.

Discuss in the light of the above statement the role of the IMO (International Maritime Organisation) in protecting environment and enhancing maritime safety and security. (Answer in 250 words)

Ans. International Maritime Organisation (IMO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations responsible for regulating shipping. Its main role is to protect the environment, ensure maritime safety and security. The role of (IMO) is increasing rapidly with increased global trade and rising environmental concerns.

Environmental Protection is done by IMO by following the guidelines drawn by MARPOL Convention for prevention of pollution from ships, whether owing to operational or accidental causes. IMO has laid down standards for the control and management of ships' Ballast Water ensuring that invasive aquatic species do not harm local ecosystems IMO has adopted measures to reduce emission of greenhouse gases from international shipping in line with global efforts to combat climate change. The safety and health of marine environment directly impacts global climate patterns.

IMO has been playing a vital role in the matter of enhancing maritime safety. In the context The International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention on safety of life at sea that ensures that ships flagged by signatory states adhere and conform to minimum safety standards in construction, equipment and operation is overseen by IMO. Similarly, The International Convention on Standards of Training Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) convention governing standards of training, certification and watch keeping for seafarers is overseen by IMO.

Regarding safety and security IMO has set safety standards following the rules set by International Convention for safe containers.

As for maritime security, IMO ensures following of International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS) code which is a comprehensive set of measures to increase the security of ships, port facilities etc, IMO has been at the vanguard to combat pirates and robbers to ensure safe sea routes; international trade depends so much on this.

Emission standards and oil spills are the two burning issues before the IMO. Both of these are vital to environment protection. s (313 words)