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EDITORIAL ANALYSIS



APRIL 15



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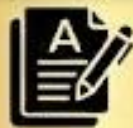
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UPSC CSE CLASSES

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A welcome move

Anganwadi centres can act as living libraries for students and researchers, providing them with the scope for testing their knowledge in practice. Disciplines such as education, social work, nutrition, public health, child development, psychology, and social welfare stand to benefit immensely. Engagement with anganwadi centres will equip students and researchers with experience of learning empathy and the power of critical thinking. An exposure to the ground reality will also convert them into responsible citizens by fostering a deeper understanding of societal issues and encouraging active participation in community service.

Debate has begun on a directive of the University Grants Commission in which colleges and universities are urged to adopt at least five to six Anganwadi centres to monitor child care and early education of children. Academics, union leaders, and activists have all criticised the directive, arguing that it shifts the responsibility of the government and shifts it on to the shoulders of higher educational institutions.

The Congress-backed All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) has strongly opposed the decision, saying the move is "deeply repressive and illustrative of a dangerous shift in the union government's commitment to welfare".

The secretary of AITUC, Anant Kumar, has said, "This move of the union government is effectively abdication of its constitutional and moral responsibility. The welfare of children and mothers cannot be left to the vagaries of voluntary or institutional charity. The higher education centres are institutions that are neither equipped nor mandated to run such welfare programmes. Essential services like Anganwadis require stable public funding, a trained workforce, and systematic state monitoring."

Former Delhi University executive council member Rajesh Bhat has also expressed the same fears, saying, "If the government is serious about Anganwadis, it must provide training to Anganwadi workers and improve facilities in these centres." While concerns like these do have merit, it must also be accepted that the UGC's new directive can transform the under-resourced and often neglected community institutions contributing



significantly to community development.

History proves that world-class education and colleges have contributed significantly to the development of society in India, the very ethos of our constitutional values includes the values of democracy, equality, justice, and the common good.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 also explicitly calls for "holistic and multidisciplinary education" that is "grounded in the Indian ethos and rooted in community engagement". Unfortunately, Indian universities and colleges by and large have failed to fulfil the expectations of society and the way in this regard.

Other centres are designed which are not grounded in reality, and PhD thesis remains confined to the stacks of the libraries. By adopting anganwadi centres, higher educational institutions of our country can significantly contribute to community development.

Anganwadi centres can act as living libraries for students and researchers, providing them with the scope for testing their knowledge in practice. Disciplines such as education, social work, nutrition, public health, child development, psychology, and social welfare stand to benefit immensely. Engagement with anganwadi centres will equip students and researchers with experience of learning empathy and the power of critical thinking. An exposure to the ground reality will also convert them into responsible citizens by fostering a deeper understanding of societal issues and encouraging active participation in community service. They will also start respecting the dignity of labour.

Officials of the Union government have expressed their concerns that this directive of the UGC is a disguised way of replacing anganwadi centres by higher educational institutions. This, however, does not waver the directive of the government. The letter that Anil Malik, the secretary in the ministry of women and child development, wrote to higher education secretary Vinod

Joshi clearly spells out responsibilities of the universities and colleges. It was suggested that universities & colleges should be encouraged to adopt host local Anganwadis for sustained mentorship and social service initiative. In this context, universities, particularly from disciplines such as education, social work, nutrition, public health, child development, psychology and social welfare, should integrate structured Anganwadi engagement into the fieldwork, internships, dissertations, or community outreach programmes of their students."



ANAND KUMAR

The writer is Professor, Department of English and Culture Studies, and Director Centre for Australian Studies, University of Burdwan

anganwadi centres - lack of funding, workers and infrastructure is markedly visible. The core services of the anganwadi centres - feeding, immunisation, and health referrals - must be delivered by the anganwadi workers and cannot be compromised. But the functioning of the centres can significantly improve with support from higher educational institutions of our country.

For instance, students and researchers of the education department can suggest new ways of teaching children by using games and play. They can even conduct workshops if needed. Students of the psychology department can design the mental health of children and adolescents through play therapy. The students of the sign language department can help the anganwadi workers

prepare healthy and balanced diet charts for children.

These students will also benefit from anganwadi centres. Their projects and theses will carry the smell of the soil. In the UGC's directive should not be considered as an attempt to replace the anganwadi centres by higher educational institutions of the country, it is only suggesting that the role of the government must be supplemented by the societal role of the higher education institutions of our country. Both anganwadi centres and higher educational institutions of our country will benefit from the move that the Union government is taking through the UGC. In fact, the first mandate of the higher educational institutions in the activities of the anganwadi centres will weaken the state's responsibility towards these centres unless it is based on imagination rather than logic.

The involvement of the higher educational institutions in the activities of the anganwadi centres will, on the contrary, act as a system of surveillance on the activities of the government, contributing to transparency, community participation, and advocacy.

It is a pity that the Union government does not always perform its duties to the

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- **Key Terms and Explanations**

- **Anganwadi** : Literally translates to "Courtyard Shelter." In the Indian policy context, it refers to a type of rural and urban mother and child care centre. It is the primary delivery platform for the **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)** scheme.

- **Example**: A small centre in a village where children aged 0-6 receive supplementary nutrition, and pregnant/lactating mothers receive health check-ups.

- **University Grants Commission (UGC)**: A statutory body under the Ministry of Education, Government of India. It is responsible for the **coordination, determination, and maintenance of standards** of higher education in India.

- **Contextual Relevance**: It acts as a regulatory bridge between the government's policy vision (e.g., NEP 2020) and the execution by universities/colleges.

- **Praxis**: A philosophical term popularized by Paulo Freire. It is the process by which a theory, lesson, or skill is **enacted, embodied, or realized** through practice.

- **Example**: A student of nutrition reading about protein deficiency in a textbook (theory) and then calculating a low-cost, high-protein diet for a malnourished child at an Anganwadi (praxis).

- **Living Laboratories (or Living Libraries)**: A research concept where real-world environments (like an Anganwadi) are used for **experiential learning and research**, as opposed to controlled lab settings. It emphasizes co-creation of knowledge with the community.

- **AITUC (All India Trade Union Congress)**: One of the oldest trade union federations in India. Their involvement here signifies that the issue is not just academic but also touches upon **labour rights and state responsibility** regarding Anganwadi workers (who are often unionized).

- **NEP 2020 (National Education Policy)**: The policy framework that aims to overhaul Indian education. Its emphasis on **multidisciplinary education, community engagement, and holistic development** forms the policy backbone for the UGC's directive.

- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**

- **The Core Thesis**

- The central argument posits that HEIs have become "insular" (isolated) and need to be reintegrated into the heart of society. By "adopting" Anganwadi centres, universities can move from theoretical learning to community-rooted education.

- **Key Supporting Points**

- **Living Libraries:** Anganwadis can serve as field laboratories for students of education, social work, nutrition, and psychology.

- **Empathetic Leadership:** Exposure to ground realities fosters "responsible citizenship" and critical thinking that cannot be taught in a lecture hall.

- **Knowledge Exchange:** Students can provide professional value-adds, such as creating balanced diet charts or mapping the mental growth of children, which the current overworked Anganwadi staff may lack the time to do.

- **Counterarguments and Criticisms**

- **State Abdication:** Critics argue the Union government is shifting its welfare responsibilities onto the shoulders of students and unpaid volunteers.

- **Lack of Mandate:** Higher education centres are neither equipped nor legally mandated to run health and nutrition programs.

- **Institutional Incapacity:** Anganwadis require stable public funding and trained workforce, not temporary student projects.

- **Historical evolution of the issue**
- **Pre-independence to early decades**

- Colonial education policy largely ignored early childhood care, focusing on secondary and higher education; community-based child care remained an informal family and community responsibility.
- Nationalist thinkers (Gandhi, Tagore) stressed holistic education, rural engagement, and learning linked to productive work, which provide an early philosophical basis for community-linked universities.
 - 1970s–1990s: Creation and expansion of ICDS and Anganwadis
- ICDS was launched in 1975 to combat malnutrition, morbidity, and school dropout through an integrated package of services; Anganwadis became its local delivery points.
- Over the decades, the network expanded to nearly 14 lakh centres, though with persistent challenges of funding, infrastructure, and uneven quality.
 - 1990s–2010s: Rights-based turn and ECCE focus
- Policies like the National Policy on Education 1986 (modified 1992), National Nutrition Policy 1993, and later the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009 brought attention to early childhood education and nutrition.
- Anganwadis were increasingly recognised as crucial for ECCE, leading to co-location with primary schools and experiments with pre-school curricula.
 - 2010s–2020: Quality challenges and reform debates
- Studies highlighted gaps in infrastructure, training, and community participation, especially in rural and marginalised areas.
- Discussions on public–private partnerships, NGO involvement, and cross-sector collaboration intensified, setting the stage for linking Anganwadis with universities.
 - 2020 onwards: NEP 2020 and integration with HEIs
- NEP 2020 proposed universalising ECCE, strengthening Anganwadis, and co-locating them with schools, while also calling for community engagement and service-learning in higher education.
- The Ministry of Education and UGC began encouraging HEIs to adopt community-linked programmes, culminating in directives asking universities and colleges to adopt five to six nearby Anganwadi centres.
 - 2026: UGC directive and debates
- In 2026, UGC formally advised all HEIs to adopt local Anganwadi centres and integrate engagement into fieldwork, internships, dissertations, and outreach.
- This triggered debate: some hailed it as a step towards socially responsible universities; others saw it as symbolic, underfunded, and shifting state responsibilities onto already stretched academic institutions.



ANALYSIS: UGC DIRECTIVE FOR HEIs TO ENGAGE WITH ANGANWADI CENTRES: A WELCOME MOVE

1. KEY TERMS:

ANGANWADI CENTRES | NEP 2020 | PRAXIS (The process of theory enacted) | UGC

4. PHILOSOPHICAL BASE:

CONSTITUTIONAL MORALITY
SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY
TACORE'S VISION | ETHOS OF SEVA

ARGUMENTS

Living Libraries
e.g., tll living libraries 
Empathetic Leadership
Empathe leadership 
Knowledge Exchange
e.g., aise knowledge 
Dignity of Labor
& dignity of labor 

ANALYSIS MAP

HEI & ANGANWADI INTEGRATION

CRITICISMS & CHALLENGES

 State Abdication
 Lack of Mandate
e.g., acid mandate
 Institutional Capacity
e.g., radia capacity
 Implementation
e.g., amented

CHALLENGES (e.g., Implementing credits, Resistance)

MULTIDIMENSIONAL IMPACT (Social, Political, Ethical, etc.)
• State Abdication
• Metitutional of Impact
• Institutioneal Clittical, etc.

LINKAGES WITH NCERTs & UPSC SYLLABUS

WAY FORWARD

- Institutionalized Framework
- Credits
- State Synergy

HISTORICAL TIMELINE:

1917 → 1975 → 2020 → 2026
Tagore's Vision → ICDS Launch → NEP 2020 → UGC Directive

UPSC PYQs: { 2020 GS 2, | Critusian pressment mention)
2017 Essay, | Porinilita - Theory impregement

MODEL ANSWER FRAMEWORK



Logical and Philosophical Base

The Logic of Supplementation vs. Substitution:

- *Assumption of Proponents:* The UGC role is **supplementary**. It adds value without taking over the core feeding/health role of the state.
- *Assumption of Critics:* The system is a **zero-sum game**. More institutional involvement will lead to less state budgetary allocation (fiscal space argument).

Deontology vs. Utilitarianism:

- **Deontological (Critics' View):** The state has a **duty** (constitutional duty under Directive Principles) to provide welfare. Passing this duty to colleges is inherently wrong, regardless of the outcome.
- **Utilitarian (Proponents' View):** If this engagement produces the **greatest good for the greatest number** (better-educated children + better-groomed students), then the policy is justified.

Tagorean Philosophy: The idea rests on the foundation that **Knowledge is not separate from Life**. Tagore criticized the colonial education system for creating a "set of carriers" disconnected from the soil. This policy is an attempt to **decolonize the Indian classroom** by bringing the "smell of the soil" into the thesis.

Multidimensional Analysis

Social Dimension:

- **Positive:** Bridges the **urban-rural divide**. Fosters **civic responsibility** among youth (a counter to the "coaching culture" mentality).
- **Negative:** Potential for **elitist gaze** and disruption of the community's organic rhythm.

Political Dimension:

- **Federalism:** Education is Concurrent List; ICDS is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme. State governments may resist this "Central directive" if they see it as encroachment on the State's responsibility for Anganwadi infrastructure.
- **Welfare State Ideology:** The debate touches the core of the **Neo-Liberal vs. Welfarist** model of governance.

Legal Dimension:

- **Article 47 (DPSP):** "Duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living."
- **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013:** Mandates specific nutritional entitlements to children. **Can student engagement ensure NFSA compliance?** Critics say no; only state machinery can.

Ethical Dimension:

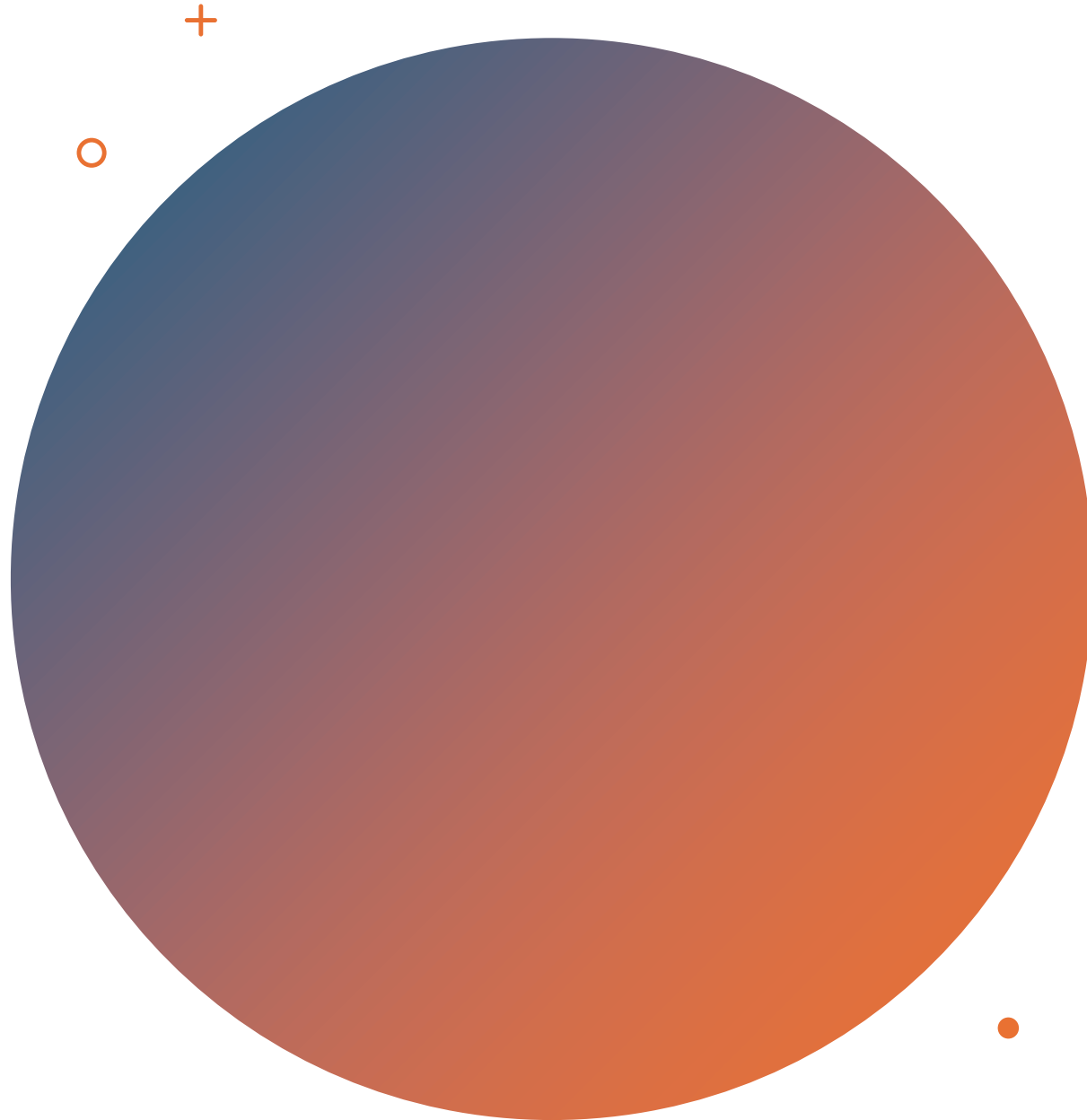
- **Informed Consent:** Do we need consent from parents of children for students to "observe" and "map" their mental growth?
- **Non-Maleficence:** "First, do no harm." Untrained student intervention in a malnourished child's diet could be dangerous.

International Dimension:

- **SDG Linkages:**
 - **SDG 4.7:** Education for sustainable development and global citizenship.
 - **SDG 2.2:** End all forms of malnutrition.
 - **SDG 17:** Partnerships for the goals.

Economic Dimension:

- **Cost Efficiency:** This is the government's unspoken objective—**leveraging free student labour and institutional resources** to plug gaps in ICDS monitoring without increasing the fiscal deficit.



- **Linkages with NCERTs**

- **Class 6–8 Social Science (Civics: Social and Political Life)**
 - Chapters on government, local self-government, and public facilities; link the role of Anganwadis as public services and the duties of the state.
 - Themes of equality, social justice, and marginalisation connect with child nutrition, gender roles, and rural poverty.
- **Class 9 Political Science (Democratic Politics – I)**
 - Chapters on constitutional design, rights, and democracy can be connected to the state’s obligation to ensure children’s welfare and dignified work for Anganwadi workers.
- **Class 10 Political Science (Democratic Politics – II)**
 - Chapters on “Working of Institutions” and “Democracy and Diversity” relate to how different institutions (ministries, UGC, universities) share responsibility for social welfare.
- **Class 11 Sociology (Introducing Sociology & Understanding Society)**
 - Chapters on social institutions, social stratification, and social change help analyse how Anganwadis reflect caste, class, and gender hierarchies, and how community engagement can challenge them.
- **Class 11 Political Science (Indian Constitution at Work)**
 - Directive Principles of State Policy, fundamental rights, and citizenship – strong linkages with child welfare, nutrition, and state accountability.
- **Class 12 Economics (Indian Economic Development)**
 - Units on human capital formation, health, and education; Anganwadis as investments in human capital and inclusive growth.
- **Class 12 Sociology (Indian Society & Social Change)**
 - Chapters on rural society, poverty, development programmes; Anganwadis as part of rural development and social policy.

Linkages with UPSC CSE syllabus

GS Paper 1 (Society)

Salient features of Indian society; role of women and women's organisations; population and associated issues; poverty and developmental issues.

Anganwadis relate to gendered care work, maternal health, and early childhood socialisation in rural and urban India.

GS Paper 2 (Polity & Governance)

Functions and responsibilities of the Union and States in social sector; government policies for vulnerable sections; health, education, and human resources.

Role of NGOs and SHGs; issues of accountability and governance in welfare schemes.

Inter-relationship between constitutional bodies (UGC) and ministries (WCD, Education).

GS Paper 3 (Economy, Development, Environment)

Inclusive growth and issues arising from it; human resource development; employment; social sector initiatives relating to health and education.

SDGs, demographic dividend, and link between early childhood development and long-term economic outcomes.

GS Paper 4 (Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude)

Ethical concerns in public service delivery, empathy and compassion, role of family and society in inculcating values.

Case studies on community engagement, dignity of labour, and conflict between formal expertise and local knowledge.

Way forward

Clarify roles and avoid abdication

- The state must explicitly affirm that university engagement supplements, not substitutes, its responsibility to fund and manage Anganwadis and to ensure fair remuneration and social security for workers.

Institutionalise partnerships

- Establish formal MoUs between universities and ICDS/WCD departments with clear objectives, responsibilities, and monitoring frameworks.
- Create dedicated “Community Engagement Cells” in HEIs to coordinate activities and maintain continuity across batches.

Capacity-building and orientation

- Train students and faculty in child protection, gender sensitivity, ethics, and local languages before fieldwork.
- Provide Anganwadi workers with joint training opportunities, recognising them as co-educators rather than mere implementers.

Ensure ethical safeguards

- Put in place protocols for consent, data privacy, and non-intrusive observation; any research must prioritise children’s best interests and community dignity.

Focus on co-created solutions

- Encourage participatory needs assessments where Anganwadi workers and community members identify priorities, and students help design context-specific interventions.
- Promote simple, low-cost innovations (play-based learning aids, nutrition demonstrations, community libraries) instead of purely data-heavy projects.

Measure and disseminate impact

- Develop simple indicators to track improvements in attendance, learning outcomes, and nutrition over time.
- Use findings to inform district and state-level ECCE policies and feed into academic curricula and teacher training programmes.

Strengthen policy coherence

- Align UGC guidelines, NEP 2020 provisions, and ICDS policy so that there is clarity on funding, accountability, and long-term planning.
- Integrate Anganwadi-related modules in B.Ed., social work, public health, and nutrition programmes.

UPSC CSE Mains – GS Paper 2 & 3

2023 GS 2: Role of Anganwadis and ASHA workers in delivering primary health and nutrition services; challenges in their working conditions.

2021 GS 2: Evaluate the implementation of ICDS in improving nutrition among women and children; suggest reforms.

2020 GS 2: Discuss the significance of ECCE and analyse how NEP 2020 addresses foundational learning.

2019 GS 2: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections; performance of ICDS and mid-day meal schemes in addressing malnutrition.

2017 GS 2: Examine the role of community-level workers in health and nutrition programmes.

2016 GS 2: Critically examine rights-based approaches to child welfare in India.

2018 GS 3: Human capital formation and its relation to health and education; discuss the role of early childhood interventions.

UPSC CSE Prelims

Questions on ICDS, POSHAN Abhiyaan, NEP 2020 features, and identification of ECCE-related schemes have appeared multiple times (e.g., 2012, 2016, 2018, 2020).

THOSE who knew Union Home Minister Amit Shah also know about his ideological commitment, political acumen and organisational skills. But many may not know how he integrates these traits through strong political will.

This will has been manifest in both the high-profile national roles he has played: as BJP president earlier and as Union home minister now. From the abrogation of Article 370 to seeing through the Citizenship Amendment Act, many legislative foats were scripted by him. But the most unique could be his courage of conviction in proclaiming that by March 31, 2026, the nation would be free from the threat of Naxalism. It is remarkable that he has fulfilled the promise.

According to government data, the number of districts affected by left-wing extremism—the name by which Naxalism is officially referred to—was reduced to 11 in 2023 from 126 before 2014. While the whittling down has been officially attributed to a strategy combining targeted security operations (killing and surrender of Maoist commanders), infrastructure development (building roads and mobile towers) and broadening of developmental aid in the affected areas, certain other factors have also contributed.

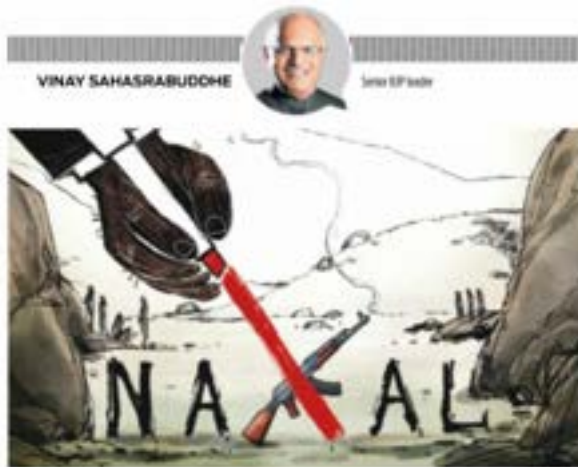
At least five other key aspects of the Centre's considered strategy merit analysis—concerted efforts for de-romanticisation of Naxalism, a non-compromisingly implemented policy of zero-tolerance to violence, taking up infrastructure projects as a gateway to human development while emphasising local people as the primary stakeholders, breaking the nexus between Naxal leaders and administration officials, and demolishing networks of 'urban Naxals'.

Through these multi-faceted measures, the authorities ensured that the gen-next of tribal communities realised there was nothing 'cool' about being a Naxal. The government also dextrously established that it is prudent to take the path of peace and surrender unconditionally. While a well-curated carrot-and-stick approach was taken, transformative governance was seen as demonstrably preferred to punitive actions. Most key leaders who opted to surrender were given a hero's welcome, apart from help to settle down in other areas respectably, swiftly.

Over the last two years, a total of 1,063 extremists opted to bid farewell to arms. Rehabilitation programmes like the Lon Varratu (meaning 'Return to your home' in Gondi language) initiative encouraged the reintegration of Maoist cadres in soci-

ety. Apart from using coordinated force and building infrastructure, the effort to rid nation of Naxal violence included de-romanticising the ideology and weaning away young tribal community members

HOW NAXALS WERE COMPELLED TO BID FAREWELL TO ARMS



VINAY SAHASRABUDHOE



Editor Outlook

ety. Between 2020 and 2024, over 1,000 Maoists surrendered under the programme, receiving housing, skills training and financial aid tailored to their ranks. A study commissioned by the Bureau of Police Research and Development concluded, "These measures have mitigated animosity and fostered trust between the State and affected communities."

This was complemented by a policy of zero tolerance towards violence. On the one hand, central agencies like the National Investigative Agency and Enforcement Directorate dismantled Maoist financial networks, seizing crores of rupees in assets. On the other, specialised forces like the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action and the Greyhound unit targeted top Naxal leaders, leading to a 90 percent drop in fatalities since 2019.

Security interventions were given more impetus to address operational

challenges more effectively. It was ensured that the number of fortified police stations in the Naxal-affected districts was taken to 586 in 2025 from 66 in 2014 and the impact of this was for all to see. This strengthened the morale of the forces apart from providing essential protection and infrastructure.

Also, since 2014, there has been far closer coordination between Naxal-affected states and the Central Armed Police Forces. As a result, between 2020 and 2022, the forces could jointly neutralise 14 politburo members, creating a leadership vacuum within the Maoist hierarchy. Local recruitment initiatives like the Bastariya Battalion and Bastar Fighters also served as confidence-building measures with more people familiar with the terrain and culture joining the forces.

Besides all this, the policy of using infrastructure as a gateway to opportuni-

ties and giving a sense of being a stakeholder in development to tribal communities also helped. In Chhattisgarh's Bastar, the heart of Maoist activity, 5,812 km of roads were constructed between 2014 and 2023 under the Road Connectivity Project for Left Wing Extremism Areas, compared to less than 3,000 km in the previous decade.

Those who regularly visit Dantewada witnessed how iconic projects like the Chhindisar bridge connected remote villages, reduced security vacuums and facilitated economic activity. The IPRD study noted, "Enhanced mobile connectivity through the installation of 4,072 towers in phase two of the mobile connectivity project has empowered local youth with educational opportunities and countered Maoist propaganda. Financial inclusion has also improved, with 4,960 new post offices, 505 bank branches and 839 ATMs established in affected areas since 2016, promoting local development."

What has also been remarkable is a well-crafted policy of breaking the back of elements thriving on clandestine nexus between Naxals and power-brokers, with interests vested in largely manufactured conflicts. The link between Naxal cadres and their supporters within the police and administration, which historically allowed Maoists to operate along the Red Corridor, was systematically destroyed through a strategy comprising proactive intelligence, legal action and sanitisation of police forces.

In official documents, this is referred to as the process of transitioning from a defensive posture to an aggressive 'clear-hold-build' approach. Yet another creatively conceived project was of reaching out to 'misguided brethren' to win them back, undertaken with the vision of developing a community policing strategy for Naxalism-affected areas. It was done to prevent subversive elements from misguiding and brainwashing the local population, weaning away the already-subverted ones and facilitating provisioning of basic amenities and livelihoods for the local youth.

Unravelling the network of urban Naxals was also given high priority in the overall strategy. In this regard, Home Minister Shah was clear and upfront. He is on record saying, "Why have roads not been built in left-wing-dominated areas? Because the Naxalites killed the contractors." He added, "Why don't intellectuals who write lengthy articles advising the government write about the victimised tribals?" For the first time, somebody was calling a spade a spade.

(Views are personal)
vnsaps07@gmail.com

- **Key Terms and Explanations**

- **Left-Wing Extremism (LWE):** An umbrella term for various insurgent groups, primarily Maoists, who aim to overthrow the state through armed revolution to establish a "New Democratic Order."
- **Red Corridor:** The region in the eastern, central, and southern parts of India that has historically experienced high levels of Naxalite-Maoist insurgency.
- **De-romanticising Naxalism:** A psychological warfare strategy aimed at stripping away the "heroic" or "revolutionary" allure of the movement, exposing it instead as a hurdle to tribal development.
- **Carrot-and-Stick Policy:** A strategy involving "Carrots" (incentives like surrender-cum-rehabilitation packages and development) and "Sticks" (punitive military action by security forces).
- **Clear-Hold-Build:** A counter-insurgency doctrine where security forces **clear** an area of insurgents, **hold** it to prevent their return, and **build** infrastructure and trust with the local population.
- **Urban Naxals:** A term used to describe individuals in urban centers who allegedly provide intellectual, legal, or logistical support to the underground Maoist movement.

- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**

- The core thesis posits that Naxalism is being dismantled through a combination of **political will, targeted security operations**, and **aggressive infrastructure development**.
- **Shrinking Footprint:** Data suggests a drastic reduction in affected districts (from 126 in 2014 to a projected 11 by 2025), indicating the success of the current containment strategy.
- **Infrastructure as a Gateway:** The argument is that "security vacuums" exist because of a lack of connectivity. Building bridges (e.g., Chhindnar bridge) and roads (9,912 km in Bastar) physically integrates remote areas into the mainstream economy.
- **Breaking the Nexus:** A major focus is placed on destroying the link between cadre leaders, "Urban Naxals," and corrupt local administrative officials who historically allowed the movement to thrive.
- **Psychological Shift:** Programs like *Lon Varratu* (Return to your home) focus on the linguistic and cultural reintegration of surrendered cadres, treating them as "misguided brethren" rather than just enemies.

- **Historical Evolution of the Issue**

- **1967 (The Spark):** The uprising in Naxalbari (West Bengal) led by Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal focused on land redistribution.
- **1970s–1990s (Fragmentation and Growth):** The movement split into various factions (MCC, People's War Group) but expanded into the tribal belts of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, and Dandakaranya.
- **2004 (The Merger):** The formation of the CPI (Maoist) consolidated the movement, making it the "single biggest internal security challenge" (as stated by former PM Manmohan Singh).
- **2014–Present (The Shift):** Move from a reactive to a proactive stance. National policies like the **SAMADHAN** strategy (Smart Leadership, Aggressive Strategy, Motivation, Actionable Intelligence, Dashboard-based KPIs, Harnessing Technology, Action plan for each theatre, and No access to financing) became the blueprint.



NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR LWE ELIMINATION: AXIA ACADEMY POLICY ANALYSIS

THE THREE-PILLAR STRATEGY (CLEAR, HOLD, BUILD)

- Clear-Targeted, intelligence-led security operations
- Hold-Prevent insurgent resurgence and build local force capabilities
- Build-Critical and ϕ -Critical infrastructure, social services, and digital connectivity



IMPACT OF INFRASTRUCTURE GATWAY



- Road connectivity integrating remote tribes
- Mobile towers countering propaganda and enabling e-services
- New bank branches and ATMs enabling financial inclusion (Bastar data comparison)



DE-ROMANTICISING NAXALISM



- Promoting a "misguided brethren" narrative
- 'Lon Varratu' linguistic-cultural reintegration
- Incentivizing conditional surrender over punitive action

BREAKING THE INTELLECTUAL-ADMIN NEXUS



- Protonic destruction of a-cities
- Proactive legal action against support structures
- Financial choking via NIA and ED asset seizures

BREAKING THE INTELLECTUAL-ADMIN NEXUS



- Systemic destruction of clandestine networks
- Proactive legal action against support structures
- Financial choking via NIA and ED asset seizures

SUSTAINABILITY & CHALLENGES



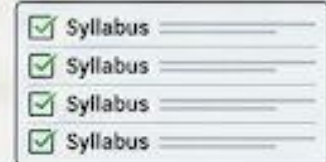
- Upholding Constitution, PESA Act, FRA
- Long-term economic and societal integration of surrendered cadres
- Human Rights monitoring

WAY FORWARD (CONSTITUTIONAL INTEGRATION)



- Deepening Gram Sabha empowerment
- Police modernization and local force focus
- Comprehensive land reforms and digitization

UPSC GS PAPER III INTERNAL SECURITY SYLLABUS LINKAGES



- Linkages between development & spread of extremism
- Role of external state and non-state actors in internal security challenges

Logical and Philosophical Base

4.1 Logic of the Integrated Strategy

Insurgency is seen as a product of governance vacuum plus ideological exploitation.

Security operations are necessary but insufficient; without development and justice, violence can re-emerge.

Therefore, a “clear, hold, build” logic:

- Clear: remove armed groups from an area.
- Hold: establish permanent security camps, administration, and rule of law.
- Build: deliver services, justice, and livelihoods.

4.2 Philosophical Foundations

Democratic legitimacy: The state claims moral authority because it is elected and governed by a constitutional framework, not by revolutionary violence.

Welfare state ideal: The state has a duty to ensure social and economic rights, especially of marginalised communities, thereby undercutting the moral ground of insurgency.

Gandhian vs revolutionary violence:

- Indian constitutional framework draws on Gandhian ethos of non-violence and peaceful change.
- Maoist strategy is based on armed struggle; the state argues this is illegitimate in a functioning democracy.

Human security perspective:

- Focus shifts from protecting territory to protecting people.
- Emphasises freedom from fear (violence) and freedom from want (poverty, exclusion).

4.3 Assumptions Underlying the Approach

Tribals and rural poor are essentially rational actors who will choose constitutional pathways once accessible and trustworthy.

Most cadres are not ideologically hardened revolutionaries but victims of circumstance, coercion, or lack of opportunities.

State institutions can reform themselves enough to deliver justice and reduce exploitation.

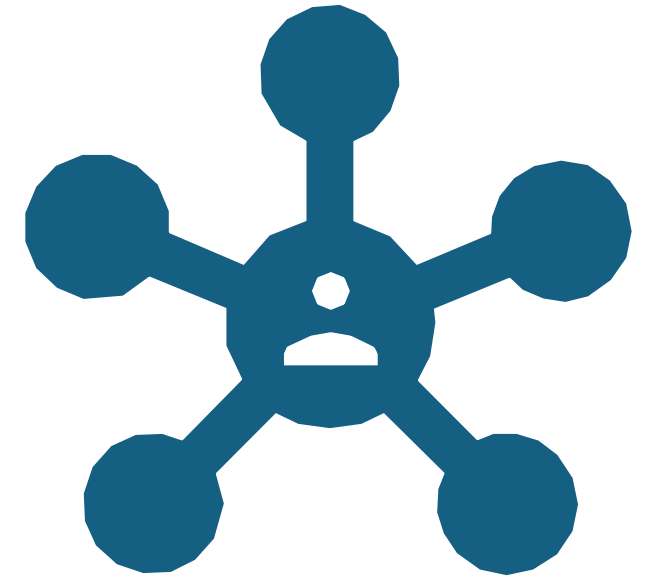
- **Multidimensional Analysis**

- **Social:** Focuses on tribal identity and the "de-romanticisation" of violence. Education and healthcare are treated as the ultimate antidotes.
- **Political:** Requires coordination between the Centre (Home Ministry) and various State governments (Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand) regardless of party lines.
- **Legal:** Heavy reliance on the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the strengthening of the NIA's mandate.
- **Ethical:** The dilemma of using force against our own citizens ("misguided brethren") and the ethics of "collateral damage" in conflict zones.
- **International:** Ensuring Maoists do not get support via the "Golden Crescent" or "Golden Triangle" or through tactical linkages with insurgents in Nepal.
- **Economic:** Integrating the tribal economy with the national market through ATMs, post offices, and bank branches.



- **Linkages with NCERTs**

- **Class 8 Social Science – “Understanding Marginalisation”, “Tribals, Dikus and the Vision of a Golden Age”**
 - Explains historical marginalisation of tribals, exploitative outsiders, and resistance.
- **Class 9 Political Science – “Democratic Rights”, “Working of Institutions”**
 - Helps discuss balance between security and rights, functioning of executive, legislature, and judiciary.
- **Class 10 Political Science – “Social Justice and Marginalised Groups”, “Democracy and Diversity”**
 - Provides concepts for analysing exclusion, affirmative action, and democratic conflict resolution.
- **Class 11 Sociology – “Social Change and Social Order in Rural and Urban Society”, “Culture and Socialisation”**
 - Useful for understanding how social change, migration, and modernisation affect rural and tribal communities.
- **Class 11 Political Science – “Constitution: Why and How?”, “Rights in the Indian Constitution”, “Local Governments”**
 - Links to constitutional protections, local governance, and legitimacy.
- **Class 12 Political Science – “Challenges to Internal Security”, “Regional Aspirations”, “Politics of Planned Development”**
 - Directly related to internal security challenges and developmental debates.
- **Class 12 Economics – “Poverty”, “Rural Development”, “Infrastructure”**
 - Gives economic context: poverty, employment, infrastructure as public good.



- **Linkages with UPSC CSE Syllabus**

- **GS Paper 1 (Society, History, Geography)**

- Salient features of Indian society; diversity of India; role of women and tribal groups.
- Urbanisation, problems and remedies; social empowerment.
- Post-independence consolidation and reorganisation of the country.
- Distribution of key natural resources; factors responsible for location of industries (mineral-rich LWE areas).

- **GS Paper 2 (Polity and Governance)**

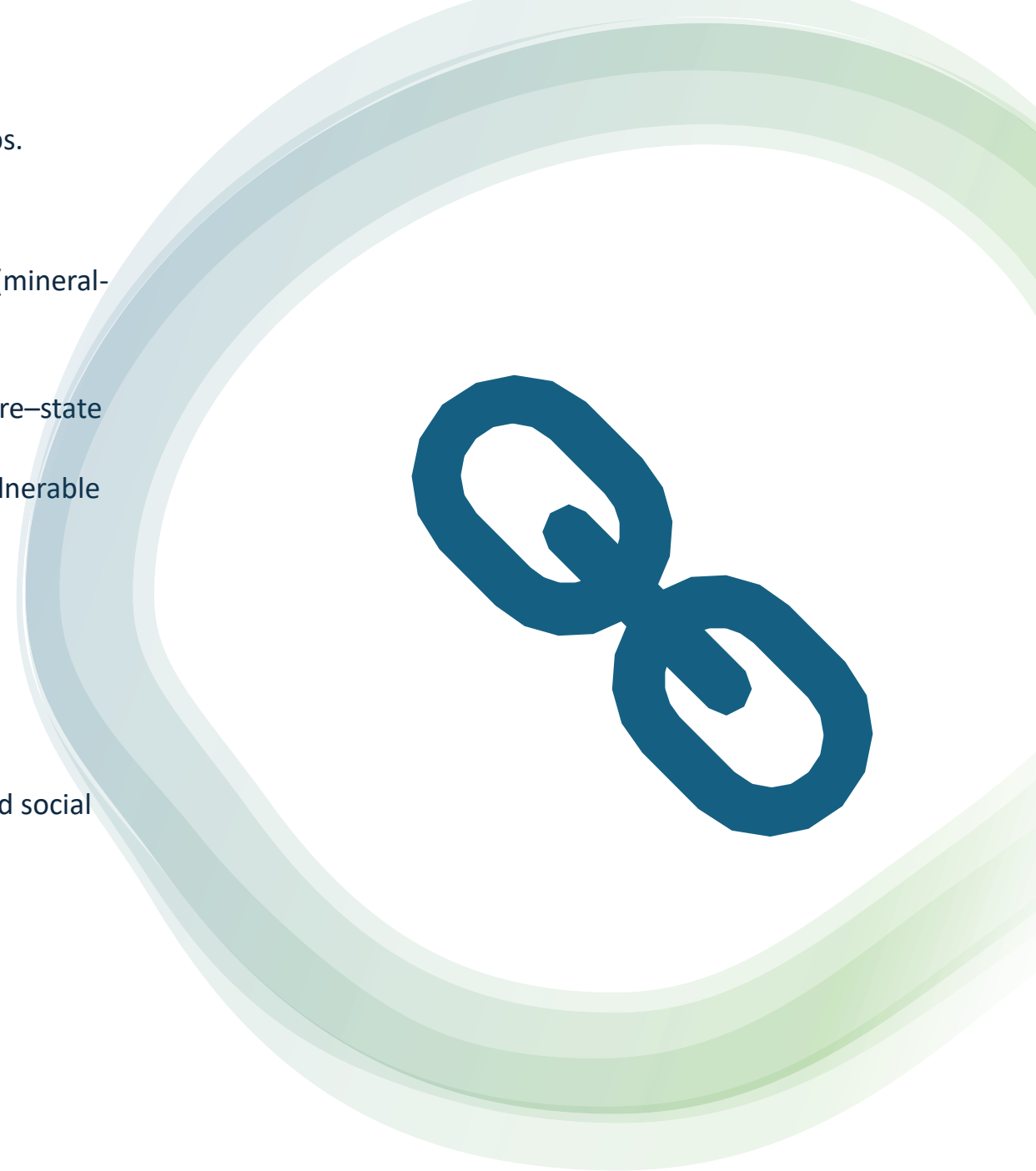
- Functions and responsibilities of Union and States; issues in federal structure (centre–state coordination on internal security).
- Role of civil services; government policies and interventions for development in vulnerable sections.
- Welfare schemes for SCs/STs and issues relating to their implementation.
- Role of NGOs, SHGs, and community-based organisations.

- **GS Paper 3 (Internal Security, Economy, Environment)**

- Linkages between development and spread of extremism.
- Role of external state and non-state actors in internal security.
- Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites.
- Various security forces and agencies and their mandate.
- Inclusive growth, infrastructure, investment models, environmental impact of development.

- **GS Paper 4 (Ethics)**

- Ethical issues in public service, accountability, and probity in governance.
- Moral dilemmas in use of force, human rights, and national security.
- Case studies on displacement, tribal rights, and police–citizen relationship.



Way Forward

Deepening Democratic Governance

- Strengthen panchayati raj institutions, particularly provisions for Scheduled Areas.
- Regular gram sabhas with real decision-making over land, forests, and local development.
- Transparent social audits and grievance redressal platforms.

Rights-based Development

- Strict implementation of Forest Rights Act, PESA, and land acquisition safeguards.
- Prior informed consent of gram sabhas for major projects.
- Strong rehabilitation and resettlement packages with long-term livelihood plans.

Human-Centred Security Operations

- Training of forces in local languages, culture sensitivity, and human rights.
- Independent oversight for investigating alleged excesses.
- Community policing and recruitment of local youth into security forces.

Sustainable Livelihoods and Economic Integration

- Promote minor forest produce-based enterprises, eco-tourism, agro-forestry, and value addition.
- Skill development aligned with emerging sectors (construction, services, digital economy).
- Ensure fair share of mining royalties to local communities.

Education, Health, and Youth Engagement

- Residential schools, hostels, and scholarship schemes for tribal children.
- Mobile health units, telemedicine, and nutrition programmes.
- Sports, cultural centres, and digital access to reduce alienation.

Knowledge and Dialogue

- Encourage research, independent monitoring, and open debates on internal security policies.
- Periodic review of laws and schemes with participation of local communities, experts, and civil society.
- Where feasible, explore conditional dialogues with groups or splinters willing to abjure violence.

- **UPSC CSE Mains**

- **GS-3 (Internal Security & Development)**

- 2013: “The linkages between development and spread of extremism.”
- 2014: “Left Wing Extremism (LWE) is showing a downward trend, but still affects many parts of the country. Briefly explain the Government of India’s approach to counter the challenges posed by LWE.”
- 2015: “Discuss the role of Land Reforms in agriculture development. Identify the factors that were responsible for the success of land reforms in India.” (Linked conceptually to agrarian grievances and extremism.)
- 2017: “The scourge of terrorism is a grave challenge to national security. What suggestions would you give to control and eliminate terrorism in India?” (Can adapt to LWE as a form of terrorism/insurgency.)
- 2019: “Left-wing extremism (LWE) is both a security and development challenge. Comment.”
- 2020: “Critically examine the role of ‘social capital’ in addressing communal violence, terrorism and insurgency.”
- 2021: “How are the principles of non-discrimination and affirmative action reflected in the provisions of the Indian Constitution?” (Relevant through tribal justice and marginalisation.)
- 2022: “The use of ICT in internal security management presents both opportunities and challenges. Discuss.”

- **GS-2 (Governance & Welfare)**

- 2013: “Discuss the role of civil society organisations in influencing public policy in India.”
- 2016: “Examine the efficacy of welfare schemes for the vulnerable sections in India.”
- 2018: “Whether the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes has effectively fulfilled its mandate.”



ILLUSTRATION: BHAVI INHIA

Manufacturing in a politicised world

With globalisation no longer an end in itself, India must rethink its industrial policy to build a more dynamic manufacturing base

Over the past few weeks, policymakers in India have had to cope with the economic impact of the West Asia war, particularly on oil and gas availability and prices. The ceasefire softened this impact, but the failure of dialogue between the United States (US) and Iran has revived these adverse effects.

The US' withdrawal from cooperation with allies and from the standards set out in the United Nations (UN) Charter signals that inter-state relations are entering a new phase — one based more on power than cooperation. This adverse transformation of the global trade, finance, and economic system runs much deeper than the immediate challenges posed by the West Asian war.

We have experienced this in the behaviour of the Trump administration in global economic relations. At risk is the free and depoliticised flow of trade and finance that has benefited emerging economies over the past four decades. This pattern was threatened by the global financial crisis in 2008, the growing concern in the developed world about the rising strength of emerging developing countries, particularly China, and its impact on employment in the developed countries.

The big change has been the explicit politicisation of trade policy by the US. Its impact on global supply chain investments will weaken corporate linkages across countries, as pressure from the federal government to reshore production increases and constraints are imposed on which countries firms can trade with and invest in.

As the influential American writer Francis Fukuyama said recently: "There has never been a time when the United States was more distrusted, by both traditional friends and by rivals, as at the present." In fact, in a variety of ways, the US has become the Unreliable State of America.

There is another dimension of emerging constraint that needs to be understood and considered in development policy in India. China is best seen not just as

an emerging economy but as a manufacturing powerhouse that accounts for 27-30 per cent of global manufacturing production and around 20 per cent of global manufacturing trade. It has also demonstrated a willingness to use its domination of production and trade in certain areas, such as rare earths, as a tool in its political relationships with major states.

Our policy must now assume that the de facto depoliticisation of inter-country trade and finance relations has ended, and that with the heavy politicisation of trade by the US, no country is pursuing globalisation as an end. All are focusing on prioritising their people and enterprises. Going forward, countries are likely to emphasise bilateral and regional trade agreements, as well as government policies aimed at protecting key industries. This is already a part of India's policy framework.

When it comes to finance, the imposition of direct controls has not occurred, and the precautions that we experience are more because of concerns about the views of national governments, particularly in the US. However, there is a body of argument in the US and in some countries in Europe that the free movement of capital has contributed to the hollowing out of industry. Hence, foreign direct investment (FDI) and foreign institutional investor (FII) flows will become more constrained.

All these developments require substantial policy changes. This has been elaborated very well in Chapter 10 of the Economic Survey 2025-26 (ES 25-26). It says: "In a world marked by geopolitical fragmentation, contested trade, volatile capital flows, and rapid technological shifts, growth by itself is no longer the binding constraint. What increasingly differentiates countries that merely absorb shocks from those that shape outcomes is the depth and quality of their state capacity."

Let me focus on the industrial policy changes that we require to cope with the threats to global trade from

the possible continuation of the West Asian war and the rise of mercantilism in the US and some other states. But this policy change is also required to correct the inadequate growth in manufacturing production, whose share in national gross value added at current prices has declined from 17.4 per cent in 2003-02 to 14.3 per cent in 2025-26.

The most important requirement is a more strategic orientation of manufacturing policy. The global politicisation of trade requires us to focus our import substitution policies sharply on products that are critical and whose imported inputs are liable to political controls by supplying countries. This may also be worth doing for industries that have the potential to become dominant in global markets.

In fact, strategic import substitution does not necessarily work against export promotion. For instance, if a policy assessment leads to incentives for greater domestic production of Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API), whose imports at present are about ₹30,000 crore, mostly from China, this domestication of API availability may actually boost pharmaceutical exports, which are a major component of our manufacturing exports.

In fact, an important objective of our industrial policy has to be to enable manufacturing to rise to a globally competitive level and for its exports to increase from about 1 per cent of global manufacturing exports to something closer to China's share of 20 per cent. This will reduce the current account deficit and make us less dependent on inflows of foreign finance.

Raising tariffs to promote domestic production of critical input requirements is not sufficient. We need to move our private and public corporations more firmly into becoming enterprises that place a higher priority on being more focussed on being technology innovators and global competitors. The key requirement here is for policy to emphasise substantially higher spending on research & development (R&D) by larger manufacturing establishments.

At present, India's R&D spending as a percentage of gross domestic product is about one-fourth of China's. Since China's GDP is four times higher than India's, this implies that in absolute terms, India's R&D spending is one-sixteenth of that of China. But the most critical difference is that in India only about 35 per cent of the national R&D is done by the commercial non-government sector, while in China this sector accounts for about 75 per cent. This is one important reason for the sharp difference in the size, evolution, and global role of the manufacturing sector between India and China. Hence, a policy that pushes the private sector, mainly in manufacturing, towards much more committed R&D is an essential part of the change that we need.

The most important policy change we require is to shift the policy priority of corporations away from focusing on relations with politicians and the administration towards standing in global competitiveness. If we do this, manufacturing production will move closer to the long-standing target of 25 per cent of GDP, become more dynamic in a global context, and more technologically independent.

Let me focus on the industrial policy changes that we require to cope with the threats to global trade from



NITIN DESAI

ECONOMIST
MAGAZINE
desai@picloud.com

- **Key Terms and Explanations**

- **Politicisation of Trade:** Traditionally, trade was governed by market forces (efficiency, cost) and WTO rules. Politicisation refers to the explicit use of trade policy—tariffs, sanctions, export controls—as a tool of national security or foreign policy leverage rather than pure economic gain.
- **Reshoring:** The process of bringing manufacturing and supply chain operations back to a company's original country from overseas locations.
- **De-politicised Flow of Finance:** The assumption that capital (FDI, FII) will move to wherever it gets the highest risk-adjusted return, without interference from home-country governments based on geopolitical alignment.
- **Mercantilism:** An economic theory and practice from the 16th-18th centuries that equates national wealth with accumulation of gold reserves and advocates for maximizing exports and minimizing imports through heavy state intervention and protectionism. The text implies a **Neo-Mercantilist** revival in the US.
- **State Capacity (as per Economic Survey 2025-26 reference):** It goes beyond just GDP growth. It refers to the **institutional ability of the government to design and implement policies effectively**. This includes the quality of bureaucracy, regulatory enforcement, data collection, and long-term strategic planning.
 - **Why it matters now:** In a volatile world, a country with high State Capacity can absorb external shocks (like a war in West Asia) and still *shape* outcomes, whereas a low-capacity state merely reacts.
- **Strategic Import Substitution:** Unlike the old, blanket import substitution of the 1960s-80s (which led to inefficiency), this is a **targeted** approach. It involves identifying critical inputs (e.g., APIs for medicines, semiconductor chips) where supply chains are controlled by potentially unreliable or adversarial powers, and building domestic capacity specifically in those areas.
- **Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs):** The biologically active component of a drug that produces the intended effects.
 - **Relevance in the Text:** India is the "pharmacy of the world" for formulations (mixing ingredients into pills), but heavily dependent on China (~70-80% in some cases) for the raw chemical APIs. This is a strategic vulnerability highlighted in the analysis.

Main Arguments and Substantive Parts

The core thesis is that the global economic order built on liberal cooperation post-1945 is fracturing, replaced by a power-based, fragmented system led by an increasingly "unreliable" United States.

Core Thesis: The End of an Era

- The post-Cold War era of hyper-globalisation (1991-2008) is over. The US withdrawal from multilateralism signals a shift from **Rule-Based Order** to **Power-Based Order**.
- **Supporting Evidence:** Explicit politicisation of trade policy by the US administration, pressure on firms to reshore, and constraints on who firms can trade with (e.g., Huawei bans, CHIPS Act restrictions).

The "Unreliable State" & Trust Deficit

- The argument posits that the US is no longer a stable anchor of the global system. Policy volatility creates immense uncertainty for businesses and allies.
- **Implication:** Emerging economies like India cannot assume that access to US markets or technology will remain free of political strings.

China as a Dual Challenge

- **Challenge 1 (Economic Gravity):** China's dominance in manufacturing (27-29% of global production) is a fact of life. Decoupling completely is impossible and costly.
- **Challenge 2 (Strategic Leverage):** China's willingness to "weaponise" trade in areas like Rare Earths creates a national security dilemma for India.
- **Counterargument (Implicit):** The text doesn't advocate decoupling from China but rather **de-risking** and building domestic alternatives in critical sectors.

The State Capacity Argument

- The analysis draws heavily on the idea that in a world of "contested trade and volatile capital flows," **Growth Alone Is Not Enough**. India must shift focus to **State Capacity**—the ability to execute complex industrial policy.
- **Key Metric:** The stark R&D gap. India's R&D spend is ~1/16th of China's in absolute terms. Worse, the **private sector** in India does only 35% of R&D vs. 75% in China. This is presented as the root cause of manufacturing stagnation.

The Policy Prescription: Shifting Corporate Mindset

- The text criticises Indian corporate culture for being too focused on "**relations with politicians and the administration**" (rent-seeking) rather than "**global competitiveness and technology innovation.**"
- **Goal:** Raise manufacturing share of GDP to 25% (from 14.1%) and global export share to near 20%.

- **Historical evolution of the issue**
- **Liberalisation and globalisation (1991 onwards)**
 - 1991 New Industrial Policy dismantled Licence Raj, opened the economy to FDI, reduced tariffs, and integrated India into global markets.
 - Manufacturing grew but remained stuck around 16–18 percent of GDP; services surged faster.
 - India joined global value chains in IT, auto components, pharmaceuticals, but less so in electronics and high-tech manufacturing.
 - Post-2008 global financial crisis
 - The 2008 crisis exposed vulnerabilities of an over-financialised global economy and led to protectionist tendencies in advanced economies.
 - Simultaneously, China's rise as a manufacturing superpower intensified concerns in the West about trade imbalances and technology leakage.
 - 2010s: Trade wars, security concerns and tech rivalry
 - US–China trade tensions, Brexit, and national security screening of investments signalled that geopolitics was re-entering trade policy.
 - Participation in mega-regional trade deals became contested; supply-chain resilience became a policy buzzword.
 - 2020s: Pandemic, wars and “weaponised interdependence”
 - Covid-19 disrupted global supply chains, revealing dependence on a few hubs (China for electronics, APIs; Taiwan for semiconductors).
 - Russia–Ukraine war and tensions in West Asia affected energy and commodity markets.
 - Countries started reshoring critical sectors, stockpiling critical minerals, and tightening technology exports.
 - India's policy evolution within this context
 - Make in India (2014), National Manufacturing Policy (2011), Atmanirbhar Bharat (2020), and PLI schemes (from 2020) represent India's attempt to shift towards manufacturing-led, export-competitive and more self-reliant growth.
 - Simultaneously, India has walked a tightrope between deepening global integration (FTAs, investment) and hedging against external shocks with domestic capacity building.



AXIA

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RISE ABOVE THE REST

AXIA COMPETITIVE EXAM CENTRE



GEOPOLITICAL REALITIES: THE SHIFT TO MERKANTILISM & STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

1 The Mercantilist Trap & Rare Earths

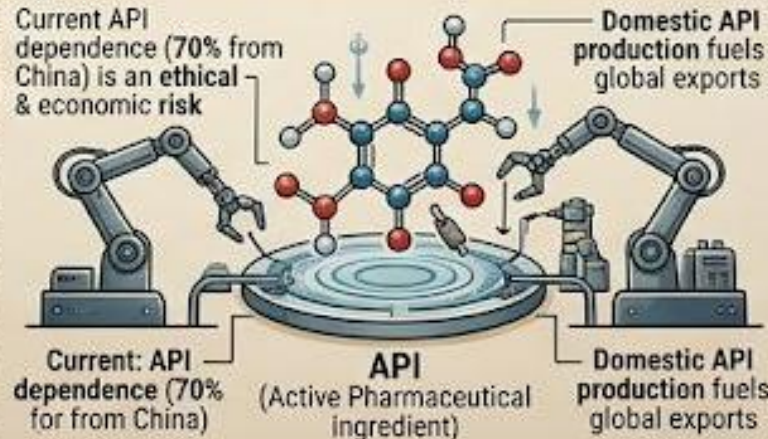


R&D Investment: Public vs. Private Sector



**SHOUTOUT TO CORPORATE R&D:
LEVERAGING CAPEX FOR INNOVATION**

2 Strategic Import Substitution for API & Tech



3 The Strategic Path Forward



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Contact: +91 6002-417488

Logical and philosophical base

Logic of risk diversification

- The central logic is that excessive dependence on volatile, politicised global markets creates systemic risk.
- Therefore, India must diversify supply chains geographically and build domestic buffers in critical sectors.

Political economy of interdependence

- Globalisation is not merely a neutral economic process; it is embedded in power relations.
- When powerful countries can cut off supplies or technology for strategic reasons, interdependence becomes asymmetrical and potentially coercive.

Philosophy of strategic autonomy

- Rooted in India's long-standing foreign policy principle of non-alignment and strategic autonomy, the argument favours a path that avoids over-reliance on any single bloc.
- Economic policy is seen as an extension of sovereignty: control over critical production is part of national self-determination.

Developmental state perspective

- The analysis implicitly favours a "developmental state" view where the government actively shapes industrial structure, rather than simply providing a neutral playing field.
- It assumes that markets alone will not naturally produce the desired mix of industries or resilience.

Balancing efficiency and resilience

- Philosophically, there is a tension between allocative efficiency (lowest cost global sourcing) and resilience (redundancy, diversification, domestic capacity).
- The argument suggests that in a politicised world, some loss of short-term efficiency is acceptable to gain long-term resilience and autonomy.

- **Multidimensional analysis**

- **Social dimension**

- Potential to generate mass employment, especially for semi-skilled workers, thereby reducing poverty and regional disparities.
- Risk of labour exploitation, unsafe work conditions and informalisation if regulatory oversight is weak.
- Urbanisation pressures on housing, health, and education in manufacturing hubs.

- **Political dimension**

- Industrial policy becomes a key arena of Centre–state bargaining: allocation of projects, incentives, and corridors.
- Politicisation of trade can reshape alliances—India’s positions in Quad, BRICS, IPEF, and South–South cooperation reflect this interplay.
- Domestic politics may favour visible, short-term mega projects over slow, systemic reforms.

- **Legal dimension**

- Must align with constitutional provisions (Article 301 on freedom of trade, Seventh Schedule entries on industry and trade, environmental provisions).
- Compliance with labour codes, environmental laws and competition law will shape the contours of industrial growth.
- International economic law (WTO, BITs, FTAs) constrains the choice of instruments but also offers dispute-settlement mechanisms.

- **Ethical dimension**

- Questions of distributive justice: who benefits from industrial policy—large firms or MSMEs, capital or labour, urban or rural regions?
- Ethical concerns about environmental degradation, displacement of communities and inter-generational equity.
- Integrity in policy-making: avoiding crony capitalism, opaque allocation of incentives, and regulatory capture.

- **International dimension**

- India’s industrial strategy interacts with global realignments: friend-shoring, supply-chain coalitions, and technology alliances.
- Manufacturing policy affects India’s bargaining power in trade negotiations and its role as a voice of the Global South.
- Cross-border environmental and labour standards debates (carbon border taxes, ESG norms) will impact market access.

- **Economic dimension**

- Manufacturing expansion can boost GDP, exports, productivity and tax revenues; it can also deepen backward and forward linkages in the economy.
- But poorly designed protectionism can raise costs, hurt export competitiveness and slow structural transformation.
- Industrial policy must complement macro-stability, financial sector health and human capital investments.

Linkages with NCERTs

Class 11 – Indian Economic Development

- Chapters on “Indian Economy 1950–1990,” “Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation,” and “Infrastructure” give the historical context of import substitution, planning, and post-1991 reforms.
- Use these to contrast old industrial policy with today’s geopolitically aware industrial strategy.

Class 12 – Macroeconomics / Indian Economic Development

- Chapters on “Open Economy Macroeconomics” and “Current Challenges facing the Indian economy” help situate manufacturing within balance of payments, employment and inequality debates.

Class 10 – Economics (Understanding Economic Development)

- Chapters like “Globalisation and the Indian Economy” introduce MNCs, trade, and government’s role—useful for building basic narratives for essays and ethics case studies.

Class 11 – Political Theory / Indian Constitution at Work

- Debates on state vs market, justice, and equality relate to industrial policy, distributive justice and constitutional principles.

Class 12 – Contemporary World Politics

- Chapters on “Globalisation,” “Security,” and “Alternative Centres of Power” connect geopolitics, trade wars and weaponisation of interdependence.

Linkages with UPSC CSE syllabus

GS Paper 1 (History, Society)

- Modern Indian history: colonial economic policies, de-industrialisation, Swadeshi movement and self-reliance debates.
- Post-independence consolidation: planning, PSUs, Green Revolution vs industrialisation.
- Society: impact of industrialisation on class structure, migration, urbanisation.

GS Paper 2 (Polity, Governance, IR)

- Functions and responsibilities of the Union and states in industry and trade.
- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors.
- India and its neighbourhood, regional groupings, and international trade agreements; role of WTO, FTAs, and global governance institutions.

GS Paper 3 (Economy, Technology, Environment)

- Indian economy: growth, development, inclusive growth, industrial policy, infrastructure, investment.
- Effects of liberalisation, globalisation, and economic reforms.
- Science and technology, indigenisation of technology, R&D, and innovation ecosystems.
- Environmental conservation and climate-friendly industrialisation.

GS Paper 4 (Ethics)

- Ethical dimensions of development policy: distributive justice, inter-generational equity, corporate governance, and crony capitalism.
- Case studies on balancing growth with environmental sustainability and labour rights.

Way forward

Adopt a “resilient globalisation” framework

- Continue engaging with global markets but consciously diversify partners and supply chains (Global South, regional value chains, plurilateral trade arrangements).
- Prioritise strategic autonomy in critical sectors without withdrawing from global trade.

Move from tariff-driven protection to capability-driven competitiveness

- Use tariffs and incentives as temporary, targeted tools with clear sunset clauses.
- Invest heavily in skills, technology, quality infrastructure, logistics, and compliance with global standards.

Strengthen industrial R&D and innovation

- Raise public and private R&D expenditure, especially in manufacturing and green technologies.
- Create mission-mode programmes linking universities, PSUs, MSMEs and start-ups around specific technology challenges.

Deepen Centre–state and public–private coordination

- Institutionalise joint Centre–state industrial councils to harmonise policies on land, labour, power, and incentives.
- Encourage states to develop niche industrial ecosystems (electronics clusters, defence corridors, green manufacturing hubs).

Embed sustainability and equity in industrial strategy

- Align industrial projects with climate goals, resource efficiency and circular economy principles.
- Ensure worker rights, social security, and community participation to maintain legitimacy and social licence.

Enhance trade diplomacy and economic statecraft

- Build coalitions in WTO and plurilateral forums to defend policy space for developmental industrial policy.
- Use economic diplomacy to secure critical minerals, technology partnerships and market access.

Transparent, evidence-based policy making

- Regularly evaluate industrial schemes with measurable outcomes (exports, productivity, innovation, jobs), not just investment announcements.
- Use independent review bodies and publish data to curb cronyism and improve accountability.

- UPSC Prelims
- 2014–2023 (multiple years): Questions on WTO, protectionism, current account, balance of payments, FDI, Make in India, National Manufacturing Policy, PLI-type schemes, Atmanirbhar Bharat, globalisation and its impact on Indian economy.
- UPSC Mains – GS Papers
- **GS-1**
 - 2013, 2017: Questions on impact of globalisation on Indian society and culture.
 - 2019: Question on explain de-industrialisation during colonial rule and its long-term consequences.
- **GS-2**
 - 2018: “Critically examine the role of WTO in promoting India’s trade interests.”
 - 2020: Question on India’s engagement in multilateral trade negotiations and regional trade agreements.
- **GS-3**
 - 2014 onwards: Repeated questions on:
 - “Effects of liberalisation on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.”
 - “What do you understand by ‘Make in India’ initiative? What are its objectives and challenges?”
 - Questions on PLI-like incentives, Atmanirbhar Bharat, and supply-chain resilience in post-Covid context.
 - 2022–2023: Questions about self-reliance in defence, pharmaceuticals and digital technologies.
- **Essay Paper**
 - Topics broadly on globalisation, economic nationalism, self-reliance, and India’s growth model have appeared multiple times.



THE GLASS PALACE OF GRIDLOCK: WHY THE UNITED NATIONS IS FALTERING AND HOW TO RECLAIM THE GLOBAL MANDATE

OPINION

SUDHIR S. RAVAL



The United Nations was conceived in 1945 as a grand moral firewall—a sacred vow to shield humanity from the recurring fires of global conflict. Yet, in 2026, that firewall is crumbling under the weight of systemic paralysis and a 20th-century blueprint that has failed to adapt to a 21st-century reality. From the 'Veto Trap' that holds collective security hostage to a 'Sovereignty Shield' that often protects the perpetrator over the victim, the UN is facing an unprecedented crisis of legitimacy. To understand its current faltering is

not merely to critique a bureaucracy, but to witness a profound betrayal of the 'Never Again' promise. If the 'Glass Palace' on the East River is to remain relevant, it must undergo a fundamental metamorphosis—moving beyond the politics of national vanity to finally become the true conscience of humanity. This is the story of how we lost that mandate, and the radical roadmap required to reclaim it.

The United Nations was baptized in the shadows of the Holocaust and the ruins of Nagasaki, founded on a sacred, singular vow: that the world would never again stand silent while humanity was systematically erased. It was envisioned as more than a diplomatic forum; it was meant to be the world's ultimate moral firewall. Yet, in the eighty years since, that firewall has repeatedly collapsed under the weight of national self-interest and structural apathy. As we stand in 2026, the UN finds

itself caught in a precarious 'legitimacy trap'—tasked with solving 21st-century existential threats using a 20th-century blueprint that remains stubbornly frozen in time. To understand why the UN is currently faltering is not merely to critique a bureaucracy, but to diagnose a systemic paralysis that threatens the very fabric of our global order.

THE VETO TRAP: THE ARCHITECTURE OF PARALYSIS

The primary engine of the UN's failure is its foundational blueprint. The 'Veto Power' granted to the five permanent members (P5) of the Security Council was a 1945 pragmatic compromise to keep the world's heavyweights at the table. In 2026, this compromise has become a cage.

When the UN was formed, the veto was intended to prevent major power conflict. Instead, it has been weaponized to shield aggressors and paralyze humanitarian intervention. Whether it is the blocking of resolutions regarding the invasion of Ukraine or halting ceasefires in the Middle East, the veto allows a single nation to hold the collective security of eight billion people hostage. When the 'Fire Department' of the world is stalled by the very actors lighting the fires, the build-



ing will inevitably burn.

THE ENFORCEMENT GAP: WHEN 'NEVER AGAIN' BECOMES 'ONCE AGAIN'

The UN's most profound failure is the chasm between its lofty rhetoric and its inability to stop a bullet in real-time. The 'Blue Helmets' were designed to be a shield, yet history is littered with the ghosts of those they were mandated to protect—from the 1994 genocide in Rwanda to the Srebrenica massacre.

In the present global scenario, this gap has widened. The UN's peacekeeping model relies on 'consent of the parties'—a diplomatic politeness that is absent when one of those parties is the perpetrator of atrocities. Furthermore, the UN lacks a permanent, rapid-response force, relying instead

on 'voluntary' contributions from member states. When the protection of humanity is treated as a voluntary contribution rather than a mandatory obligation, the UN ceases to be a guardian and becomes a mere book-keeper of tragedy.

THE SOVEREIGNTY SHIELD VS. UNIVERSAL WELFARE

The UN Charter is built on the bedrock of 'sovereign equality,' yet it also pledges to protect universal human rights. This creates a systemic contradiction. When a state turns against its own people, the UN often hides behind the shield of 'non-interference.'

This 'Geopolitics of Compassion' means that intervention often depends on whether the victims reside in a region of strategic interest to the US. We see this

in the global refugee crisis, now exceeding 120 million displaced souls. While the UNHCR performs heroic logistical feats, the political arm fails to address the root causes—tyranny and civil war—because doing so would infringe upon 'sovereignty.' The UN treats the symptoms of global suffering but is structurally forbidden from curing the disease.

ECONOMIC INEQUITY AND THE FAILED TRADE FRAMEWORK

Beyond the battlefield, the UN has failed to regulate a global capitalist system that prioritizes profit over people. While the UN oversees various trade and development bodies, it has struggled to bridge the North-South divide.

The current international trade framework remains skewed, leaving developing nations trapped in cycles of debt and commodity dependence. The UN's failure to advocate for a more equitable 'Faith Economy' or a moral approach to international trade has allowed wealth to concentrate in the hands of a few while the many face austerity. If the UN cannot ensure economic dignity, it cannot expect political stability. Peace, after all, is not merely the absence of war; it is the presence of the means to live.

A 1945 MODEL IN A 2026 REALITY

The world of 2026 is unrecognizable from the world of 1945. The rise of the Global South, the economic dominance of nations like India, and the emergence of non-state actors find no formal place in the UN's elite tiers.

The Security Council remains a 'Gentlemen's Club' reflecting a defunct colonial-era hierarchy. This lack of representation has led to a 'legitimacy deficit.' If billions of people across Africa, Latin America, and Asia do not have a permanent seat at the table, the institution loses its claim to speak for 'We the Peoples.' This exclusion isn't just an administrative oversight; it is an active suppression of the global majority's voice.

RECLAIMING THE MANDATE: A ROADMAP FOR METAMORPHOSIS

Can the UN's motives be achieved today? Yes, but it requires a fundamental restructuring. Membership must be expanded to include nations from the Global South, such as India, as permanent members. In cases of documented mass atrocities, the veto should be automatically suspended under the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) framework. Furthermore, the UN must shift its developmental

focus from raw GDP to a 'Happiness Index,' prioritizing mental well-being, social trust, and environmental health as the true markers of a successful nation. Diplomacy must move beyond transactional politics toward a model that integrates moral and civilizational values into global governance.

THE NECESSITY OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

The United Nations is frequently criticized for being a 'Glass Palace' of talk and no action. Dag Hammarskjöld, the UN's second Secretary-General, famously noted that the UN was not created to take humanity to heaven, but to save it from hell.

In 2026, the fires of that 'hell' are burning brighter than ever—fueled by climate change, inequality, and unchecked conflict. The failure of the UN is not a failure of its ideals, but a failure of its members to prioritize collective survival over national vanity. To achieve its motives, the UN must stop looking inward at its own bureaucracy and start looking outward at the humanity it was meant to serve. The world does not need a new UN; it needs a UN that finally has the courage to be the conscience of humanity.

Sudhir S. Raval is Consulting Editor at the ITJ Network.

- **Key Terms and Explanations**

- **The Veto Trap:** Refers to the power held by the five permanent members (P5) of the Security Council (UNSC) to block any substantive resolution. It creates a "trap" where collective action is paralyzed if even one P5 member's national interest is at stake.
- **Legitimacy Deficit:** A situation where an institution loses its moral or legal authority because it no longer represents the current global reality or the people it serves.
- **Sovereignty Shield:** The use of the principle of "national sovereignty" by states to prevent the international community from intervening in domestic atrocities or human rights violations.
- **Responsibility to Protect (R2P):** A global political commitment endorsed by all UN member states in 2005 to prevent genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.
- **Global South:** A term used to describe developing, emerging, or lower-income nations, primarily located in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, which often feel marginalized in global governance.
- **Happiness Index / Well-being Metrics:** Moving beyond GDP to measure a nation's success based on mental health, social trust, and environmental sustainability.

- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**

- The core thesis posits that the UN is a "**Glass Palace of Gridlock**"—a 20th-century structure failing to solve 21st-century existential threats due to structural paralysis.
- **Structural Obsolescence:** The UN remains frozen in its 1945 blueprint, reflecting a post-WWII power hierarchy that ignores the rise of powers like India and the influence of non-state actors.
- **The Enforcement Gap:** While the UN excels at "bookkeeping tragedy" (tracking refugees/casualties), it fails to stop the bullets in real-time. This is attributed to the lack of a permanent, rapid-response force and a reliance on "voluntary contributions."
- **Economic Inequality:** The UN has failed to regulate a global trade framework that favors the North, leading to cycles of debt and commodity dependence in the South.
- **Geopolitics of Compassion:** International intervention is often selective, depending on whether the victims reside in a region of strategic interest to the P5.

Historical Evolution of the Issue

1945 (The Genesis): Born from the ruins of WWII and the failure of the League of Nations. The UNSC was designed as a "pragmatic compromise" to keep great powers at the table.

Cold War Era: The UN became a theater for proxy wars; the Veto was used frequently by the US and USSR to paralyze the Council.

1990s (The Decade of Failure): Despite the "New World Order," the UN failed to prevent genocides in Rwanda (1994) and Srebrenica (1995), highlighting the "Enforcement Gap."

2005 (World Summit): Adoption of R2P to address the "Sovereignty Shield," though its application remains inconsistent (e.g., Libya vs. Syria).

2020s (The Modern Crisis): The invasion of Ukraine and conflicts in the Middle East have seen the Veto weaponized by P5 members who are themselves parties to the conflict.

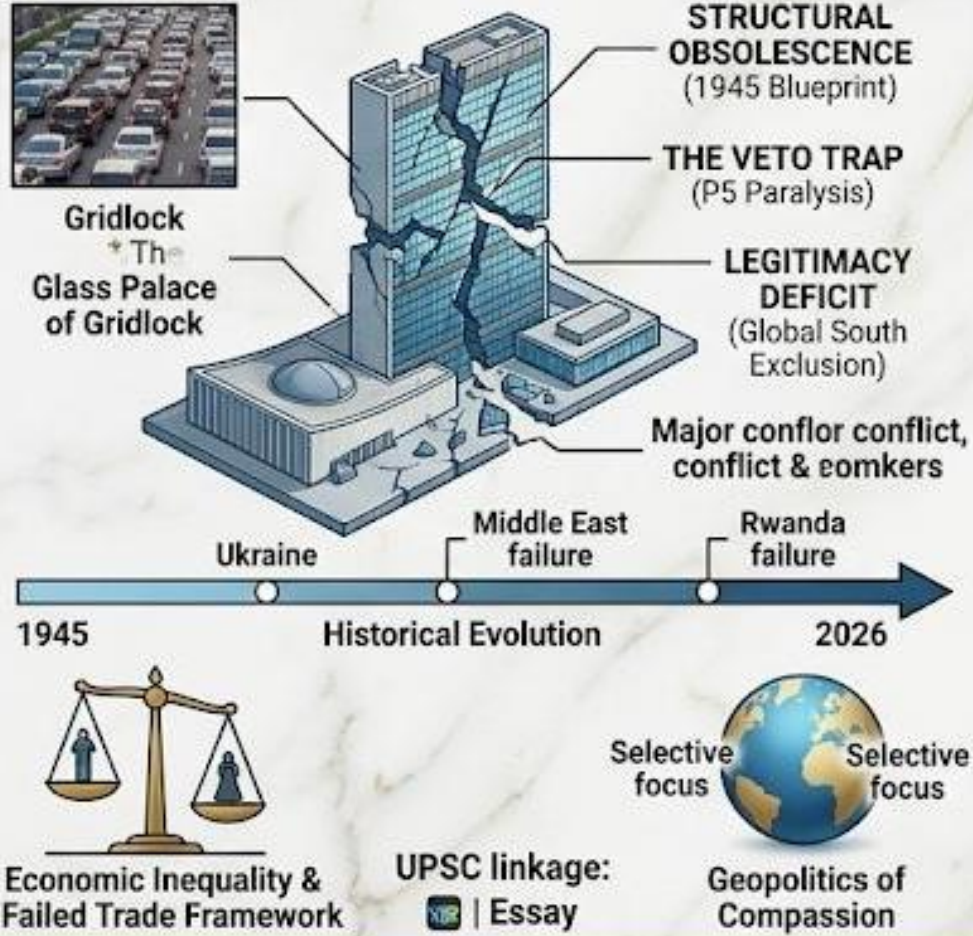


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MULTIDIMENSIONAL IMPACT



THE ROADMAP TO RECLAMATION



- **Logical and philosophical base**

- **4.1 Realism vs idealism**

- At one level, the institutional design reflects **realism**: accepting that great powers will only participate if their vital interests are protected through tools like veto.
- At another level, the UN Charter expresses **idealism**: universal human rights, equal sovereignty of states, and collective security.
- The argument is that this hybrid design has reached its limits: realist power privileges repeatedly override idealist commitments.
- 4.2 Justice vs order
 - Philosophically, there is a tension between **order** (avoiding war between great powers) and **justice** (protecting vulnerable populations and addressing structural inequality).
 - The current system often sacrifices justice at the altar of order, leading to toleration of atrocities or economic marginalization if challenging them would upset powerful states.
 - This reflects deeper debates in political philosophy: Should global institutions prioritize peace even if it is unjust, or should they risk instability to pursue justice?
- 4.3 Sovereignty, cosmopolitanism, and moral responsibility
 - Classical sovereignty theory asserts that states are supreme within their territory and external actors should not interfere.
 - Cosmopolitan ethics views individuals, not states, as ultimate moral units; thus, the international community has a duty to protect individuals from their own governments if necessary.
 - The conceptual critique is that the UN tries to sit on both chairs, leading to ambiguous responses and “selective cosmopolitanism” driven by power politics.
- 4.4 Epistemic limits and technocracy
 - The economic governance critique highlights over-reliance on technocratic assumptions about markets, growth, and comparative advantage, ignoring real-world power asymmetries.
 - The philosophical question is epistemic: whose knowledge and experience shape global rules—experts in Northern institutions or affected communities in the South?
 - There is an implicit call for more epistemic justice, participatory rule-making, and inclusion of diverse development pathways.

Multidimensional Analysis

Social: Focus on the refugee crisis (120 million+) and the need for the UN to address the human cost of gridlock.

Political: The "Gentlemen's Club" mentality of the UNSC and the rise of "minilateralism" (G20, BRICS) as alternatives.

Legal: The conflict between Article 2(7)—non-interference in domestic affairs—and the R2P framework.

Ethical: The "Geopolitics of Compassion" where some lives are treated as more "strategically significant" than others.

International: The shift from a unipolar or bipolar world to a multipolar world where the 1945 map is obsolete.

Economic: The "failed trade framework" and the North-South divide in wealth concentration.

Linkages with NCERTs

Class 9 – Democratic Politics I

- Chapter “Democratic Rights” introduces basic human rights and global institutions, helping students see why international protection mechanisms matter.

Class 10 – Democratic Politics II

- Chapter “International Organizations” (older editions) or related content explains UN structure, Security Council, and peacekeeping.

Class 11 – Political Theory

- Chapters on “Freedom,” “Equality,” and “Justice” provide theoretical tools to analyse fairness of veto, inequality, and reparative justice.

Class 11 – Indian Economic Development

- Chapters on globalization, poverty, and development connect directly to North–South divide, trade inequality, and SDGs.

Class 12 – Politics in the Contemporary World (Political Science)

- Chapters on “International Organizations,” “Alternative Centres of Power,” and “Contemporary South Asia” help contextualize UN’s role and limitations in post-Cold War era.

Class 12 – Contemporary World Politics

- Topics on US hegemony, environmental movements, and globalisation give concrete illustrations of how power and institutions interact.

Linkages with UPSC CSE syllabus

10.1 GS Paper I

World history: Second World War, post-war institutions, decolonization, Cold War, and its impact on global institutions.

Society: impact of conflict, displacement, and global inequality on social structures, migration, and social justice.

10.2 GS Paper II

International relations:

- Role of UN and specialized agencies in global governance.
- Important international institutions, agencies, and fora—their structure, mandate, and reform debates.
- India and its neighbourhood, India's role in UN peacekeeping, and its stance on UNSC reform.

Polity and governance:

- Comparison of Indian constitutional values (equality, justice) with global normative frameworks.

10.3 GS Paper III

Economy:

- Effects of liberalization, WTO, and globalization on Indian economy and developing countries.
- Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

Environment and disaster management:

- Climate change negotiations, environmental governance, and role of UNFCCC and related bodies.

Internal and external security:

- Linkages between development, extremism, and conflict; role of international cooperation in counter-terrorism.

10.4 GS Paper IV (Ethics)

Ethics in international relations, humanitarian intervention, and responsibility to protect.

Issues of global justice, equity, and distributive justice; empathy and compassion across borders.

Ethical dimensions of peacekeeping, command responsibility, and whistle-blowing.

- **Way forward: pragmatic and balanced suggestions**

- **12.1 Security architecture reforms**

- Gradual curbing of veto use:
 - Voluntary pledges by P5 not to use veto in mass atrocity situations (veto restraint initiatives).
 - Procedural innovation where veto automatically triggers a General Assembly debate and non-binding advisory vote, increasing political cost.
- Expanding UNSC membership to better reflect current realities (e.g., Africa, Latin America, major developing powers) while balancing efficiency and representation.
- 12.2 Strengthening peacekeeping and accountability
- Sharper, realistic mandates that prioritize civilian protection and are matched by adequate resources and logistics.
- Robust accountability mechanisms for peacekeeper misconduct, with clear responsibility shared between UN and troop-contributing states.
- Enhanced training in human rights, gender sensitivity, and local engagement.
- 12.3 Rebalancing economic governance
- Reform of trade and financial regimes to preserve policy space for developing countries: industrial policy, smart protection, and diversification.
- Scaling up concessional finance, debt restructuring, and climate loss-and-damage funds for vulnerable economies.
- Incorporation of beyond-GDP metrics into UN reporting and country assessments, linking SDGs explicitly to well-being rather than just growth.
- 12.4 Normative and epistemic renewal
- Institutionalizing participation of Global South scholars, civil society, and affected communities in UN processes—panels, consultations, advisory bodies.
- Promoting global civic education and youth engagement so that legitimacy stems not just from states but from peoples.
- Encouraging plural visions of development, including indigenous and ecological perspectives, to diversify the epistemic base.

- 13.1 UPSC CSE Mains – GS II
- Year 2015: Question on “Reforming the UN Security Council” – discuss India’s case and challenges.
- Year 2016: Question on “Critically examine the role of UN peacekeeping operations in conflict zones.”
- Year 2018: Question on “Responsibility to Protect (R2P): opportunities and challenges.”
- Year 2020: Question on “Multilateralism at cross-roads: Is the UN still central to global governance?”
- Year 2022: Question on “North–South divide and SDGs in the context of global climate negotiations.”
- 13.2 UPSC CSE Mains – GS III and Essay
- Year 2014–2019 (multiple years): Questions on globalization, inequality, and WTO’s impact on developing countries.
- Essay questions over various years on “Globalization and its discontents,” “Cooperative federalism and cooperative globalism,” and “Alternative models of development.”
- 13.3 UPSC Prelims
- Repeated questions on:
 - Structure and functions of UN, UNSC, ECOSOC, UNDP, UNESCO.
 - Peacekeeping operations, SDGs, UNFCCC, Paris Agreement, and related bodies.
 - Differences between IMF, World Bank, and UN institutions.





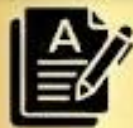
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