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EDITORIAL ANALYSIS



JUNE 22



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- 1. Road to energy security passes through our farms
(THE INDIAN EXPRESS)**
- 2. The politics of defection and erosion of democracy
(HINDUSTAN TIMES)**
- 3. Iran war underlines the need for a Gulf doctrine
(HINDUSTAN TIMES)**
- 4. Constitution's promise of fraternity matters more
than ever (THE INDIAN EXPRESS)**



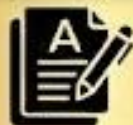
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Road to energy security passes through our farms



FROM PLATE TO PLOUGH

BY ASHOK GULATI
AND SUBHDEEP BASU

THE WEST Asia crisis has exposed a structural vulnerability in India's growth story: Its heavy dependence on imported fossil fuels. Whether it is power generation, transport or fertiliser production, India's energy architecture remains deeply import-dependent. For a fast-growing economy, this is not merely a macroeconomic concern; it is a strategic risk.

But energy insecurity is not India's only challenge. Climate change is increasingly threatening agricultural livelihoods. The forecast of a strong El Niño in 2026 does not augur well for farm incomes. The question, therefore, is not only how India secures its energy future, but also how it builds income resilience for its farmers, who comprise 43 per cent of the workforce. The answer may be insuring India's *samvadats* into *arjadsats*, from producers of food to producers of energy, too.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's push towards renewable energy is commendable. As of March 2026, renewable energy capacity stood at about 274 GW, with solar alone crossing 150 GW. But the model so far adopted in solar energy is mainly large solar parks and PM Surya Ghar. The PM-KUSUM scheme is basically for solar pumpsets. This is not sufficient for agricultural transformation. We

lay out below a case for agriphotovoltaics on farmers' fields that has potential not only to generate clean energy in rural areas but also to halve the government's power subsidy, while also increasing farmers' incomes manifold. If promoted by PM Modi on priority basis, it can transform not just agriculture but the very growth story of India. Let us delve a little deeper into it.

Agri-photovoltaics (Agri-PV) integrate solar power generation and crop cultivation on the same piece of land. This allows farmers to harvest both sunlight and crops. Solar panels are mounted at a height of about 3.5 metres, which permits cultivation beneath them while generating electricity for sale to discoms. The result is dual use of land and dual streams of income.

Unlike agricultural income, which is vulnerable to weather shocks, pest attacks and market fluctuations, solar income is stable. In effect, solar becomes a "third crop" that provides a dependable source of earnings when conventional crops fail.

ICRIER, with support from Kotak Mahindra Bank's CSR initiative, has created a pilot 600 KW solar plant in Rajasthan. The State Bank of India provided a loan of Rs 1.4 crore, and the farmer himself put in Rs 60 lakh. The project has increased the farmer's income from about Rs 40,000 per acre from wheat and bajra cultivation to nearly Rs 4 lakh per acre through a combination of energy sales and shade-tolerant horticulture, demonstrating a tenfold income enhancement potential.

The significance of Agri-PV extends beyond farmers' income. It also addresses a longstanding distortion in India's power sector. Agriculture consumes nearly 260,000 GWh of electricity annually, yet pays tariffs far below the actual cost

of supply. According to the Comptroller and Auditor General of India's recent report, *Steering India's Power Sector Towards Viksit Bharat* (2026), the average cost of supplying electricity in India is around Rs 8.5/kWh, and assumed revenue realisation from agricultural consumers close to Rs 1/kWh. This implies an effective subsidy of at least roughly Rs 7.5/kWh. India's annual power tariff subsidy bill is approximately Rs 2.35 lakh crore, with agriculture accounting for roughly 85 per cent. The true cost of power subsidy to agriculture may be even higher as the cost of supply to agriculture is higher than Rs 8.5/kWh, once technical losses, long feeder lines and the costs of maintaining rural distribution infrastructure are taken into account. This would take the farm power subsidy to over 90 per cent of total tariff subsidy. No wonder that, despite repeated reforms and financial bailouts, discom finances remain under severe stress.

Agri-PV offers an opportunity to fundamentally alter this equation. By generating electricity at the farm level and feeding it into local distribution networks, it reduces transmission losses and infrastructure costs while transforming farmers from consumers of highly subsidised power into producers of clean energy. However, scaling Agri-PV requires supportive policy. Elevated structures make Agri-PV systems 15-20 per cent more expensive than conventional solar projects, creating a significant entry barrier for farmers.

A differentiated feed-in tariff of say Rs 4.5/kWh, coupled with targeted support under PM-KUSUM, can significantly improve project viability and accelerate adoption. From the perspective of discoms and state governments, such support should be viewed not as an additional subsidy but as a smarter

reallocation of existing expenditure. Even at a feed-in tariff of Rs 4.5/kWh, discoms would be procuring clean power at roughly half the effective cost of supplying power to agriculture. In effect, every unit of electricity generated through farmer-owned Agri-PV has the potential to reduce the subsidy burden by nearly half while simultaneously creating a new source of farm income.

The policy implications are clear. Existing support mechanisms under PM-KUSUM Components B and C already provide capital subsidies for standalone solar pumps and the solarisation of grid-connected agricultural pumps. If public support is considered justified for solarising irrigation, a strong case can be made for extending similar support to farmer-owned Agri-PV projects under Component A that simultaneously generate clean energy and preserve farm incomes. Targeted capital subsidies and an attractive feed-in-tariff can be game-changers, and a win-win for the government as well as farmers.

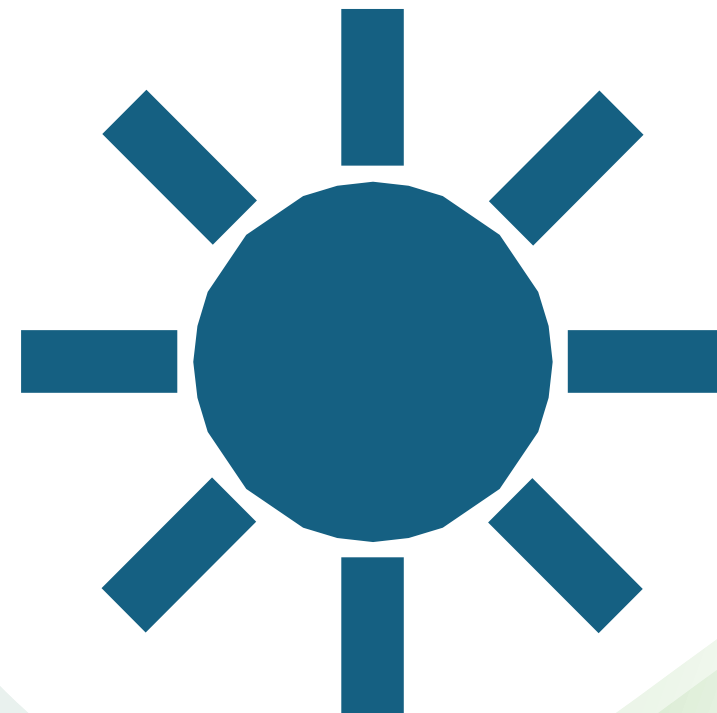
Institutional innovation will be equally important. Just as milk cooperatives transformed India's dairy sector, solar cooperatives can aggregate smallholders, improve access to finance, strengthen bargaining power and manage power sales collectively. Such cooperative institutions can become the vehicle through which the Agri-PV revolution can be unleashed.

If PM Modi takes it up on priority, he can not only transform India but also set an example for the Global South, especially Africa, under the theme of "One Sun, One Earth, and One Grid". That would bring relief from fossil fuels while augmenting farmers' incomes. Can he do that? Only time will tell.

Gulati is distinguished professor and Basu is research fellow at ICRIER. Views are personal.

Agri-photovoltaics integrate solar power generation and crop cultivation on the same piece of land. Solar panels are mounted at a height of about 3.5m, which permits cultivation beneath them while generating electricity for sale to discoms

- **Key Terms and Explanations**
- **Agriphotovoltaics (Agri-PV):** A dual-use land management model where solar photovoltaic panels and agricultural crops are co-located on the same piece of land. By elevating solar arrays to approximately 3.5 meters, the design allows standard tractors and farm machinery to operate underneath, harvesting both electrical energy from sunlight and biological yield from the soil.
- **Annadata to Urjadata:** A conceptual policy shift in India's rural economy aimed at transforming traditional farmers from mere *producers of food* (Annadata) into decentralized *producers of energy* (Urjadata). This structural transition turns agricultural land into a source of regular commercial power generation.
- **PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan):** A flagship initiative of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) designed to provide energy security to Indian farmers. It operates through three distinct verticals:
 - *Component A:* Setting up decentralized, ground-mounted, grid-connected renewable power plants up to 2 MW.
 - *Component B:* Installing standalone solar agriculture pumps for off-grid areas.
 - *Component C:* Solarising existing grid-connected agricultural pumps to enable farmers to sell surplus power back to the grid.
- **Discoms (Distribution Companies):** The utility entities—mostly state-owned in India—responsible for operating the local distribution network and delivering electricity directly to end consumers, including residential, industrial, and agricultural users.
- **Feed-in Tariff (FiT):** A policy mechanism where regional utilities are mandated to purchase renewable electricity from decentralized producers at a predetermined, preferential price per kilowatt-hour (kWh). This guaranteed rate ensures predictable long-term returns, helping project developers secure bank financing.
- **Average Cost of Supply (ACS) vs. Average Revenue Realisation (ARR):** The widening fiscal gap within India's power infrastructure:
 - ACS represents the total cost incurred by a utility to buy, transmit, and distribute a single unit of power (averaging roughly Rs 8.5/kWh across India).
 - ARR is the actual revenue collected per unit. For agricultural consumers, heavily subsidized tariffs mean the realized revenue drops close to Re 1/kWh, necessitating massive cross-subsidies and state bailouts.



- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**

- The core thesis of this structural transformation is that India can resolve its intertwined crises of energy import dependence and climate-induced agricultural vulnerability by scaling decentralized, farmer-owned solar infrastructure.

- **The Strategic Energy-Agriculture Nexus**

- India's rapid macroeconomic growth is structurally exposed to volatile geopolitical shocks in West Asia due to its deep reliance on imported fossil fuels for transport, power, and chemical fertilizer manufacturing. Simultaneously, climate realities—such as severe El Niño anomalies—frequently disrupt monsoon patterns, threatening the livelihoods of the 43% of the domestic workforce engaged in farming.

- **The Agri-PV Structural Alternative**

- While India's clean energy expansion is highly successful—reaching 274 GW of renewable capacity, with solar exceeding 150 GW—the current configuration relies primarily on centralized mega-solar parks and residential rooftop initiatives. This framework overlooks the transformative potential of rural farmlands. Agri-PV remedies this by introducing a "third crop": a weather-immune, contractually guaranteed revenue stream from solar power sales that insulates farmers from crop failures, pest outbreaks, and market shocks.

- **Overcoming Cost and Implementation Barriers**

- The primary structural barrier to scaling Agri-PV is that elevated mounting frames make these setups 15% to 20% more expensive than conventional, ground-mounted solar arrays. To overcome this initial capital hurdle, states can implement a preferential feed-in tariff of around Rs 4.5/kWh alongside capital subsidies under PM-KUSUM. For state distribution companies, buying clean power locally at Rs 4.5/kWh is highly cost-effective; it effectively halves the subsidy burden of delivering centralized grid power to remote agricultural nodes.

- **Historical Evolution of the Issue**

- **The Post-Independence and Green Revolution Era (1947–1980s)**

- Following independence, the overriding national priority was securing food self-sufficiency. The launch of the Green Revolution in the late 1960s led to rapid agricultural mechanization and a massive expansion of groundwater irrigation. To accelerate this transition, state governments began offering heavily subsidized—or entirely free—electricity to power tube wells. During this period, state electricity boards managed these costs relatively well as overall rural power demand remained a modest fraction of national generation.

- **The Rise of Populist Tariffs and Utility Vulnerability (1980s–2000s)**

- By the 1980s, unmetered flat-rate power tariffs became a powerful political tool across major agricultural states. This policy shift triggered deep structural unintended consequences:
 - Unchecked groundwater extraction led to severe depletion of regional water tables.
 - Agricultural power consumption surged, and utilities began masking high transmission and distribution losses as "agricultural use."
 - By the late 1990s, the financial distress of state electricity boards began choking public investment in network modernization.

- **Structural Reforms and the Shift to Renewables (2003–2015)**

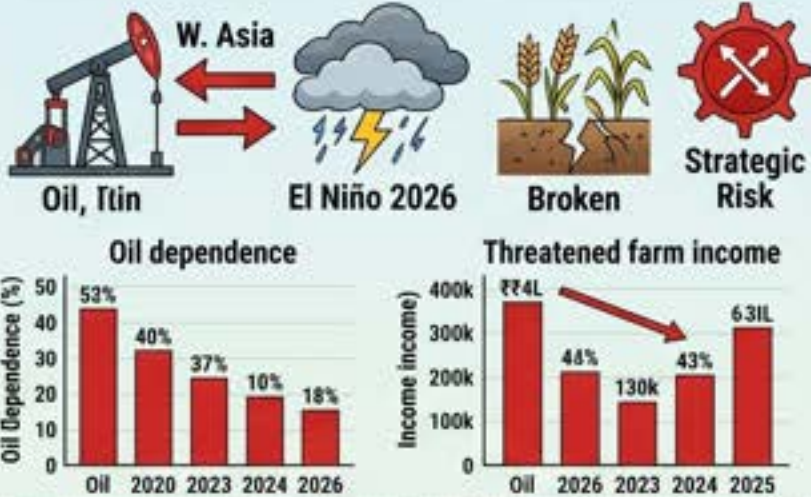
- The passage of the **Electricity Act of 2003** introduced mandatory cross-subsidy caps, functional unbundling of state electricity boards into separate generation, transmission, and distribution entities, and established independent state regulatory commissions.
- Concurrently, India launched the **Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission (JNNSM)** in 2010. This marked a major shift toward large-scale utility infrastructure, driving down the levelized cost of solar energy through competitive bidding for centralized mega-solar parks.

- **The Modern Decentralized Clean Energy Era (2016–Present)**

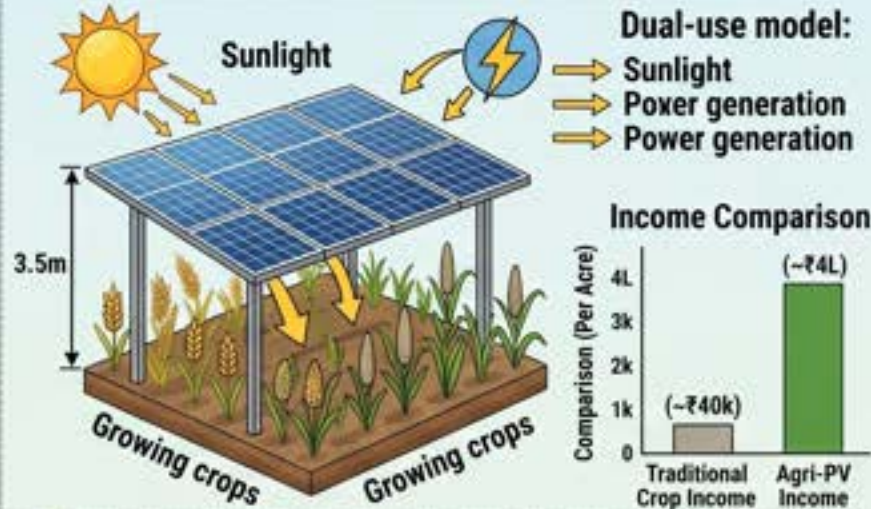
- As centralized solar generation matured, policymakers recognized that large installations often competed for scarce arable land. This realization led to the rollout of the **PM-KUSUM** scheme, aimed at decentralizing solar infrastructure by focusing on solar pump irrigation sets and feeder-level solarization.
- Today, the energy landscape is shifting toward **Agriphotovoltaics**. This model moves beyond simply powering irrigation pumps to transforming farm fields into dual-production centers for food and clean energy, addressing land constraints while building climate resilience.



THE DOUBLE CRISIS (FOSSIL FUELS & CLIMATE).



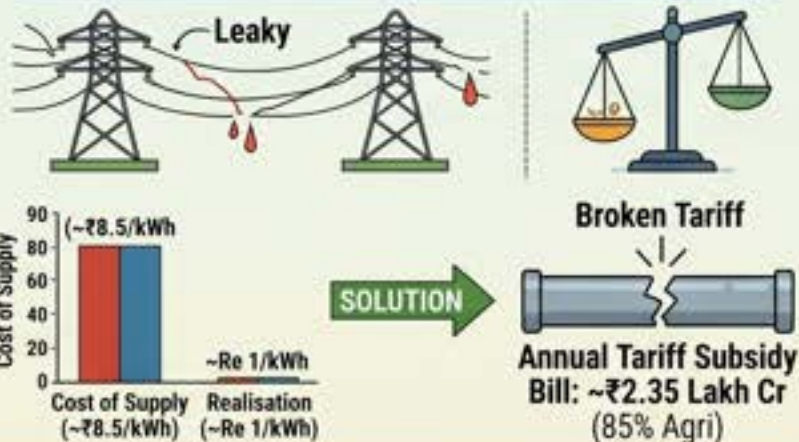
THE SOLUTION: AGROVOLTAICS (AGRI-PV).



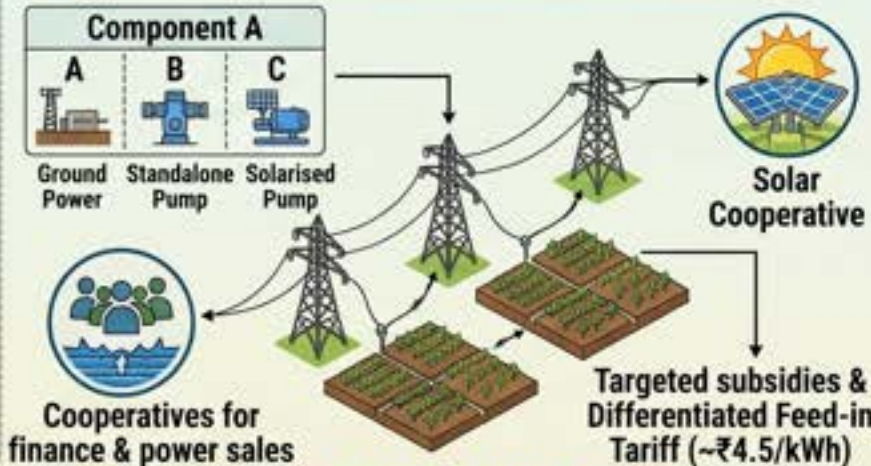
TRANSFORMING FARMER'S INCOME (ECONOMICS OF AGRI-PV).



ADDRESSING POWER SECTOR DISTORTIONS & SUBSIDIES.



PM-KUSUM & INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATION.



MULTI-DIMENSIONAL IMPACT & GLOBAL LEADERSHIP.



- **Logical and Philosophical Base**

- The concept of integrating agricultural production with solar energy generation is anchored in several foundational economic, social, and developmental philosophies.

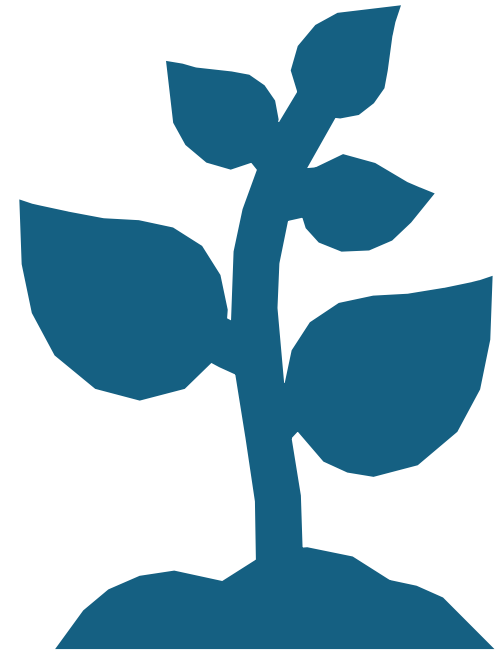
- **The Democratic Reallocation of Capital:** Moving away from a centralized model where mega-corporations dominate solar parks, toward a decentralized model where the financial returns of the green transition are distributed across millions of smallholders.

- **Democratic Reallocation of Capital:** Centralized mega-solar parks require large, contiguous tracts of land, often concentrating economic benefits within institutional developers. Agri-PV shifts this dynamic by utilizing existing smallholder farmlands. This ensures that capital flows directly into the rural economy, turning the green transition into an inclusive democratic process.

- **Gandhian Gram Swaraj (Rural Self-Reliance):** Mahatma Gandhi envisioned Indian villages as self-contained economic units capable of managing their basic needs. Agri-PV aligns with this philosophy by enabling rural communities to produce their own clean energy. This reduces their dependence on urban-centric state grids and turns villages into net exporters of clean power.

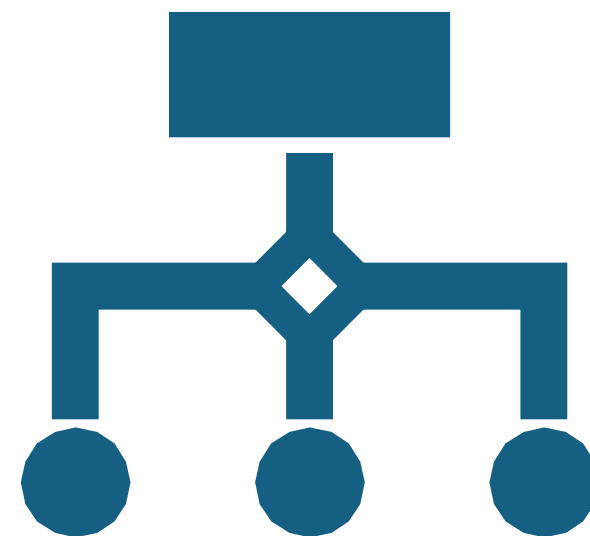
- **The Philosophy of Climate Justice:** Traditional farmers contribute the least to global greenhouse gas emissions yet bear the brunt of climate volatility through erratic monsoons and crop damage. Agri-PV offers a practical framework for climate justice: it provides vulnerable farmers with a stable, weather-proof revenue stream funded by the broader transition to clean energy.

- **Utilitarian Optimization of Scarce Resources:** Land and water are finite resources under growing pressure from industrialization and urbanization. Agri-PV operates on a strong utilitarian logic: it maximizes resource efficiency by generating food and clean energy simultaneously from the exact same footprint of land.



- **Multidimensional Analysis**
- **Social Dimension**
 - Agri-PV plays a direct role in stabilizing volatile agricultural incomes, helping to mitigate rural economic distress and reduce related suicide rates. By turning farming into a more lucrative and modern livelihood, it helps check forced distress migration of rural youth to urban slums.
 - Furthermore, because women perform a significant share of agricultural labor in India, the financial stability and technological integration brought by farm-level solar installations can help improve rural gender equity and support community-led development.
- **Political Dimension**
 - The current system of heavily subsidized agricultural electricity creates a challenging political lock-in; rolling back these tariffs is often politically unfeasible for state governments. Agri-PV offers an elegant policy alternative. Instead of taking away cheap power, it allows states to reallocate existing energy subsidies into targeted capital investments for rural solar infrastructure.
 - This shifts the political conversation from managing resource scarcity to building clean energy wealth, fostering smoother center-state cooperation in executing national climate goals.
- **Legal and Regulatory Dimension**
 - Scaling Agri-PV requires updating outdated state land-use regulations. Many state laws mandate strict, time-consuming bureaucratic approvals to convert agricultural land for commercial energy use.
 - Introducing clear, standardized legal frameworks that formally recognize Agri-PV as a distinct, dual-use category is essential. Regulatory bodies must also update grid codes to mandate that state distribution companies provide smooth, non-discriminatory grid access and timely payments for power generated by smallholders.
- **Ethical Dimension**
 - As global food demand rises alongside the need for clean energy, converting fertile cropland exclusively into large solar parks creates an ethical dilemma between food security and decarbonization. Agri-PV resolves this tension by prioritizing both needs equally.
 - It ensures that expanding renewable energy does not compromise domestic food production, preserving the core agricultural identity of rural farmlands.
- **International Dimension**
 - By pioneering large-scale decentralized Agri-PV models, India can strengthen its leadership position across the Global South. This model offers a highly replicable blueprint for agrarian economies throughout Africa and Asia that face similar challenges with fragile power grids and high climate vulnerability.
 - It also aligns closely with India's international climate initiatives, such as the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** and the vision of "*One Sun, One Earth, One Grid.*"
- **Economic Dimension**
 - At the macroeconomic level, substituting imported fossil fuels with decentralized solar power helps reduce India's current account deficit (CAD) and strengthens long-term energy sovereignty. Locally, reducing transmission and distribution losses by generating power right where it is consumed helps restore the financial health of state distribution companies.
 - The resulting influx of steady solar income also stimulates rural credit markets, encouraging greater private investment in modern post-harvest infrastructure like cold storage networks.

- **Linkages with NCERTs**
- **Class X: Contemporary India-II (Geography)**
- **Chapter 4 ("Agriculture"):** Examines cropping patterns, institutional reforms, and the vulnerabilities of smallholder farming. Agri-PV introduces a new technological intervention that integrates directly with these traditional farming systems.
- **Chapter 5 ("Minerals and Energy Resources"):** Discusses the geographic concentration of conventional energy sources and underscores the strategic importance of expanding decentralized renewable alternatives like solar and wind power to ensure long-term energy security.
- **Class XI: Indian Economic Development**
- **Chapter 6 ("Rural Development"):** Analyzes the critical need to diversify rural livelihoods away from a singular dependence on traditional crop cultivation. Agri-PV serves as a practical, scalable example of non-farm income generation within rural areas.
- **Chapter 8 ("Infrastructure"):** Focuses on the structural energy challenges facing the nation. It highlights how high transmission and distribution losses, combined with financially strained utilities, act as key bottlenecks holding back faster economic growth.
- **Class XII: Politics in India Since Independence**
- **Chapter 3 ("Politics of Planned Development"):** Traces the historical debates surrounding the allocation of national resources between industrial growth and agricultural development, providing helpful context for understanding modern subsidy structures.
- **Chapter 6 ("Crisis of the Democratic Order"):** Examines the historical rise of agrarian political movements and explains how power subsidies evolved into a highly sensitive, deeply institutionalized political tool across rural India.



- **Linkages with UPSC CSE Syllabus**
- **GS Paper I: Geography of India & Society**
 - *Salient features of world's physical geography; changes in critical geographical features:* Analyzes how climate anomalies like El Niño directly impact agrarian livelihoods and regional groundwater tables.
 - *Social empowerment and developmental issues:* Evaluates structural solutions for mitigating rural poverty, distress migration, and economic vulnerability among smallholders.
- **GS Paper II: Governance & Public Policy**
 - *Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors:* Examines the implementation challenges of flagship programs like PM-KUSUM, alongside the needed center-state policy alignment on clean energy tariffs.
 - *Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections:* Gauges the effectiveness of shifting from passive fiscal subsidies to active, wealth-generating rural assets.
- **GS Paper III: Economy, Agriculture, Environment & Infrastructure**
 - *Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing and farm subsidies:* Directly relevant to analyzing the fiscal impact of India's annual Rs 2.35 lakh crore power subsidy bill and exploring smarter resource reallocations.
 - *Infrastructure (Energy):* Explores strategies for expanding decentralized clean energy networks and improving the financial viability of state distribution companies.
 - *Environmental pollution and degradation:* Contributes directly to evaluating India's decarbonization pathway and meeting its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Climate Agreement.
- **GS Paper IV: Ethics & Public Administration**
 - *Environmental Ethics:* Balances the global imperative for rapid renewable energy expansion with the ethical responsibility to safeguard domestic food security.
 - *Public Service Values:* Analyzes the ethical allocation of public funds, shifting away from populist, short-term subsidies toward building sustainable, long-term rural infrastructure.



- **Way Forward**
- **Establish Differentiated Feed-in Tariffs:** State electricity regulatory commissions should institute a dedicated feed-in tariff—ideally around Rs 4.5/kWh—specifically for Agri-PV projects. This premium rate accounts for the 15% to 20% higher cost of elevated mounting structures, ensuring projects remain attractive to investors and accessible to local farmers.
- **Restructure the PM-KUSUM Scheme:** Policymakers should introduce a dedicated sub-component under Component A of PM-KUSUM focused exclusively on elevated Agri-PV systems. This should be backed by targeted capital subsidies from the central government, encouraging farmers to adopt dual-use land designs over standard ground-mounted systems.
- **Scale the Solar Cooperative Model:** India can replicate the structural success of its dairy cooperative network by building rural Solar Cooperatives. These community institutions can aggregate smallholder land parcels, secure bank loans at competitive interest rates, negotiate equipment purchases, and manage power delivery to the grid efficiently.
- **Streamline Land and Grid Integration Rules:** State governments should simplify land use rules by granting automatic "dual-use permissions" to approved Agri-PV installations, removing the need for slow, traditional commercial land conversion approvals. Simultaneously, state utilities must invest in upgrading rural feeder stations to handle decentralized power inputs smoothly without increasing network losses.
- **Invest in Targeted Agricultural R&D:** The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), in partnership with national energy laboratories, should lead research into identifying and breeding high-yielding, shade-tolerant crop varieties (such as specific root crops, leafy vegetables, and legumes) that thrive beneath solar arrays, ensuring optimal food and energy production.



UPSC CSE Prelims Questions

Question 1 (2015)

With reference to the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA), which of the following statements is/are correct?

- 1.It is a Public Limited Government Company.
- 2.It is a Non-Banking Financial Institution. Select the correct answer using the code given below: A) 1 only B) 2 only C) Both 1 and 2 D) Neither 1 nor 2

Question 2 (2020)

Consider the following statements:

- 1.The value of Indo-Sri Lanka trade has consistently increased in the last decade.
- 2.“Textiles and garments” constitute an important item of trade between India and Bangladesh.
- 3.In the last five years, Nepal has been the largest trading partner of India in South Asia. Which of the statements given above is/are correct? A) 1 and 2 only B) 2 only C) 3 only D) 1, 2 and 3

Question 3 (2022)

With reference to solar water pumps, consider the following statements:

- 1.Solar power can be used for running surface pumps and not submersible pumps.
- 2.Solar power can be used for running centrifugal pumps and not the ones with pistons. Which of the statements given above is/are correct? A) 1 only B) 2 only C) Both 1 and 2 D) Neither 1 nor 2

- **Key Terms and Explanations**

- **Political Defection:** The act of an elected representative voluntarily giving up the membership of the political party on whose ticket they were elected, or voting/abstaining in the House contrary to the party's official directive.
 - **"Aya Ram, Gaya Ram" Phenomenon:** A legendary political idiom in Indian politics born out of the 1967 Haryana legislative elections. It refers to an MLA named Gaya Lal who changed his political allegiance thrice within a span of a mere fifteen days. It serves as a classic textbook example of unprincipled, opportunistic floor-crossing.
 - **The Tenth Schedule:** Inserted into the Constitution of India via the **52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985**. Popularly known as the **Anti-Defection Law**, it lays down the framework, grounds, and penalties for the disqualification of elected members of Parliament (MPs) and State Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) on account of changing political allegiances.
 - **The 91st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003:** A vital structural modification to the Tenth Schedule. It completely **deleted the provision regarding a "split"** (which previously protected a defection if one-third of a party's legislative strength broke away). Currently, it recognizes a valid "merger" only if at least **two-thirds** of the members of a legislative party agree to merge with another political entity.
 - **Article 356 (President's Rule):** A constitutional provision that empowers the Union government to suspend a state government and assume direct control if the Governor reports that the governance of the state cannot be carried out in accordance with the Constitution. Historically, it has been closely linked with periods of rampant defection and manufactured political instability.
 - **Political Whip:** Both an office and a directive within the parliamentary system. A "three-line whip" is a binding instructions issued by a political party to its legislators requiring their mandatory presence and compliance during a critical vote. Violating this directive directly triggers disqualification proceedings under the Tenth Schedule.
 - **Delimitation:** The process of redrawing boundaries of Lok Sabha and State Assembly constituencies based on recent population data. It is a highly sensitive federal issue that alters the spatial distribution of political power.
 - **One Nation, One Election (ONOE):** A structural policy proposal aimed at synchronizing the electoral cycles of the Lok Sabha and all state legislative assemblies so that they occur simultaneously, minimizing administrative friction and public expenditure.
-

- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**
 - The contemporary discourse surrounding political defections has transitioned from simple, isolated instances of individual opportunism into systemic, highly calculated legislative realignments.
- **The Macro Strategy: Legislative Engineering for Major Reforms**
 - A primary argument emerging among political analysts is that the sudden acceleration of splits within opposition blocks is not random. It appears to be linked to a broader legislative design by central authorities to secure the absolute, unambiguous majorities required in both Houses of Parliament to clear monumental constitutional changes, such as the **Delimitation Bill** and the **One Nation, One Election Bill**.
- **The Paradox of Growth vs. Ideological Purity**
 - When a dominant political party seeks rapid geographical expansion, it faces a profound internal contradiction:
- **The Pragmatic Route:** Absorbing defecting leaders brings immediate legislative strength and local vote banks in newer territories.
- **The Structural Backlash:** This influx threatens the party's core **ideological purity** and creates massive friction among its long-term grassroots cadre, who feel sidelined by newly arriving "outsiders."
- **The "Washing Machine" Dilemma:** Wholesale absorption of opposition figures—especially those facing investigation by central agencies—severely dents the ruling party's anti-corruption credentials, projecting an image of transactional politics rather than clean governance.
- **The Ineffectiveness of Regulatory Countermeasures**
 - Despite robust constitutional barriers like the Tenth Schedule, the continuous survival of engineered defections indicates that the law has structural loopholes. Rather than stopping floor-crossing, the legal provisions have merely shifted the behavior from individual retail defections to institutionalized, wholesale political mergers.



Aspect	52nd Amendment (1985) Framework	91st Amendment (2003) Amendment
Individual Defection	Prohibited; leads to disqualification.	Prohibited; leads to disqualification.
Split Exception	Allowed if 1/3rd of the legislative party defected.	Completely Deleted (No longer recognized).
Merger Exception	Allowed if 2/3rd of the legislative party agreed.	Retained; requires 2/3rd legislative strength.

- **Historical Evolution of the Issue**
- **Phase 1: Unchecked Floor Crossing and Federal Instability (1967–1985)**
 - Following the 1967 general elections, the absolute dominance of the Indian National Congress cracked, leading to the formation of fragile coalition governments in nine states. This era became notorious for unchecked, highly volatile floor-crossing.
 - Between 1967 and 1971, nearly **1,900 cases of defection** were recorded across state assemblies and Parliament. This political instability collapsed 32 state governments. In response, central executives frequently and arbitrarily invoked **Article 356** to dismiss elected state ministries, a trend that peaked during and immediately after the Emergency period, setting off a cycle of political vendetta between opposing regimes.
- **Phase 2: Constitutional Codification and the Elimination of "Splits" (1985–2003)**
 - Recognizing that systemic instability was crippling governance, the Rajiv Gandhi administration passed the **52nd Constitutional Amendment Act in 1985**, introducing the **Tenth Schedule**.
 - The 1985 law contained a fatal loophole: it exempted a "split" if one-third of a party’s legislators broke away. This led to massive, wholesale defections instead of individual ones, famously exemplified during the early 1990s minority government era. To remedy this, the **91st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003** deleted the split provision entirely, making a two-thirds merger the only legal escape route from disqualification.
- **Phase 3: The Modern Era of Engineered Resignations and Factional Claims (Post-2003)**
 - In the current political landscape, politicians have devised sophisticated methods to bypass the strict two-thirds merger rule:
 - **The Resignation Route:** Instead of defecting directly to another party, legislators resign en masse from their seats. This lowers the total strength of the House, collapses the ruling government, and allows the defectors to contest by-elections on the ticket of the opposing party.
 - **The Factional Claim Strategy:** Legislators break away and claim that *they* represent the original, authentic political party due to their overwhelming legislative majority, leading to protracted legal battles before the Election Commission and the Supreme Court over the party name and symbol.

INDIAN POLITICAL DEFECTIONS: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS & UPSC RELEVANCE

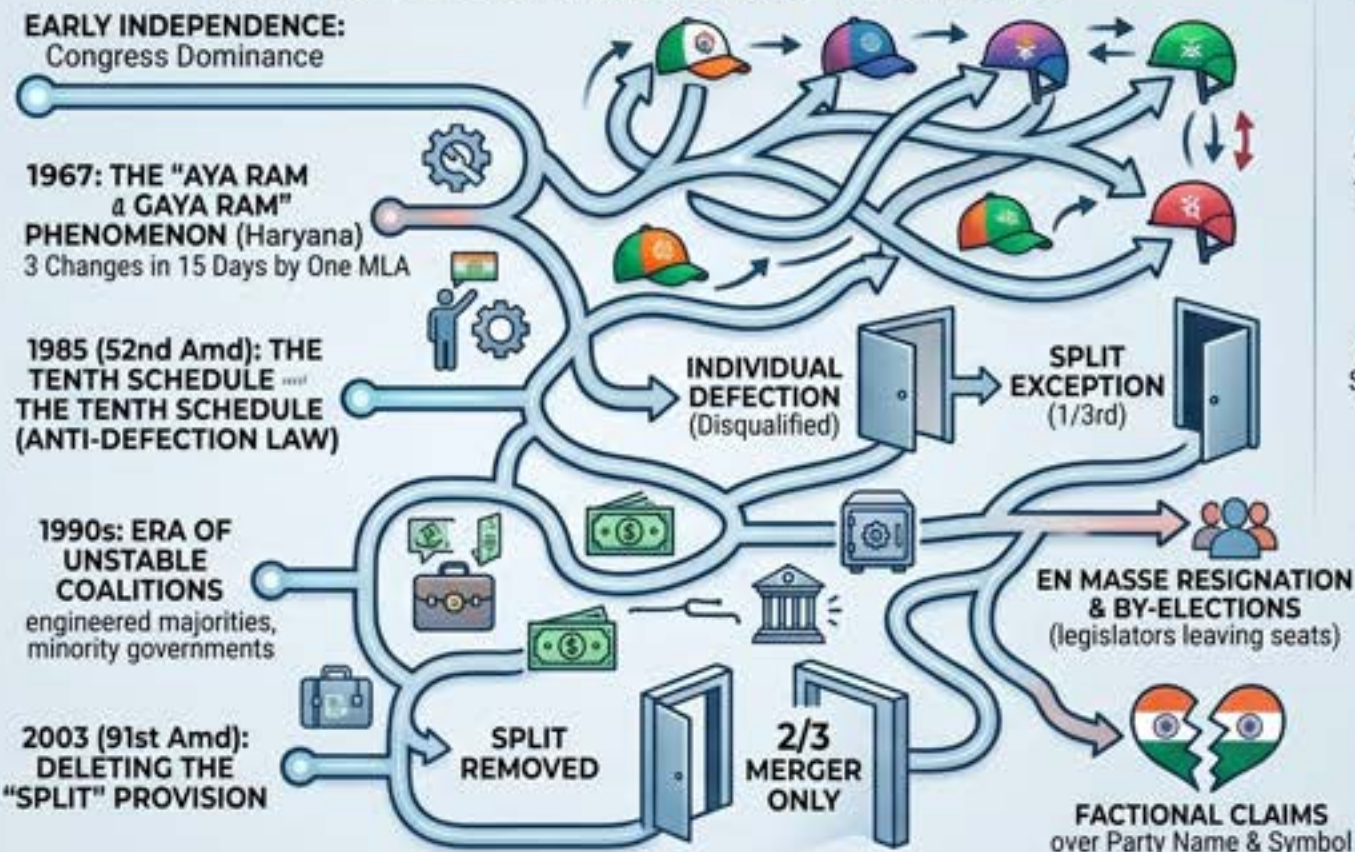
KEY TERMS

- Aya Ram Gaya Ram** → Summary definitions and healt defection: Congress Dominance
- Tenth Schedule (1985)** → Changes defection control hot the Tenth (Anti-Defection Law)
- 91st Amendment (2003)** → Summary definitions in demosed changing party government
- Article 356** → Definitions spacies speaker to preritait & conomis paltysis
- Political Whip** → Summary of ever changes an aparties, governmnt:genarities

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

- 1960s-1980s:** rampant floor crossing
- 1985:** Constitutional control
- 1990s:** instability
- 2003:** Tightening loopholes
- Post-2003:** Complex legal battles

MAZE OF POLITICAL FLOOR-CROSSING



MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS



UPSC CSE LINKAGES

- GS PAPER 2:** Constitution, Parliament functioning, Separation of Powers
- GS PAPER 4:** Public Governance Ethics
- ESSAY:** Policy & Democratic ideals
- OPTIONAL (e.g., PSIR):** Political Behavior

THE WAY FORWARD: RECOMMENDATIONS

- LIMIT PARTY WHIP SCOPE** (Goswami Comm & Law Comm: Only for key motions)
- SHIFT ADJUDICATION POWER** (ARC 2nd: President/Governor via ECI advice)
- MANDATE AUTOMATIC RESIGNATION** (Mid-term defector to return to electorate)
- CODIFY ADJUDICATION TIMEFRAMES** (Supreme Court: e.g., 3-month suggestion)

- **Logical and Philosophical Base**
- **The Theoretical Models of Representation**
- The issue of defection directly pits two classic political theories against each other:
- **The Trustee Model:** Asserts that an elected representative must vote according to their individual conscience, intellect, and national interest, even if it contradicts the official stance of their political party.
- **The Delegate Model:** Views the representative as an agent who must strictly execute the mandates of their party leadership or electorate. The Tenth Schedule completely enforces the delegate model, subordinating individual conscience to institutional party commands.
- **Kantian Ethics vs. Machiavellian Realpolitik**
- From an ethical standpoint, defections present a clash between **Kantian Deontology**—which demands absolute fidelity to the promises made to voters during elections—and **Machiavellian Teleology**, where the acquisition of raw legislative numbers is justified as a necessary means to achieve long-term structural changes or policy outcomes.
- **The Breakdown of the Social Contract**
- An election is a democratic social contract between the citizen and the candidate, based on a specific ideological manifesto. When a representative changes parties post-election, they unilaterally alter the terms of that contract. This distorts the concept of popular sovereignty, reducing a citizen's vote to a traded commodity in legislative floor management.

- **Multidimensional Analysis**
- **Social Dimension**
 - Defections severely damage public trust in democratic institutions. When citizens observe their elected representatives switching sides frequently, it breeds **voter apathy**. This dynamic reduces democratic participation to a transactional game, convincing the electorate that their choices can be easily bought or manipulated by powerful political networks.
- **Political Dimension**
 - The immediate consequence of defection is the structural destabilization of executives, causing **policy paralysis**. When a government is constantly preoccupied with retaining its legislative majority, long-term developmental planning is cast aside for short-term survival. Furthermore, it completely destroys intra-party democracy, as the fear of defection prompts centralized party leaderships to heavily suppress genuine internal dissent.
- **Legal and Constitutional Dimension**
 - Defections put immense strain on the constitutional principle of the **Separation of Powers**. Under the Tenth Schedule, the Speaker operates as a quasi-judicial authority. However, partisan behavior by Speakers who delay or accelerate disqualification cases based on political convenience has forced repeated judicial interventions. Landmark rulings like ***Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachilhu (1992)*** established that while the Speaker's decision is final, it remains fully open to **Judicial Review** on grounds of malice or perversity.
- **Ethical Dimension**
 - The trend normalizes a complete collapse of political morality. It prioritizes the pursuit of ministerial office and material gain over ideological consistency. When political actors treat public office as a tradeable asset, it erodes the ethical baseline of public life and sets a damaging precedent for administrative integrity.
- **International Dimension**
 - As the world's most populous democracy, India's institutional stability is a key component of its global soft power. Regular cycles of engineered defections, horse-trading, and unstable state governments can negatively impact India's rankings on global governance and democracy indices, projecting an image of systemic unpredictability to international partners and observers.
- **Economic Dimension**
 - Defections impose a direct and heavy financial burden on the public exchequer. When legislators resign en masse to bypass the Anti-Defection Law, it necessitates large-scale **by-elections**. The cost of conducting these unexpected elections, alongside the enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct, interrupts local developmental projects and diverts crucial public funds away from essential social infrastructure.



- **Linkages with NCERTs**
- **Class XI: *Indian Constitution at Work***
- **Chapter 4 (The Executive) & Chapter 5 (The Legislature):** These chapters outline the structural dependence of the Executive on maintaining a stable majority within the Legislature. Reading these sections will help you explain how defections directly break the chain of daily parliamentary accountability.
- **Class XII: *Politics in India Since Independence***
- **Chapter 2 (Era of One-Party Dominance) & Chapter 5 (Challenges to and Restoration of the Congress System):** These sections provide essential historical context on the post-1967 breakdown of single-party dominance, the rise of unstable coalition politics, and the actual origins of the "Aya Ram, Gaya Ram" era.
- **7. Linkages with UPSC CSE Syllabus**
- Integrating this topic across multiple papers will significantly enhance your structural analysis in the examination.
- **GS Paper 2 (Polity, Constitution, and Governance)**
- Significant provisions of the Constitution (Tenth Schedule, Articles 102 and 191).
- Structure, functioning, and conduct of business of Parliament and State Legislatures.
- The constitutional role, powers, and neutrality of the Speaker.
- **GS Paper 4 (Ethics and Human Interface)**
- Ethical concerns and dilemmas in public governance.
- Accountability and ethical values in public service vs. opportunistic realpolitik.
- Purity of means versus purity of ends in administrative and political structures.



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- **Essay Paper**
 - Highly useful for philosophical or systemic essays revolving around themes like: *"Democracy: An Ideal or a Transaction?"*, *"Politics without Principles is a Social Sin"*, or *"The Institutional Resilience of Indian Governance."*
- **Relevant Optional Subjects**
 - **Political Science & International Relations (PSIR):** Paper 1B (Indian Government and Politics – Political Parties, Pressure Groups, and Electoral Behaviour).
 - **Public Administration:** Paper 2 (Indian Administration – Executive and Legislature relations).



- **Way Forward**
- **1. Limiting the Scope of the Party Whip**
 - As strongly recommended by the **Dinesh Goswami Committee** and the **Law Commission's 170th Report**, the power to issue a binding whip must be restricted. Instead of applying to all daily legislative business, it should be strictly confined to votes that directly impact the survival of the government, such as:
 - No-Confidence Motions
 - Confidence Motions
 - Money Bills / Budget votes
 - This change would safely restore individual legislative autonomy and freedom of speech for MPs and MLAs on regular policy matters.
- **2. Shifting the Adjudicating Authority**
 - To preserve institutional neutrality, the power to decide on disqualifications should be removed from the Speaker. As suggested by the **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (2nd ARC)**, this power should be vested in the **President** (for MPs) or the **Governor** (for MLAs), acting on the binding, independent advice of the **Election Commission of India (ECI)**, mirror the mechanism under Article 103.
- **3. Deleting the Merger Exception**
 - The two-thirds merger loop-hole under the Tenth Schedule must be re-evaluated. If an elected representative wishes to shift allegiance to another party mid-term, the cleanest democratic solution is to mandate their **automatic resignation and a mandatory return to the electorate** via a by-election to seek a fresh, transparent popular mandate.
- **4. Codifying Strict Adjudication Timelines**
 - In ***Keisham Meghachandra Singh v. Speaker, Manipur (2020)***, the Supreme Court stated that defection petitions should ideally be decided within a period of **three months**. This directive needs to be formally codified into law to ensure that Speakers cannot indefinitely delay decisions to suit ruling political coalitions.



UPSC CSE Prelims Questions

1. Which one of the following Schedules of the Constitution of India contains provisions regarding anti-defection? (UPSC 2014)

- (a) Second Schedule
- (b) Fifth Schedule
- (c) Eighth Schedule
- (d) Tenth Schedule

Answer: (d)

2. With reference to the Anti-Defection Law in India, consider the following statements: (UPSC 2022)

- 1.The law specifies that a nominated legislator cannot join any political party within six months of being appointed to the House.
- 2.The law does not provide any time-frame within which the presiding officer has to decide a defection case. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- 3.(a) 1 only
- 4.(b) 2 only
- 5.(c) Both 1 and 2
- 6.(d) Neither 1 nor 2

7. Answer: (b) [Note: Statement 1 is incorrect because a nominated member *can* join a party *within* the first 6 months; they are disqualified if they join *after* 6 months.]

UPSC CSE Mains Questions

•GS Paper 2 (2022): "The role of individual MPs (Members of Parliament) has declined in the Parliament, which in turn has adversely affected the quality of debates and their outcome. Discuss in the light of the Anti-Defection Law." (15 Marks, 250 Words)

•GS Paper 2 (2013): "The Anti-Defection Law was enacted to bring stability to governments, but it has often been criticized for restricting the freedom of speech of legislators. Critically evaluate its performance in upholding intra-party democracy." (10 Marks, 150 Words)

Iran war underlines the need for a Gulf doctrine

One of the most consequential regions for India is still often handled as a set of bilateral relationships rather than as a connected strategic space

The US-Iran memorandum of understanding is a crisis bargain, not a reconciliation. It gives India a reprieve. The crisis has shown that the Strait of Hormuz may lie on foreign maps, but its price is paid in Indian markets.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was right to welcome the arrangement. The US-Iran confrontation has quietened for now, the threat to Hormuz has eased, waivers on sanctions affecting Iranian oil exports are expected under the arrangement, and the nuclear question has been pushed back into the realm of diplomacy. The first signs will show up in crude prices, the rupee, fertiliser bills and freight costs. A calmer Gulf would give Indian policymakers more room to protect growth.

The Gulf is not a neat geographic box. Its security is shaped by Iran's position on the waterway, Israel's confrontation with Tehran, American power, and the anxieties of Arab Gulf capitals. The crisis is likely to

leave the Gulf States more anxious. They will have to secure a region in which ports, airports, desalination plants and energy infrastructure remain within reach of missiles and drones, while trade routes remain vulnerable to maritime disruption. They will look for more buffers, including stronger air defence, safer trade corridors and deeper Asian partnerships.

India's Gulf engagement has grown almost invisibly. The Gulf is not only about diplomacy. It is where India's energy, remittances, shipping and inflation risks meet. India's Gulf policy must, therefore, move beyond relationship management to managing risk. Unlike the East, which acquired a public vocabulary through Look East and Act East, India's expanding Gulf stakes have never received a doctrine of their own. The result is that one of the most consequential regions for India is still often handled as a set of bilateral relationships rather than as a connected strategic space.

India's stakes in the Gulf have outgrown its influence there. Nearly ten million Indians live in the Gulf States. Remittances from the region support households across India. Gulf energy powers Indian industry and mobility. Gulf capital matters to India's growth ambitions. Indian seafarers keep ships moving

through dangerous waters around Hormuz. Yet when the crisis reached its most dangerous point, India was still absorbing shocks more than influencing choices. India can no longer afford that mismatch. It cannot dictate outcomes in the Gulf, but neither can it remain peripheral to risks that reach into its markets and households.

Pakistan's visible role during the crisis was instructive. Islamabad did not alter the regional balance, but used its relationships to keep a channel open when Washington and Tehran could not engage directly. Pakistan has played such a role before, most famously in helping open the US-China channel in the early 1970s. India should not respond with irritation. The better answer is delivery: secure sea lanes, accelerate Gulf projects, move faster at Chabahar and work with partners to keep shipping and energy flows stable.

India now needs a Gulf doctrine. It need not be grandiose. It should keep routes open, preserve limited channels of communication when rivals stop talking and protect Indian citizens and markets against the next shock. The task is not to dominate the Gulf. It is to be present before crises erupt, useful when they do, and prepared when they recur. That means dependable port access, energy plans that can survive disruption,



The Gulf is no longer an external theatre for India. It is part of India's economic security, maritime security and strategic future.

ANP

faster work on connectivity and usable channels of communication with Gulf capitals, Tehran and Tel Aviv.

If the diplomatic opening holds, India must extend humanitarian support, seek a calibrated restoration of Iranian oil purchases, expand pharmaceutical and food exports, and revive usable routes through Iran. Iran is a major regional State, linked to India by history and geography, and located across India's route to Afghanistan and Central Asia. Engagement with Iran is not a favour to Tehran. It is obedience to geography.

India's defence, agriculture and technology links with Israel are valuable and should endure. India can support Israel's security and oppose a nuclear-armed Iran. It need not, however, make Israeli threat perceptions the centre of India's approach to West Asian security. Escalation around Iran can raise India's oil bill, unsettle Indians living in the Gulf, endanger Indian seafarers, complicate relations with

Arab partners and disrupt access to Central Asia.

The Gulf is no longer an external theatre for India. It is part of India's economic security, maritime security and strategic future. The next crisis may begin with a failed nuclear negotiation, an Israeli strike, a militia attack, a tanker incident or a misread signal in crowded waters.

India cannot afford to rediscover the Gulf only when oil spikes. A Gulf doctrine would not make India a dominant power in the region. It would do something more necessary: help India arrive earlier, act faster and absorb less damage when the Gulf turns turbulent again. The window opened by the US-Iran understanding should not be wasted.

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The views expressed are personal



Syed Akbaruddin



- **Key Terms and Explanations**

- **Crisis Bargain:** A tactical, short-term agreement reached between adversarial nations to temporarily de-escalate tensions and avoid immediate conflict. It acts as a temporary freeze rather than a structural reconciliation or permanent resolution of ideological and political disputes.
- **Strait of Hormuz:** A narrow, choke-point waterway of vital global consequence connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. It serves as the primary maritime artery through which roughly one-fifth of the world's total petroleum consumption passes daily.
- **Chabahar Port:** A deeply strategic deep-sea port located in southeastern Iran on the Gulf of Oman. Developed via Indian cooperation, it provides a vital maritime-land transit route that allows India to bypass land routes through Pakistan to access Afghanistan, Central Asia, and the broader Eurasian landmass.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** A foreign policy posture wherein a nation state maintains the independent capability to pursue its national interests and form alliances based on specific issues, without being structurally forced into rigid, ideologically driven military or diplomatic blocs.
- **Remittances:** Private financial transfers sent by migrant workers back to their home countries. In the Indian context, the millions of workers residing in the Gulf Cooperation Council nations generate significant capital inflows that directly stabilize India's current account balance.
- **Sanctions Waivers:** Legal, formal exemptions granted by a sanction-imposing authority (such as the United States) that permit third-party nations to engage in restricted economic transactions (such as purchasing Iranian crude) without triggering secondary economic penalties.

- **Main Arguments and Substantive Parts**

- The geopolitical theater of the Gulf functions not as a detached external landscape, but as a critical extension of India's domestic economic and national security apparatus.

- **The Illusion of Geopolitical Tranquility**

- Temporary diplomatic arrangements or memorandums between major powers provide essential operational relief, but they do not eliminate systemic vulnerabilities. These tactical pauses temporarily suppress energy market volatility and freeze regional nuclear posturing. However, the foundational friction points remain intact. Infrastructure assets across the Gulf—ranging from desalination plants and shipping lines to international airports—remain constantly within range of asymmetric drone and missile technologies.

- **The Domestic Price of Distant Choke Points**

- The structural reality of India's economic landscape is that its domestic market health is intrinsically tied to the security of West Asian maritime corridors. The physical geography of the region may place these waters outside India's legal borders, but the economic liabilities are felt acutely inside Indian households.

- **The Influence-Stakes Asymmetry**

- A widening gap persists between India's immense, non-negotiable stakes in the Gulf and its structural capacity to dictate or steer regional outcomes. India's reliance is absolute: it hosts nearly ten million citizens in the region, draws vital sovereign capital for its infrastructure ambitions, and relies on Indian seafarers to navigate these contested waters. Yet, during peak geopolitical escalations, India primarily absorbs external shocks rather than proactively shaping regional decisions. Moving beyond passive containment toward active risk management is no longer optional; it is a structural necessity.

- **The Instructive Role of Regional Intermediaries**

- The utility of regional actors during intense diplomatic standoffs offers clear lessons. Certain neighboring nations have historically leveraged their long-standing institutional and security relationships to act as communication bridges when direct diplomatic channels between major adversaries collapsed. India does not need to view these intermediary roles with strategic anxiety. Instead, the correct structural response is to focus on institutional execution: accelerating connectivity corridors, securing sea lanes, and ensuring that strategic projects transition from diplomatic blueprints to operational realities.

- **Historical Evolution of the Issue**
- **Phase 1: Pre-Independence to the Early Cold War Era**
 - Centuries of monsoon-driven maritime trade established deep, organic links between the western coast of India and the ports of the Persian Gulf. Following independence in 1947, India's foreign policy approach was largely shaped by its commitment to Non-Alignment and its support for pan-Arab nationalist regimes, such as Egypt under Gamal Abdel Nasser. During this period, formal strategic ties with the conservative oil-producing monarchies of the Gulf remained relatively limited and secondary.
- **Phase 2: The 1973 Oil Shock and the Migration Boom**
 - The historic OPEC oil embargo of 1973 radically transformed the structural dynamics of the relationship. As oil revenues surged across the Gulf, it triggered massive, state-led infrastructure booms. This economic shift drew millions of blue-collar Indian workers to the region, initiating a massive wave of labor migration. For the next two decades, India's approach to the Gulf operated primarily through a transactional lens, focusing on securing energy imports and managing the welfare and remittances of its growing diaspora.
- **Phase 3: Post-Cold War Realignment and the 'Look West' Policy**
 - The geopolitical shock of the 1990-91 Gulf War, combined with India's severe domestic balance of payments crisis, forced a comprehensive reassessment of its foreign policy architecture. India recognized the danger of relying on a purely reactive policy. Under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in the early 2000s, India formally conceptualized the **Look West Policy**. This marked the beginning of a highly pragmatic approach, enabling India to normalize and expand critical defense and technology ties with Israel while steadily deepening its energy security partnerships with Iran and Arab capitals.
- **Phase 4: The 'Act West' Era and Deep Strategic Integration**
 - Over the past decade, this framework has been systematically upgraded into a robust **Act West Policy**. The contemporary era has broken away from the old buyer-seller paradigm. Today, India's engagement is defined by deep institutional integration. This includes securing multi-billion-dollar investments from sovereign wealth funds, conducting joint naval exercises, building counter-terrorism intelligence-sharing networks, and participating in pioneering minilateral architectures like the I2U2 group and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).



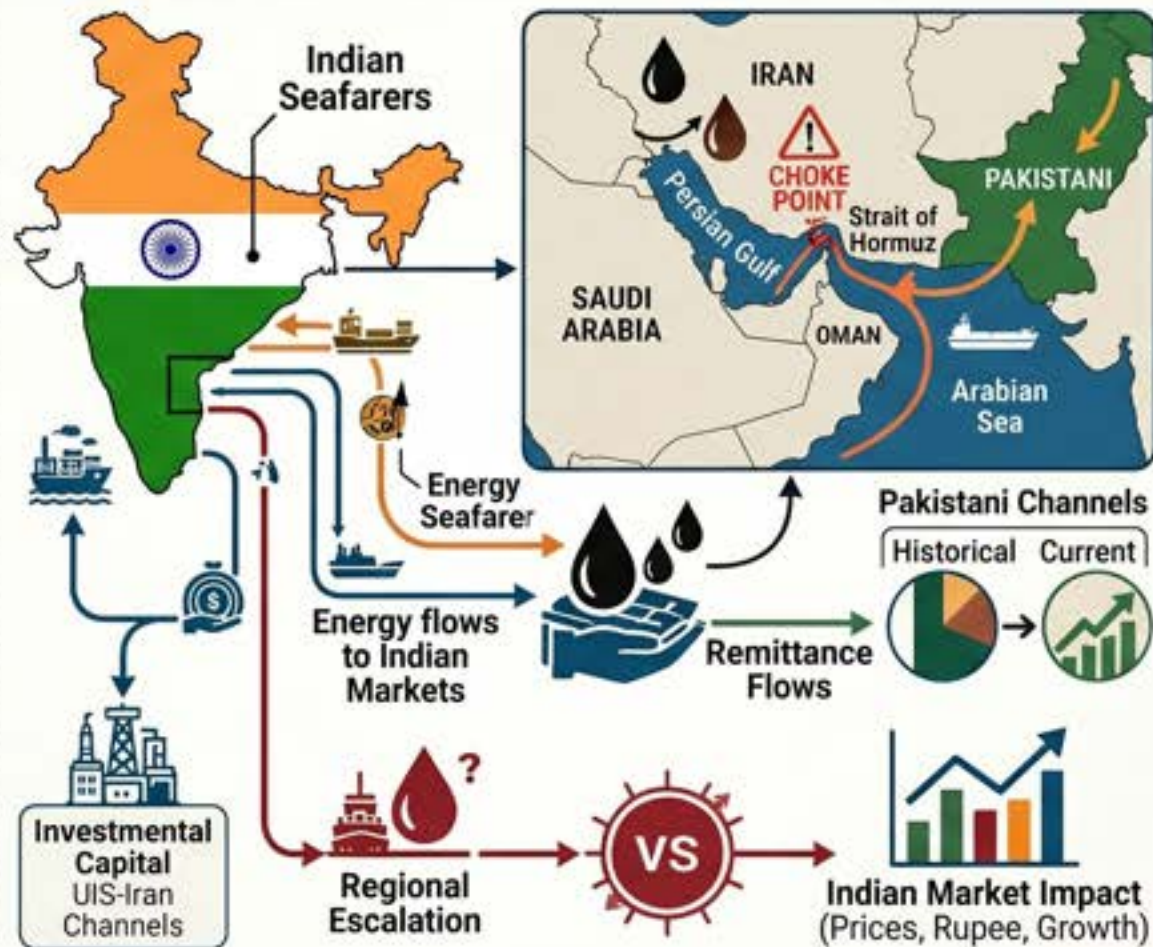
ANALYSIS: THE GULF AS INDIA'S STRATEGIC FRONTIER

INDIA'S STAKES: ENERGY & WEALTH

- Energy Reliance (Oil/Gas)**
Oil & on Gas ow energy
- Labor & Remittances**
(Millions of Indians)
- Investment Capital**
200 Insion investments

THE GULF VULNERABILITY

- Choke Points**
(Strait of Hormuz)
- Vulnerable Infrastructure**
Vulnerable Infrastructure
- Geopolitical Instability**
(US-Iran, Israel-Tehran)



PATH FORWARD: A GULF DOCTRINE

- Dependable Port Access**
(Chabahar Development)
- Strategic Petroleum Reserves**
Strategic capils energy
- Secure Sea Lanes & Freight**
Secure, ea lanes & freight
- Managing Multi-lateral Risks**
(Tehran, Arab Capitals, Tel Aviv)
- Faster Project Delivery**
Faster project delivery
- Humanitarian & Trade Links**
(Calibrated Oil Purchases, Pharma/Food Exports)



- **Logical and Philosophical Base**

- The strategic necessity of a structured policy framework for West Asia is anchored in distinct, well-established paradigms of international relations theory.

- **Geopolitical Realism (Realpolitik)**

- This perspective recognizes that international politics is fundamentally driven by national survival, geography, and relative power capabilities. The assertion that engaging with regional powers like Iran is an "obedience to geography" reflects classic realist logic. Ideological preferences cannot override unalterable geographical realities. Because Iran sits as a permanent land bridge to Afghanistan and resource-rich Central Asia, maintaining stable relations with it is a structural necessity dictated by geography, not an optional diplomatic favor.

- **Complex Interdependence**

- In a highly globalized economy, state vulnerabilities are deeply interconnected across traditional borders. The concept that a maritime choke point's real price is paid directly in domestic consumer markets challenges the old idea of isolated geographic zones. When external geopolitical disruptions can instantly impact domestic inflation, currency value, and agricultural input costs, the boundary between domestic policy and foreign policy effectively disappears.

- **Strategic Hedging and Multi-Alignment**

- Rather than choosing sides or joining rigid alliances in a deeply polarized region, a rising power balances its interests by maintaining robust, independent relationships with competing regional power centers.

- **The Triad of West Asian Balancing:** India's contemporary doctrine relies on maintaining deep defense and technological links with **Israel**, massive energy and capital partnerships with **Arab Gulf Capitals**, and critical connectivity routes through **Iran**.

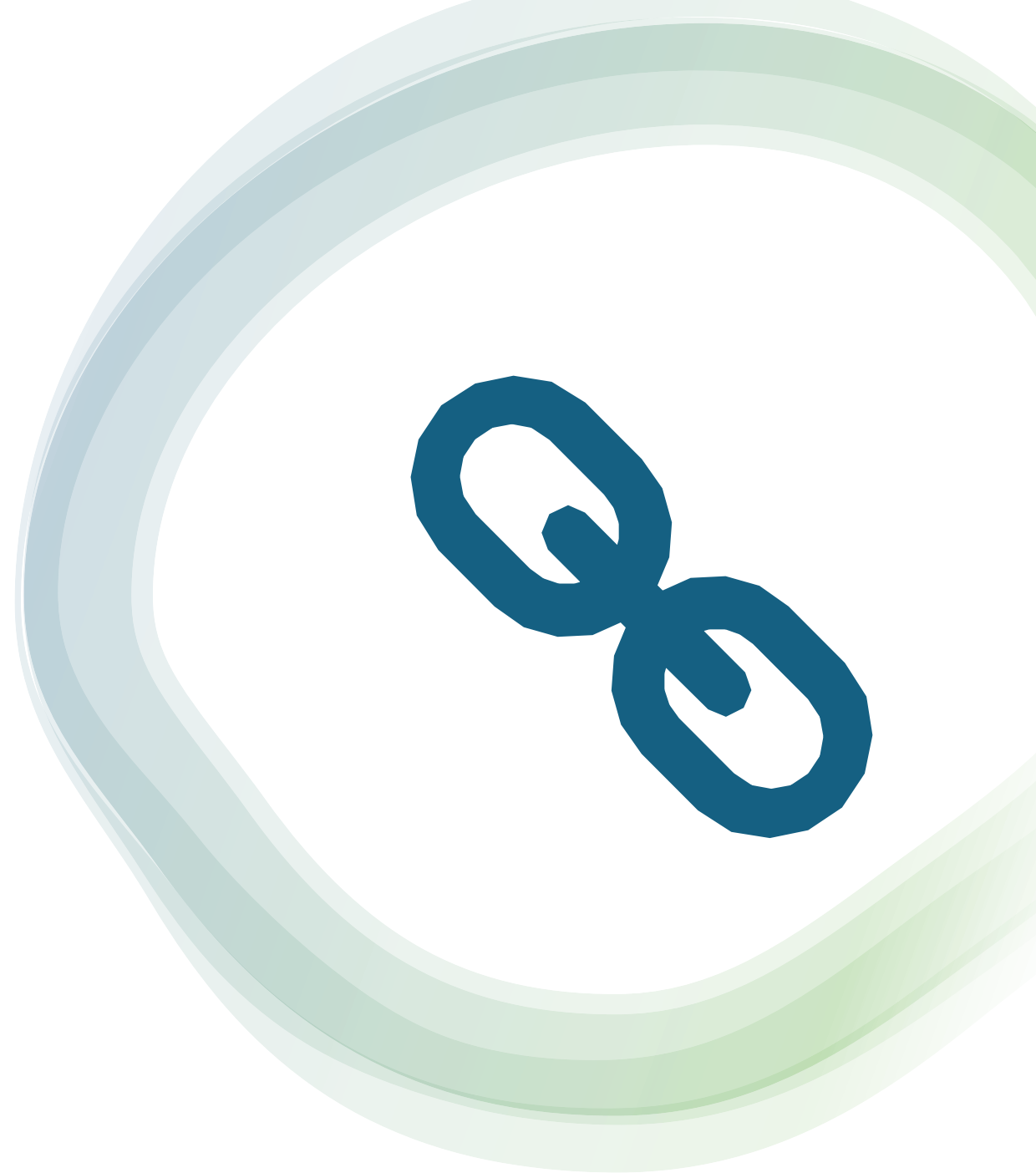
- This multi-aligned approach rejects a zero-sum view of international relations. It assumes a nation can successfully manage parallel relationships with bitter regional rivals, provided the engagement is anchored strictly in shared, transparent national interests.

- **Preventive and Institutionalized Diplomacy**

- This philosophy emphasizes shifting from a reactive, crisis-driven diplomatic style to a proactive, structurally prepared posture. A sustainable regional strategy cannot simply operate as an emergency response mechanism when energy prices spike or active conflicts erupt. Instead, it must focus on building reliable institutional buffers, securing long-term port access, and maintaining active communication channels *before* the next geopolitical shock occurs.

Dimension	Core Strategic Intersections & Vulnerabilities
Social	• Diaspora Security: Safeguarding nearly 10 million citizens subject to sudden regional conflict and evacuation emergencies. • Remittance Lifelines: Protecting capital inflows that sustain millions of households across states like Kerala and Uttar Pradesh.
Political	• Strategic De-hyphenation: Navigating parallel partnerships with adversarial states (Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia) without getting caught in regional crossfire. • Domestic Feedback Loops: Managing how energy price volatility impacts internal political debates around inflation and economic governance.
Legal	• Freedom of Navigation (UNCLOS): Upholding international maritime law against unlawful tanker seizures or transit blockades in international straits. • Sanctions Jurisprudence: Balancing compliance with unilateral secondary sanctions against national infrastructure commitments.
Ethical	• State Responsibility: Fulfilling the ethical obligation to protect and evacuate citizens stranded in foreign conflict zones. • Pragmatism vs. Ideology: Balancing vital economic survival interests with commitments to global peace and international legal norms.
International	• Sino-Indian Strategic Competition: Responding to China's growing diplomatic and infrastructure footprint in West Asia. • Minilateral Geopolitics: Utilizing new frameworks like I2U2 and IMEC to build resilient alternative supply chains.
Economic	• Current Account Vulnerability: Managing exposure to imported inflation and fiscal strain caused by volatile Brent crude prices. • Supply Chain Vulnerability: Protecting critical trade routes from rising maritime insurance costs and freight delays.

- **Linkages with NCERTs**
- **Class XII: Contemporary World Politics**
- **Chapter on 'Security in the Contemporary World':** This chapter provides the theoretical framework needed to analyze non-traditional security threats. It helps students understand how energy security, global supply chain reliability, and the protection of international economic commons represent vital national interests that extend far beyond traditional territorial defense.
- **Chapter on 'Globalisation':** This section breaks down the economic realities of global flows of capital, commodities, and labor. It provides the conceptual tools needed to analyze how a localized security shock in a maritime choke point like the Strait of Hormuz can instantly impact equity markets, currency valuation, and consumer prices within India.
- **Class XII India: People and Economy**
- **Chapter on 'International Trade':** This chapter provides an empirical breakdown of India's import and export structures. It details the country's high dependence on imported fossil fuels and chemical fertilizers, highlighting why maritime stability in West Asia is directly linked to India's macroeconomic balance.
- **Chapter on 'Migration':** This section examines the socio-economic drivers of international labor movements. It outlines the historical trends, destinations, and volume of the Indian diaspora, explaining how private remittances from the Gulf function as a critical support mechanism for India's balance of payments.



- **Linkages with UPSC CSE Syllabus**

- **General Studies Paper II: Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International Relations**

- **Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests:** Highly relevant for analyzing institutional frameworks like the I2U2 grouping, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), and India's long-term strategic joint ventures in Gulf ports.
- **Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora:** Directly covers the impact of external sanctions regimes on India's energy options, regional conflict dynamics, and the economic security of the ten-million-strong Indian expatriate community.
- **General Studies Paper III: Technology, Economic Development, Bio-diversity, Environment, Security and Disaster Management**
- **Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment:** Directly relevant for assessing imported inflation, oil-price volatility, the widening of the Current Account Deficit, and the fiscal impact of rising fertilizer subsidy bills.
- **Security challenges and their management in border areas; linkages of organized crime with terrorism:** Covers the security of maritime communication lines, maritime domain awareness in the western Arabian Sea, and anti-piracy and counter-state maritime disruption operations.

- **Essay Paper & Optional Subjects**

- **Strategic Themes:** Highly applicable for analytical essays on themes such as *"Geography is the ultimate determinant of foreign policy," "The challenges of strategic autonomy in a fragmented world,"* or *"Energy security as the foundational bedrock of national sovereignty."*
 - **Optional Alignments:** Directly integrated into the syllabus for **Political Science and International Relations (PSIR)** (Paper II: India and the World) and **Geography Optional** (Paper II: Political Aspects and International Trade).
-

Way Forward

Institutionalizing a Formal 'Gulf Doctrine'

India needs to move past managing its West Asian relations through isolated, bilateral channels. The Ministry of External Affairs should establish an integrated, regional **Gulf Doctrine**. This framework would treat the region as a single, connected strategic landscape. It would prioritize setting up pre-negotiated crisis protocols, securing permanent logistical access to regional ports, and maintaining reliable lines of communication with all major regional capitals simultaneously.

Accelerating Strategic Connectivity Architecture

- Chabahar Port Expansion:** Resolving outstanding bureaucratic and operational delays to maximize the capacity of the Shahid Beheshti terminal.
- INSTC Integration:** Harmonizing customs protocols and digital tracking along the International North-South Transport Corridor to secure a reliable, overland trade route into Central Asia.
- IMEC Resiliency:** Maintaining continuous, foundational diplomatic work on the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor to ensure it remains a viable long-term option for trade diversification.

Expanding Energy Security Buffers

To protect the domestic economy from sudden supply shocks, India must expand its **Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR)** from its current limited capacity to at least a 90-day net-import cushion. Simultaneously, the country should accelerate its transition to green hydrogen, nuclear energy, and domestic renewable infrastructure. This structural shift is critical to reducing long-term economic exposure to overseas maritime choke points.

Strengthening Western Indian Ocean Maritime Presence

The Indian Navy should expand its operational footprint through continuous anti-piracy escorts, regular maritime patrols, and advanced drone surveillance across the Western Arabian Sea. Deepening institutional links with the **Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)** will enhance real-time maritime domain awareness, helping protect critical trade lanes and commercial shipping from asymmetric threats.

UPSC CSE Civil Services Mains Questions

- GS Paper II (2023):** "The policy of multi-alignment has emerged as the cornerstone of India’s contemporary foreign policy, especially in the volatile geopolitical landscape of West Asia. Examine how India effectively balances its competing strategic equations with Israel, Iran, and the Arab monarchies."
- GS Paper II (2020):** "The strategic importance of Chabahar Port is not merely economic but fundamentally geopolitical for India's ambitions in Central Asia. Discuss the operational and diplomatic bottlenecks that have historically slowed its full implementation."
- GS Paper II (2018):** "The Indian diaspora in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries serves as an indispensable economic driver for India's domestic economy, yet it remains highly exposed to regional political shifts. Evaluate the institutional safety nets and policy mechanisms required to protect their interests during regional crises."

UPSC CSE Civil Services Prelims Conceptual Pointers

Question 1: Which of the following bodies of water are connected by the strategically vital Strait of Hormuz? (a) Red Sea and Gulf of Aden
(b) Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman
(c) Caspian Sea and Black Sea
(d) Mediterranean Sea and Red Sea

Answer: (b)

Question 2: Consider the following maritime and land ports of West and Central Asia:

- 1.Chabahar
- 2.Gwadar
- 3.Bandar Abbas
- 4.Duqm
- 5.What is the correct sequential order of these ports when traveling from West to East?
- 6.(a) 4-3-1-2
- 7.(b) 3-4-2-1
- 8.(c) 4-1-3-2
- 9.(d) 3-1-4-2

10.Answer: (a)

In time of distrust, Constitution's promise of fraternity matters more than ever



S Y QURAISHI

EVERY SCHOOLCHILD can recite the Preamble to the Constitution: Justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. The first three have generated debate in courts, politics and academia. The fourth, however, has passed almost unnoticed. Yet fraternity may be the most consequential of all the constitutional values because it is the one value that law alone cannot create.

The neglect is curious because the Constitution does not treat fraternity as an afterthought. It appears in the same sentence as the other three, carrying equal constitutional weight. The framers placed it there deliberately. The question is why we have spent 75 years largely ignoring it, and what that neglect has cost us.

The answer begins with a distinction that was explicit during the Constituent Assembly debates but has since faded from constitutional discourse. Liberty and equality define the relationship between the citizen and the state. Fraternity defines the relationship between citizens themselves. That distinction makes all the difference. If the state violates liberty or equality, courts can intervene. But what recourse exists when citizens cease to regard one another as fellow citizens? When disagreement hardens into hostility and difference into suspicion, fraternity begins to disappear. If R Ambedkar understood this with unusual clarity. In his final address to the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949, he warned: "Without fraternity, equality and liberty will be no deeper than coats of paint." His warning stemmed from a frank assessment of Indian society. "How can people divided into several thousands of castes be a nation?" he asked. He was reminding us that nationhood is not a given but an achievement, and fraternity both its condition and proof. The Constitution's concern with fraternity did not end with the Preamble. Article 32(A) makes it a Fundamental Duty of every citizen to pro-

mote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood across religious, linguistic and regional differences.

Seventy-five years later, the original societies have not diminished. Though we have never been more connected technologically, we have rarely been more estranged socially. Public debate has grown louder, sharper and more vicious, while mutual understanding has become thinner. The greatest damage caused by hate-filled discourse — whether political, religious or digital — is not that it offends. Democracies have always survived offense. Its deeper damage lies in the erosion of trust.

Trust is the invisible infrastructure of a functioning society — the assumption that strangers can deal with one another in good faith. When that assumption erodes, no law can fully restore it. The economy depends upon it. Democracy depends upon it.

Liberty and equality are justiciable, enforceable and actionable before a judge. Fraternity belongs to a different category. If liberty and equality are the fundamental rights of citizens, fraternity, for me, is the fundamental right of the nation. No court can manufacture mutual respect. No statute can create a sense of common belonging. No government programme can legislate trust. Yet it would be wrong to conclude that fraternity lies entirely beyond the reach of law and the government and the courts are helpless spectators.



ILLUSTRATION: C. R. SARKAR

The Constitution and the criminal law contain a substantial architecture designed to protect social harmony. Article 14 guarantees equality before the law. Articles 15 and 25 protect citizens against discrimination and safeguard freedom of faith. Article 32(A) imposes a duty to promote harmony and common brotherhood. Criminal law goes further. Sections 153A, 153B, 295A and 506 of the IPC, along with provisions protecting places of worship, were enacted to preserve civility and prevent communal hostility.

These provisions may not create fraternity, but they exist to prevent its systematic destruction. The challenge, therefore, is not the absence of legal safeguards. It is their uneven enforcement. Courts cannot command affection, but they can act against hatred, intimidation and attacks on equal citizenship. The law cannot manufacture fraternity, but it can — and must — prevent its destruction.

It is worth asking what 75 years of neglecting fraternity has produced. Consider what the government's own data tell us. For more than a decade, roughly 2 lakh Indians

have been surrendering their citizenship every year, amounting to nearly 9 lakh in the last five years alone, according to information placed before Parliament. Many of these leaving are successful entrepreneurs and professionals. Their decisions reflect multiple factors, but the scale of the phenomenon raises a legitimate question: What role do social climate and civic

confidence play in such choices?

History suggests that prolonged social conflict leaves economic scars that persist long after the headlines disappear. India has already learned this lesson. Punjab was once the most prosperous state in the country, with the highest per-capita income as recently as the mid-1980s. The decade-long militancy and communal discord that followed devastated the investment climate. Punjab slipped from first place in per-capita income rankings and, between 2014-15 and 2022-23, it ranked 30th in economic growth among 25 major states. The damage was not merely economic; poisoned atmospheres take generations to climb.

The irony is difficult to miss. We have spoken of India becoming the world's third-largest economy and a fully developed Vistat Bhumi by 2047. Yet public institutions have often appeared insufficiently concerned about an atmosphere of anxiety and periodic lawlessness that seems to corrode such ambitions. Lynchings, targeted demolitions and the normalisation of communal hostility are not merely law-and-order failures. They are fraternity failures. When such acts go unpunished, they send a signal — not just to minorities, but to every entrepreneur, investor and family weighing its future.

Polarisation may have delivered electoral dividends to those who have practised it. But a nation cannot continuously inflame its divisions for short-term political advantage and expect to contain its economic consequences.

Fraternity is not a pious wish inscribed in a preamble and ceremonially quoted on national occasions. It is the social oxygen without which neither liberty nor equality can survive, and without which no economy, however ambitious its targets, can truly flourish. Ambedkar warned that without fraternity, liberty and equality would be no deeper than coats of paint. For three-quarters of a century, we barely noticed the paint peeling. We are beginning to see the cracks now.

The framers placed all four values together for a reason. It may be time we did the same.

Quraishi is former chief election commissioner of India and author of *An Undocumented Wonder: The Making of the Great Indian Election*.

No court can manufacture mutual respect. No statute can create a sense of common belonging. Yet it would be wrong to conclude that fraternity lies entirely beyond the reach of law

- **Key Terms and Explanations**
- **Fraternity (Social Brotherhood):** Far from a mere sentimental expression, fraternity is a democratic value denoting a sense of common brotherhood and shared citizenship among all Indians. It is the psychological condition that assures the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation. For example, it is what makes an individual in Assam feel a sense of shared destiny and mutual respect toward a stranger in Kerala.
- **Justiciable vs. Non-Justiciable Rights:** *Justiciable rights* (like Fundamental Rights) are legally enforceable in a court of law. If your liberty is curtailed by the state, you can approach the judiciary via writ petitions. *Non-justiciable principles* (like fraternity or the Directive Principles) cannot be directly enforced by a judge through a decree. You cannot sue a fellow citizen simply for failing to feel brotherly toward you.
- **The Trinity of Rights:** A concept popularized by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, which posits that liberty, equality, and fraternity form a single, indivisible trinity. To divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy. Liberty without equality produces the supremacy of the few; equality without liberty kills individual initiative; without fraternity, liberty and equality cannot become natural courses of life.
- **Social Capital and Trust Infrastructure:** The invisible network of interpersonal trust, shared values, and civic cooperation that allows a society to function smoothly. Just as physical infrastructure (roads, bridges) enables economic transit, the *trust infrastructure* enables everyday economic transactions, contract compliance, and peaceful democratic dialogue without constant state coercion.
- **Article 51A(e):** A constitutional provision within the Fundamental Duties (Part IVA) that tasks every citizen with the responsibility to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India, transcending religious, linguistic, regional, or sectional diversities.
- **Legal Protections for Social Harmony (Sections 153A, 153B, 295A, 505):** These sections of the criminal law are designed to curb actions that disrupt fraternity. Section 153A penalizes promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, or language; Section 295A punishes deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings; Section 505 targets statements conducive to public mischief.
- **Viksit Bharat (Developed India):** A strategic national vision aiming to transform India into a fully developed nation by the centenary of its independence in 2047. This vision encompasses high economic growth, social progress, structural modernization, and robust governance.

- **Main Arguments and Core Thesis**

- **The Nature of the Constitutional Relationship:** The fundamental difference between the values of the Preamble lies in their targets. Liberty and equality verticalize the relationship between the citizen and the state, protecting the individual from state overreach. Fraternity, conversely, operates horizontally. It governs the relationships *between citizens*. If this horizontal relationship breaks down, the vertical protections become fragile.
- **The Illusion of Structural Protections:** Without a deeply rooted sense of fraternity, formal legal frameworks are merely superficial layers. As Dr. Ambedkar famously observed, without fraternity, equality and liberty will be "no deeper than coats of paint." If a society is fragmented by rigid systemic hierarchies like casteism or communalism, constitutional safeguards cannot truly take root.
- **The High Price of Civic Estrangement:** The decay of fraternity manifests as a deep-seated social erosion rather than just a simple law-and-order problem. In an era of intense digital and political polarization, public discourse often prioritizes hostility over mutual understanding. When structural trust collapses, the shared assumption that strangers will interact in good faith disappears, directly damaging both economic confidence and democratic stability.
- **The Paradox of Law:** The state cannot legislate affection. No court can issue a writ mandating mutual respect, and no government spending program can automatically generate civic trust. However, the state is not a helpless bystander. While the law cannot *create* fraternity from scratch, it has a strict duty to prevent its systematic destruction by evenly enforcing protections against hatred, intimidation, and targeted violence.

- **Historical Evolution of the Issue**

- **Pre-Independence Era: Foundations and Deep Fault Lines**

- The roots of fraternity in India are dualistic. Philosophically, it draws from the country's syncretic cultural traditions—such as the Bhakti and Sufi movements, which advocated spiritual equality and brotherhood—as well as the egalitarian ideals of the French Revolution (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity).
- However, British colonial governance deliberately weaponized social cleavages through policies like the Communal Award and institutionalized "divide and rule" strategies. This widened the gaps between religious and caste groups, leaving a deeply fractured social fabric ahead of independence.

- **The Constituent Assembly Debates (1947–1949): Crafting the Concept**

- During the drafting of the Constitution, the inclusion of fraternity was a deliberate, protective measure rather than an afterthought. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar argued that political democracy could not succeed on a dysfunctional social foundation. On November 25, 1949, he reminded the nation that a people divided into thousands of castes could not easily form a cohesive nation. Fraternity was included in the Preamble to serve as both the foundation and the goal of Indian nationhood.

- **The Post-Independence Era (1950s–1970s): Building a State vs. Building a Nation**

- In its early decades, the Indian Republic focused heavily on state-building through heavy industrialization, planning commissions, and land reforms. While legal structures aimed to dismantle caste untouchability (Article 17), structural social hierarchies remained largely intact. The constitutional vision assumed that economic development would naturally dissolve ancient social friction, underestimating the resilience of identity-based politics.

- **The Late 20th Century: Identity Politics and Social Friction (1980s–1990s)**

- This period saw a significant shift toward identity assertion, driven by the Mandal Commission reforms and widespread mobilization along religious and caste lines. While this democratized political representation by giving voice to historically marginalized groups, it also intensified inter-community competition. The resulting political polarization exposed the fragility of civic fraternity across regional and religious boundaries.

- **The 21st Century: Digital Echo Chambers and Modern Discontent (2000s–Present)**

- Today, the challenges facing fraternity have evolved. While technology has made the nation more interconnected than ever, it has also created digital echo chambers that can rapidly amplify misinformation and hostile discourse. Unchecked polarization, localized vigilante violence, and targeted social media campaigns present a distinct threat: they don't just spark temporary civil unrest, but steadily erode the day-to-day civic trust required for a modern economy and a stable society.
-



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THE PREAMBLE PILLARS



THE
NEGLECTED
KEystone

THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF THE NATION

Fraternity is the right is the fundamental the
in our invisible infrastructure to coats of
paint is the invisible infrastructure.



FRATERNITY
DEFINES THE
RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN
CITIZENS

"Without fraternity, equality and liberty
will be no deeper than coats of paint."
- DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR (Nov 25, 1949)

LIBERTY/
EQUALITY
(Citizen ↔
State)



EQUALITY
& LIBERTY
(Peeling Paint
without Fraternity)

NEGLECTED
FRATERNITY
(Deep Cracks and
Social Estrangement)

THE HIGH COST OF NEGLECT





- **Logical and Philosophical Base**

- To truly understand fraternity, we have to look past simple political rhetoric and examine its underlying philosophical foundations.

- **The Concept of Associated Living:** Democracy is not merely a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellow men.

- **The Limits of Legal Positivism:** Legal positivism assumes that a society can be effectively governed purely through written statutes and institutional sanctions. The conceptual base of fraternity challenges this assumption. It argues that a constitutional democracy cannot survive on enforcement alone; it requires a baseline of *constitutional morality*—an unwritten commitment among citizens to respect the system and one another, keeping the costs of governance manageable.

- **Deweyan Pragmatism and Social Democracy:** Dr. Ambedkar's view of fraternity was deeply influenced by the American philosopher John Dewey, who saw democracy as a shared, communicative experience. In this view, fraternity is not a utopian, emotional state but a practical necessity. It requires active, everyday civic participation, open communication across social barriers, and a shared acknowledgment of common citizenship.

Multidimensional Analysis

Social Dimension

- The Persistence of Stratification:** Enduring caste-based exclusions and growing communal polarization directly undermine the horizontal bonds of citizenship.
- Digital Tribalism:** Algorithmic social media platforms often monetize outrage, trapping users in ideological echo chambers that transform ordinary policy disagreements into deep-seated cultural hostilities.

Political Dimension

- Electoral Majoritarianism:** Short-term political strategies frequently rely on polarizing social identities for quick electoral gains, prioritizing identity-based mobilization over broad social cohesion.
- Erosion of Nuanced Debate:** When fraternity declines, political opponents are often treated as existential enemies rather than legitimate choices within a democratic system, undermining parliamentary consensus and institutional norms.

Legal Dimension

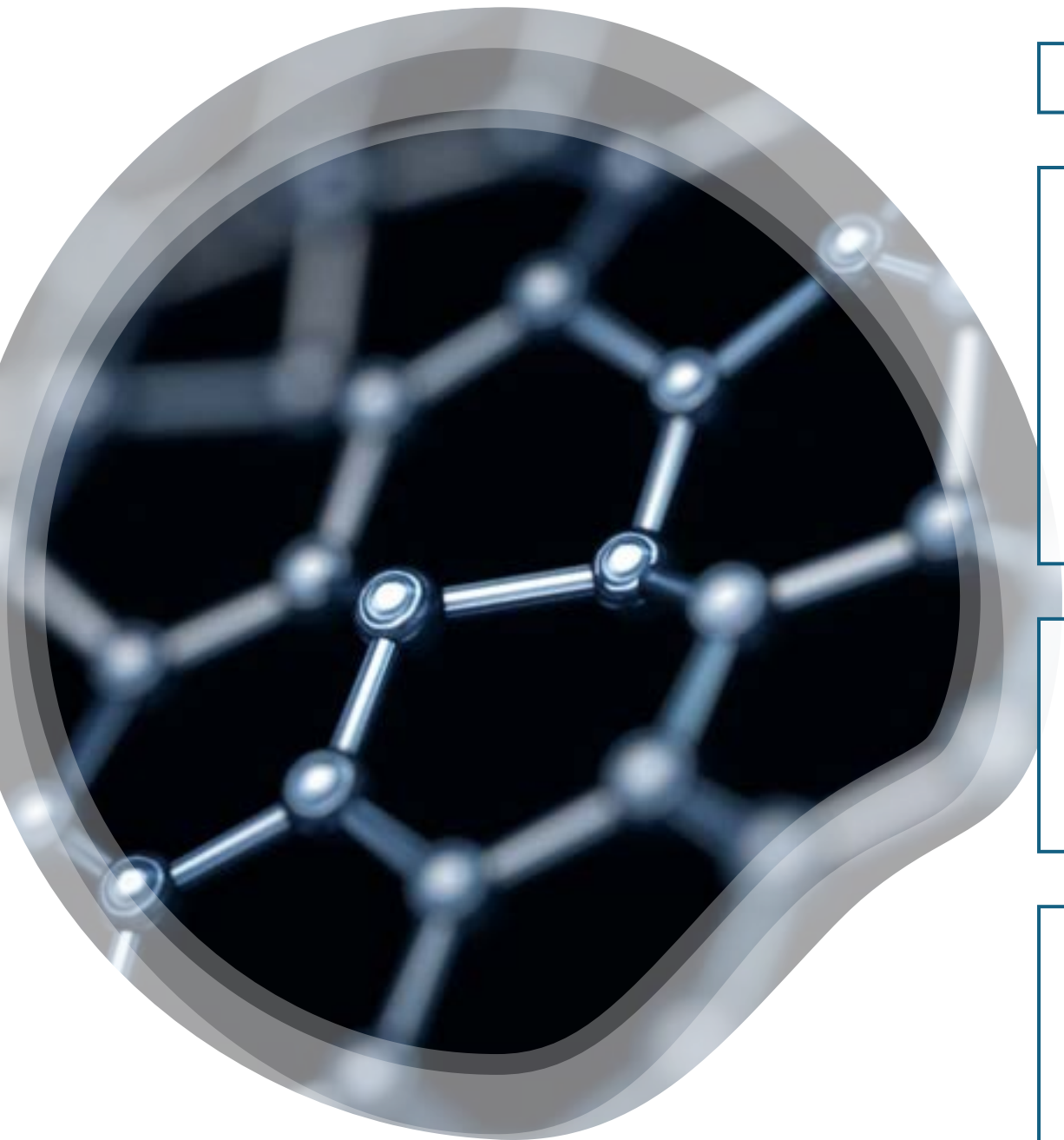
- Asymmetric Enforcement of Laws:** The primary legal challenge is not a lack of statutory safeguards, but their inconsistent and selective enforcement, which can weaken public confidence in the rule of law.
- The Limits of Judicial Power:** While the judiciary can penalize overt hate speech or hate crimes, it lacks the mechanisms to proactively foster social empathy or repair damaged community relations.

Ethical Dimension

- Decline of Constitutional Morality:** When personal and political loyalties override core constitutional principles, individual civic responsibility begins to fade.
- Erosion of Empathy:** A polarized environment often limits social empathy exclusively to one's own community, leading to indifference toward injustices faced by other groups.
- Normalisation of Hostility:** Over time, continuous exposure to aggressive rhetoric can normalize civic intolerance, making hostile public discourse acceptable to the broader population.

Economic Dimension

- The Real Cost of Conflict:** Prolonged social instability leaves lasting economic scars. A clear historical example is Punjab: the state enjoyed the highest per-capita income in the country in the mid-1980s, but a decade of militancy and social discord severely disrupted its investment climate, causing its long-term economic growth ranking to drop significantly among major states.
- Risk Premiums and Capital Stagnation:** Modern investments, particularly foreign direct investment (FDI), require long-term predictability. An atmosphere marked by unpredictable social unrest, lynchings, or sudden structural disruptions raises risk premiums, discouraging long-term capital commitments.
- The Threat to Long-Term Vision:** Achieving the economic milestones of a developed economy requires an environment of stability. Internal social friction consumes state resources for law enforcement and damages the predictable social conditions necessary to sustain high-tech innovation and long-term industrial growth.



Linkages with NCERTs

Class XI: Indian Constitution at Work

- *Chapter 1: Constitution: Why and How?* This chapter introduces how a constitution allows people to live together by providing a shared set of basic rules. It directly underscores fraternity as the foundational agreement making co-existence possible.
- *Chapter 2: Rights in the Indian Constitution.* This section details the interplay between justiciable Fundamental Rights and non-justiciable principles, helping students analyze why legal mandates alone cannot guarantee social harmony.

Class XI: Political Theory

- *Chapter 3: Equality & Chapter 4: Social Justice.* These chapters explore the structural limitations of pursuing legal and political equality within a highly stratified society, providing the theoretical background for Dr. Ambedkar's concept of the "Union of Trinity."

Class XII: Indian Society

- *Chapter 5: Patterns of Social Inequality and Exclusion & Chapter 6: The Challenges of Cultural Diversity.* These texts analyze the historical realities of casteism, regionalism, and communalism, offering real-world context to the structural obstacles to fraternity in India.

- **Linkages with UPSC CSE Syllabus**
- **GS Paper 1: Indian Society**
 - *Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.*
 - *Communalism, Regionalism, and Secularism.* It provides an analytical framework for studying how identity politics can disrupt national integration.
- **GS Paper 2: Polity and Governance**
 - *Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.* (Focusing on the Preamble, Fundamental Rights, and Fundamental Duties).
 - *Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.* (Analyzing the consistency and efficacy of institutional law enforcement).
- **GS Paper 3: Economic Development & Security**
 - *Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.* (Examining how social instability impacts long-term investment and talent retention).
 - *Linkages between development and spread of extremism; Role of external state and non-state actors in creating internal challenges.*
- **GS Paper 4: Ethics and Integrity**
 - *Conscience as a source of ethical guidance; Corporate governance; Values in public administration.*
 - *Civic virtues, empathy, and foundational values for civil services.* Fraternity serves as a primary conceptual source for civic empathy and public integrity.
- **Essay Paper & Optional Subjects**
 - An excellent theme for philosophical essays focused on democracy, development, or social cohesion. It is also highly relevant for optionals such as Political Science and International Relations (PSIR), Sociology, Law, and Public Administration.



- **Way Forward**
 - Addressing the structural erosion of fraternity requires a balanced combination of consistent legal enforcement, institutional neutrality, and long-term civic initiatives.
 - **Strict and Uniform Enforcement of Law**
 - **Zero-Tolerance Policy for Hate Crimes:** State agencies must enforce existing legal protections (such as Sections 153A and 153B of the criminal law) impartially, regardless of the perpetrator's political or community affiliation.
 - **Judicial Fast-Tracking:** Setting up specialized, fast-track courts to handle cases of communal violence, hate speech, and vigilante actions can ensure swift accountability and deter future disruptions.
 - **Police Reforms:** Implementing long-awaited police structural reforms, along the lines of the Supreme Court's *Prakash Singh* directives, can help insulate state law enforcement from local political pressures.
 - **Revitalizing Institutional and Civic Infrastructure**
 - **Institutional Accountability:** Public bodies, administrative authorities, and regulatory commissions must maintain strict neutrality, working actively to counter atmospheres of civic anxiety or selective law enforcement.
 - **Local Peace Committees:** Re-establishing and empowering localized, multi-community civic committees can help de-escalate social friction before it turns into broader unrest.
 - **Promoting Digital Responsibility:** Developing clear co-regulatory frameworks with social media platforms can curb the spread of viral misinformation and targeted harassment without infringing on legitimate free expression.
 - **Educational and Cultural Interventions**
 - **Value-Based Civic Education:** Updating school curricula to focus on the practical value of fraternity, constitutional morality, and shared citizenship, moving past simple rote learning of constitutional text.
 - **Encouraging Cross-Cultural Spaces:** Designing urban public spaces, housing policies, and cultural initiatives that bring diverse groups together, helping rebuild everyday social trust and counter urban segregation.
- 

Civil Services Examination (Mains)

- **"Democracy cannot survive without a baseline of social cohesion and mutual respect among its citizens." In light of this statement, critically analyze the constitutional value of Fraternity in India. (250 Words, 15 Marks)** *[Theme Alignment: Core Thesis & Conceptual Base]*
- **"Has the emphasis on identity politics in recent decades strengthened democratic representation at the cost of social harmony?" Give reasons for your answer. (150 Words, 10 Marks)** *[Theme Alignment: Multidimensional Analysis - Political Dimension]*
- **Many laws exist to safeguard social peace, but the challenge often lies in their selective implementation. Discuss the institutional measures needed to ensure impartial enforcement of laws protecting public order. (250 Words, 15 Marks)** *[Theme Alignment: Legal Dimension & Way Forward]*
- **Illustrate how long-term social friction can leave lasting economic scars on a region, drawing from historical or contemporary examples in India. (150 Words, 10 Marks)** *[Theme Alignment: Economic Dimension]*

Civil Services Examination (Prelims)

Question 1

Which of the following statements best reflects the relationship between Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity as envisioned by the framers of the Indian Constitution? A) Liberty and Equality can be effectively realized in court, while Fraternity remains an optional moral guide. B) They form an indivisible trinity where divorcing one from the other defeats the primary purpose of democracy. C) Equality is subordinate to Liberty, while Fraternity is an independent cultural concept. D) Fraternity is exclusively protected through justiciable fundamental rights.

Answer: B



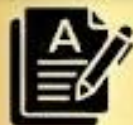
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