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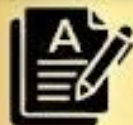
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TEACHING NATIONHOOD TO GEN Z

How to teach the young the importance of the nation when both the Right and Left constantly declare it irrelevant?



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There is a particular kind of vertigo that afflicts students (and teachers) in post-colonial democracies today. They carry two contradictory inheritances at once. From one direction—call it the rose-coloured Left, though its provenance is broader than any single ideology—they are told that the nation-state is a colonial residue, an artificial construct imposed on older, more organic solidarities of caste, region, language, or class, and that its claims on loyalty are at best sentimental and at worst reactionary. From another direction—the transactional Right of globalised capital and technocratic liberalism—they are told that the nation is simply inefficient: a bureaucratic drag on markets, a border that stifles choice and movement, a jurisdiction to be shrugged rather than inhabited. Both critiques, despite their opposed politics, converge on a single verdict: the nation does not matter, or at least does not matter as much as it once claimed to. The teacher of national history, civil-national memory, or even international relations in a post-colonial classroom has to work against this double vision. And the difficulty is epistemological, emo-

tional, and pedagogical all at once.

POST-COLONIAL INHERITANCE

Post-colonial states inherited education systems designed to serve imperial interests, not nation-building. These systems were often exclusionary, racially segregated, and culturally alienating, intended to sustain European domination rather than foster indigenous identity. After independence, these same institutions were suddenly tasked with forging new national identities and senses of belonging among populations divided by language, ethnicity, religion, and caste. The challenge was intractable: reform curricula to reflect national development needs while equally expunging colonialism from education.

And today, in a country like India which is still, eight decades after independence from British rule, working to define and settle its sovereignty with contested borders, subversive rituals, and nuclear-armed antagonists is being urged from the Right and Left to “go beyond nationalism”, where in reality it is still trying to complete the process of being fully sovereign.

IDEOLOGICAL ASSAULT ON NATIONHOOD

Today, educators confront a new complication: the nation is under ideological siege from multiple directions. On the Right, where once “globalists” declared the “global village”, now tech bros promise borderless AI utopia. This approach fails to account for the ambivalence inherent in post-colonial identity and the power disparities

resulting from colonialism. Meanwhile, the Left frequently criticises national identity as inherently exclusionary, tied to ethnic nationalism, or incompatible with cosmopolitan values and human rights frameworks.

This dual assault creates a pedagogical vacuum. Students are told from one direction that the nation is everything (often in ways that deny historical complexity) and from another that it is nothing (a mere construct of oppression). The result is what scholars call “teaching ambivalence”—the need to navigate national identity education in multicultural societies where multi-ethnic discourses complicate straightforward narratives. In Sweden, for example, citizenship-education grapples with creating national identity in multi-ethnic societies, assigning education the normative character of teaching ambivalence as a didactical principle.

HYBRIDITY CHALLENGE

Post-colonial theorists emphasise that national identity in formerly colonised societies is inherently hybrid—neither fully indigenous nor entirely colonial, but a complex amalgam. Homi Bhabha’s concept of hybridity suggests that national identity portrayals should be understood as malleable rather than fixed. This presents both opportunity and difficulty for educators. On one hand, hybridity allows for flexible, inclusive conceptions of nationhood that acknowledge colonial trauma while building new futures. On the other, it complicates the task of teaching a coherent national narrative.

EPISTEMIC VIOLENCE AND CULTURAL UPROOTING

A deeper challenge lies in what is known as “cultural epistemicide”—the loss of indigenous knowledge, languages, and national identity. Schooling in ex-colonies



Young girls march with flags amid rain during 80th Independence Day celebrations at Narendra Modi Stadium, in Jaipur on Saturday. AP

never illustrates this tension. Since independence from America in 1946, attempts to construct coherent national identity have met limited success. Unlike other Asian nations where colonial histories were effectively harnessed for nation-building, the Philippines’ protracted and varied colonization created fragmented identities resistant to unification. Postcolonial philosophies of education there emerged from desires to unite disparate populations into common identity, yet remained heavily influenced by Western conceptions of personhood and partition. The imposition of uniform national identity upon diverse populations established sources of differing identities, knowledge systems, and ways of life.

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tends to de-historicise students and apocryphal their own cultural heritage, replacing colonial patterns of cultural alienation. This creates national security risks associated with the erosion of national cultural identities. African states inherited underdeveloped, exclusionary education systems whose curricula sustained European domination, then faced the impossible task of reforming these systems while rigidly expunging colonialism.

The language question reconfigures this dilemma. Research on language education and identity evaluation shows significant consequences in choosing between indigenous or colonial language approaches. Teaching in colonial languages may provide global mobility but risks cultural disconnection; teaching in indigenous languages may preserve heritage but limit economic opportunities. This tension reflects broader questions about what kind of nation is being imagined—now oriented toward global integration or cultural authenticity.

WHY THE NATION REMAINS IMPORTANT

Scholars propose alternative frameworks for teaching national identity in post-colonial contexts. One approach conceptualises teaching national identity as “play”—an interactive, exploratory process rather than instruction.

But how can a country so troubled with deep structural and geopolitical existential challenges not develop institutional roles in engendering the very idea of nationhood and love for the country? In fact, today’s committed citizens are all part of the post-independence cohort, or their children and grandchildren, who were provided this fundamental grounding in love for one’s country and knowledge of the sacrifices that went into achieving independence. This instructional role, in my opinion, is not diminishing—it is in fact more urgent than ever.

GLOBAL NATIONALISM CONTEXT

Recent research highlights

how global nationalism complicates efforts to construct curriculum with student identities. Studies in Catalonia and the United States show how efforts to counteract deficit views and re-centre curriculum in community priorities encountered challenges in different nationalist contexts. Global nationalism as a context can potentially undermine efforts to link curriculum and identity, requiring sustained attention to the dynamic, fluid character of identity.

Survey data from 23 countries reveals that most respondents consider speaking the same language (55%) and sharing traditions and customs (51%) more important for national identity than sharing birthplaces (50%). This suggests that national identity formation is not straightforward but an outcome of protracted socialisation and reculturation. Formal curricula touch upon national identity through languages, history, geography, social studies, and civic education, yet these efforts must navigate competing ideological pressures.

CAN WE THINK THIS PROBLEM AFRESH?

The way forward requires educators to embrace complexity rather than retreat into simplistic narratives. Teaching national identity as malleable rather than fixed allows students to engage critically with their nation’s history while maintaining civic attachment. This approach acknowledges colonial trauma without being trapped by it, recognizing hybridity without surrendering to nihilism. It requires what scholars call

“national interpretation” of citizenship education—promoting epistemological approaches based on rights and responsibilities rather than subordination.

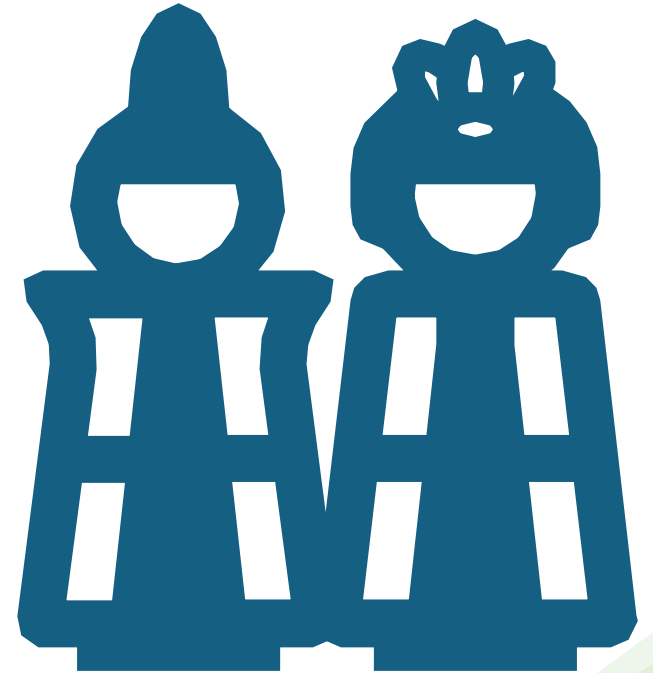
Educators must also resist the false choice between national pride and critical engagement. National education policies, curricula, and textbooks construct the nation and delineate characteristics of “good citizens”. One of the education system’s most important tasks is developing strong sense of national pride and making students feel part of the larger national community. Yet this must be done honestly, acknowledging historical complexities while building toward inclusive futures.

The challenge in post-colonial countries is not merely ideological but fundamentally pedagogical and epistemic. It requires constructing national narratives that are historically honest, culturally grounded, and ethically meaningful—narratives that acknowledge hybridity without surrendering to nihilism, that foster pride without denying complexity, and that prepare students for global engagement without severing them from their heritage. In a world where both Right and Left declare the nation irrelevant, educators must insist on its continued significance—not as an uncritical object of devotion, but as an ever-evolving project of collective self-determination.

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- **Key Terms and Conceptual Framework**

- **Cosmopolitanism vs. Nation-State:** Cosmopolitanism posits that all human beings belong to a single global community governed by universal moral standards. In contrast, the nation-state model asserts that political sovereignty, democratic accountability, and social welfare are rooted within historically bounded territorial units. For instance, while a multinational tech executive may adopt a cosmopolitan lifestyle, their fundamental civil protections and property rights are guaranteed by a specific nation-state.
- **Epistemic Violence and Cultural Epistemicide:** Formulated by post-colonial thinkers such as Gayatri Spivak and Boaventura de Sousa Santos, these terms describe the systematic destruction, marginalization, or delegitimization of indigenous knowledge systems, languages, and worldviews by colonial frameworks. An example is the historical delegitimization of traditional indigenous water harvesting systems (*Ahar-Pyne* or *Zabo*) in favor of standardized Western engineering models during colonial rule.
- **Post-Colonial Hybridity:** A concept advanced by theorist Homi Bhabha suggesting that cultural identities in formerly colonized societies are neither purely indigenous nor purely colonial, but exist in a "Third Space" of continuous translation and negotiation. For example, modern Indian administrative and legal institutions retain a British Westminster structure while operating through indigenous cultural practices and vernacular political languages.
- **Maximal vs. Minimal Citizenship Education:** Minimal citizenship education limits pedagogy to passive civic literacy—memorizing constitutional articles, state machinery, and voting procedures. Maximal citizenship education empowers students with critical consciousness, structural awareness, participatory skills, and an understanding of the balance between constitutional rights and fundamental civic obligations.
- **Technocratic Globalism:** An ideological orientation prioritizing borderless capital flows, algorithmic efficiency, and supranational market integration over sovereign political jurisdictions. It views the nation-state as an operational friction point or an arbitrary regulatory boundary to be circumvented through digital platforms and financial arbitrage.
- **Teaching Ambivalence:** A pedagogical methodology adopted in complex, multi-ethnic, and post-colonial democracies (such as Sweden or India) where national identity is taught through inquiry, critical reflection, and debate rather than rigid, uncritical indoctrination.



- **Core Thematic Discourse and Substantive Arguments**

- **The Ideological Squeeze from Left and Right:** Post-colonial education faces a dual challenge. The cosmopolitan Left critiques the nation-state as an artificial colonial container that suppresses organic sub-national identities (caste, region, ethnicity) and fosters exclusionary chauvinism. Concurrently, the hyper-capitalist and technocratic Right views the nation-state as an inefficient regulatory drag on market efficiency and global technological integration.
- **The Post-Colonial Sovereignty Paradox:** Western liberal democracies consolidated their territorial sovereignty and domestic political economies over centuries before experimenting with post-national, supranational frameworks. Conversely, post-colonial democracies are pressured to "transcend" national identity while still actively securing disputed borders, reconciling deep-seated social hierarchies, and building foundational state capacity.
- **The Alienation of Gen Z:** Digital native generations, immersed in borderless algorithmic ecosystems, risk experiencing epistemic uprooting (*deracination*). When the classroom reduces history either to uncritical political hagiography or to an unremitting narrative of structural oppression, students are left without an intellectual basis for civic duty and national solidarity.
- **Nationhood as an Instrument for Collective Self-Determination:** Far from being an outdated relic, the sovereign democratic nation-state remains the only viable institutional mechanism capable of enforcing the rule of law, regulating transnational capital, redistributing wealth, and protecting fundamental rights for historically marginalized populations.



- **Historical Evolution of Nation-Building and Education**

- **Colonial Subjugation and Epistemic Displacement (1835–1947):** The British colonial administration formalized educational policy through Thomas Babington Macaulay's *Minute on Indian Education* (1835) and the *Wood's Despatch* (1854). These policies aimed to create an English-educated administrative intermediary class alienated from native cultural roots. In response, national leaders established alternative epistemological institutions, such as Rabindranath Tagore's *Visva-Bharati*, Mahatma Gandhi's *Nai Talim* (Basic Education), and Bal Gangadhar Tilak's *Deccan Education Society*.
 - **Post-Independence State-Building and Composite Culture (1947–1970s):** Following the trauma of Partition and integration of over 500 princely states, the primary educational objective was national integration and scientific modernization. Under the recommendations of the *Radhakrishnan Commission* (1948), the *Mudaliar Commission* (1952), and the *Kothari Commission* (1964–66), institutions like the NCERT (1961) were established to build a standardized, pan-Indian civic identity anchored in secularism, non-alignment, and industrial development.
 - **Regional Assertions and Policy Formalization (1970s–1990):** The 42nd Constitutional Amendment (1976) moved education from the State List to the Concurrent List, reinforcing Union-State coordination. The *National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986* introduced a National Curriculum Framework with a common core, balancing pan-Indian values with India's diverse regional and linguistic realities.
 - **Post-Liberalization, Digitalization, and NEP 2020 (1991–Present):** Economic liberalization in 1991 expanded private schooling and English-medium technical education, creating a globally competitive workforce while widening educational inequality. The *National Education Policy (NEP) 2020* represents a contemporary attempt to bridge this divide by promoting mother-tongue instruction in early years, integrating the Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), and fostering global competitiveness alongside constitutional citizenship.
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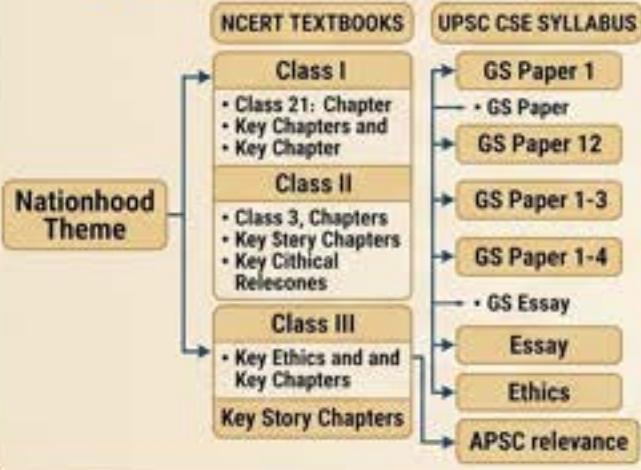
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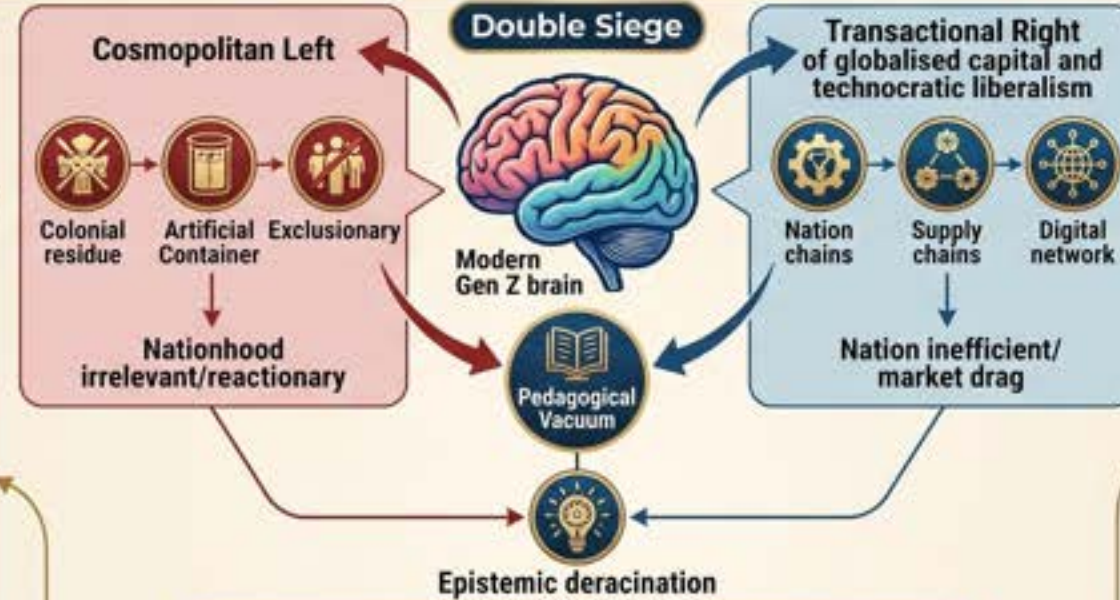
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UPSC CSE COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS: TEACHING NATIONHOOD TO GEN Z

CURRICULAR LINKAGES



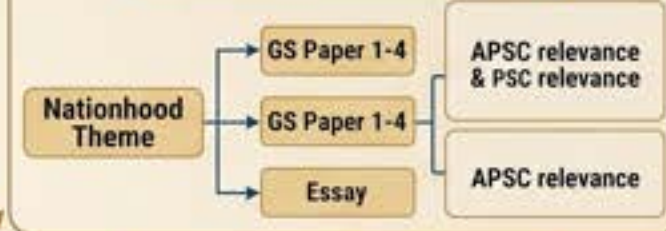
MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS



WHY NATIONHOOD REMAINS CRUCIAL



CURRICULAR LINKAGES



HISTORICAL TIMELINE



WAY FORWARD



Philosophical and Theoretical Foundations		
Philosophical School / Thinker	Core Thesis on the Nation	Application to Post-Colonial Pedagogy
Benedict Anderson (Imagined Communities)	The nation is a socially constructed, imagined political community forged through "print-capitalism" and mass media.	Explains how standardized national curricula create shared historical narratives across diverse linguistic groups.
Ernest Renan (What is a Nation?)	Nationhood is not bounded by race, language, or geography, but is a "daily plebiscite" rooted in shared heritage and collective purpose.	Validates post-colonial nationhood as an active democratic choice rather than an uncritical ethnic inheritance.
Jürgen Habermas (Constitutional Patriotism)	Post-traditional allegiance should be anchored in constitutional values, procedural democracy, and human rights rather than blood or soil.	Provides a framework for civic identity in diverse societies, preventing majoritarian excess while building unity.
Frantz Fanon & Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (Decolonizing the Mind)	Colonialism colonizes the mental universe of the colonized; genuine liberation requires reclaiming cultural consciousness.	Highlights the need to deconstruct colonial biases in history, social sciences, and language policies.
Michael Sandel & Charles Taylor (Communitarianism)	Individuals are "encumbered selves" shaped by their social, moral, and cultural communities, not unattached market agents.	Counters market-driven technocratic globalism by affirming that civic duty requires deep community roots.

- **Multidimensional Analysis**

- **Social Dimension:** Post-colonial societies are characterized by complex internal stratifications along caste, ethnic, religious, and linguistic lines. National identity serves as an overarching umbrella that mitigates parochial fractures and fosters horizontal solidarity. Without a shared civic consciousness, societies risk devolving into identity politics or social fragmentation, undermining collective action for social justice.
- **Political Dimension:** The democratic nation-state is the primary institutional anchor for political rights and representative governance. While majoritarian ethno-nationalism risks marginalizing minorities, a complete abandonment of national identity creates a political vacuum often filled by populist or anti-democratic forces. A robust conception of civic nationalism enables citizens to hold their government accountable.
- **Legal and Constitutional Dimension:** In India, nationhood is legally articulated through the Constitution. The Preamble outlines sovereignty, socialist welfare, secularism, and democracy, while **Article 51A (Fundamental Duties)** calls on every citizen to uphold national unity, preserve composite culture, and develop a scientific temper. Educational institutions bear the constitutional duty of operationalizing these mandates.
- **Ethical Dimension:** A purely transactional view of human existence reduces citizenship to consumerism, eroding civic virtues such as altruism, public service, and intergenerational responsibility. Cultivating ethical nationhood encourages individuals to look beyond narrow self-interest and contribute to collective welfare, historical reparations, and ecological stewardship.
- **International and Strategic Dimension:** In an anarchic international system marked by geopolitical competition, contested borders, and supply-chain vulnerabilities, a coherent national identity is essential for strategic autonomy. Internal ideological fragmentation can weaken a state's resilience against hybrid warfare, foreign information manipulation, and external economic coercion.
- **Economic Dimension:** The nation-state remains the only authority capable of managing progressive taxation, implementing welfare safety nets, investing in public goods, and driving domestic industrial policy (such as *Atmanirbhar Bharat*). Unchecked market globalism facilitates capital flight and tax arbitrage, undermining the state's capacity to address structural poverty and regional imbalances.

Curricular Linkages with NCERT Textbooks

- **Class 11 Political Science (*Political Theory*):**
 - *Chapter 7: Nationalism*: Directly addresses the debate between cultural-linguistic criteria for self-determination and inclusive political boundaries, exploring the tension between state sovereignty and global responsibility.
 - *Chapter 6: Citizenship*: Discusses full and equal membership in a political community, examining how post-colonial states balance universal rights with group-differentiated rights for marginalized sections.
- **Class 12 Political Science (*Politics in India since Independence*):**
 - *Chapter 1: Challenges of Nation-Building*: Details the three immediate post-independence challenges: shaping a united nation, establishing democracy, and ensuring inclusive economic development.
 - *Chapter 8: Regional Aspirations*: Analyzes the democratic negotiation of regional identities (e.g., Punjab, North-East, Jammu & Kashmir), demonstrating that accommodation strengthens, rather than weakens, the national fabric.
- **Class 12 Sociology (*Indian Society*):**
 - *Chapter 6: The Challenges of Cultural Diversity*: Analyzes how state policies handle minority rights, assimilation, secularism, and regionalism, distinguishing between authoritarian standardization and democratic pluralism.
- **Class 10 History (*India and the Contemporary World – II*):**
 - *Chapter 2: Nationalism in India*: Traces how diverse anti-colonial struggles (peasants, tribal communities, workers, and urban intelligentsia) were woven into a shared national movement through non-violent resistance and common cultural symbols.

- **Syllabus Linkages (UPSC & State PSC)**
 - **General Studies Paper 1:**
 - *Indian Society:* Effects of globalization on Indian culture; regionalism, secularism, communalism; factors maintaining social cohesion amidst linguistic and ethnic diversity.
 - *Modern Indian History:* Evolution of nationalist thought; anti-colonial resistance; the contribution of social reform movements to national consciousness.
 - **General Studies Paper 2:**
 - *Polity & Governance:* Constitutional philosophy; role of the state in human resource development; education policies (NEP 2020); balancing federal autonomy with national integration.
 - **General Studies Paper 3:**
 - *Economic Development & Security:* Challenges of structural unemployment, digital disruption, and economic sovereignty; internal security challenges stemming from radicalization, regional disparities, and hybrid warfare.
 - **General Studies Paper 4 (Ethics, Integrity, and Aptitude):**
 - *Foundational Values & Civic Ethics:* Fostering civic duty and constitutional morality; the ethical responsibility of citizens toward public institutions; resolving tensions between individual self-interest and the national common good.
- **Essay Paper:** Provides analytical depth for themes such as "*Nationalism in a Globalized Era*," "*Education as an Instrument of Social Transformation*," and "*Constitutional Morality vs. Majoritarian Sentiments*."
- **Optional Subjects:** Highly relevant for **Political Science and International Relations (PSIR)** (Concepts of Nation, Sovereignty, and Post-Colonial State Formations) and **Sociology** (Modernization, Education and Social Change, Nation-Building, and Ethnic Mobilization).



- **Strategic Policy Recommendations and Pedagogical Reforms**

- **Adopting the Pedagogy of Constitutional Patriotism:** Educational curricula should transition from passive, rote learning of historical events to an inquiry-based engagement with constitutional values. Textbooks must frame the nation not as a finished, static product, but as an evolving democratic project rooted in liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice.
- **Decolonizing Knowledge via Critical Synthesis:** Integrate the Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) and regional histories into school curricula without falling into uncritical revivalism. Emphasize indigenous contributions to mathematics, metallurgy, environmental conservation, and political philosophy while retaining modern scientific methodology.
- **Experiential and Community-Driven Civics:** Redesign civic education to be participatory rather than theoretical. Mandate structured rural/community immersion programs, youth parliaments, and local governance internships (such as observing Gram Sabhas and Urban Local Bodies) to foster empathy and real-world understanding of civic responsibilities.
- **Pragmatic Multilingualism:** Implement the Three-Language Formula effectively across all states. Prioritize primary education in the mother tongue to prevent cultural and cognitive alienation, while ensuring equitable access to English as a tool for global economic mobility.
- **Insulating Education from Partisan Polarization:** Establish independent, statutory curriculum boards composed of academicians, historians, and educators. This prevents frequent partisan revisions of textbooks and ensures stable, long-term pedagogical policies that foster critical thinking alongside genuine civic pride.

UPSC Civil Services Examination (Mains)

- **Mains GS-1 (2021):** "Has globalization led to the reduction of cultural diversity in India? Critically evaluate."
- **Mains GS-1 (2020):** "Customs and traditions suppress reason leading to obscurantism. Do you agree? Evaluate in the context of Indian society."
- **Mains GS-1 (2016):** "Has the linguistic reorganization of states consolidated Indian unity, or has it posed a threat to it? Discuss with examples."
- **Mains GS-2 (2020):** "The Indian Constitution has centralizing tendencies, yet it provides an architecture that accommodates sub-national aspirations. Examine."
- **Mains GS-2 (2018):** "How does the National Education Policy aim to transform the education system to meet the demands of a 21st-century knowledge economy while remaining rooted in Indian ethos?"
- **Mains GS-4 (2019):** "What do you understand by 'Constitutional Morality'? How does an individual develop it, and how does it sustain the democratic spirit of the nation?"
- **Essay Paper (2022):** "Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school."
- **Essay Paper (2017):** "Fulfilment of 'new aspirations' of youth requires a balance between traditional culture and modern science."

State Public Service Examinations

- **APSC GS-1 (Mains):** "Examine the role of the freedom movement in Assam in shaping a unified Indian national consciousness while retaining distinct regional cultural identities."
- **APSC GS-2 (Mains):** "Analyze the challenges of implementing the Three-Language Formula in multi-ethnic and multilingual states of North-East India."
- **APSC GS-4 (Mains):** "Can civic pride and patriotism be taught in classrooms, or are they outcomes of state justice and equitable governance? Give reasons."

A 'DIGITAL DAVOS' MEETS THE UNITED NATIONS

OPINION

HUGH DUGAN



This week, in the shadow of Wyoming's Teton Mountains, a "Digital Davos" will convene. The third annual Wyoming Blockchain Symposium, hosted by SALT and Krollen, will bring together the world's A-list of digital technology visionaries, entrepreneurs, and plutocrats — today's "ill-gests" — shaping the architecture of digital assets and blockchain-enabled finance. They possess trillions in resources, influence, and capabilities that increasingly shape public outcomes once reserved for governments alone.

This confluence will catalyze more forward-thinking digital assets regulation, create a more decentralized, rather than centrally-planned, global financial system, and drive greater institutional understanding and adoption of blockchain infrastructure," according to the agenda. And the Ts and the Os will be computing non-stop.

So, this is not merely a conference about Bitcoin, Ethereum, tokenization, blockchain, or distributed

ledgers. The 500 invited "tech bros," policy wonks, and digital magicians will make plug-and-play decisions redefining ownership, trust, value exchange, and institutional accountability in the globalizing digital asset domains.

And while sipping stories on the latest apps, this gang of 500 will be surveying the frontier where new AI models are birthed and raised. Eyes will continue to widen at how contracts, financial transactions, and supply lines are increasingly automated, verifiable, and efficient — and possible, eventually, autonomous.

Digital assets are no longer simply assets; they are becoming components of programmable systems capable of engineering economic behavior itself.

Yet we all sense the uncomfortable reality that will filter into Wyoming's rare air this week.

Digital technology is moving faster than human adaptation. How might humanity manage technology but technology manage humanity?

If it is designed to power humanity's future, we human beings must first digest it. Otherwise, the rapid month closures from today's digital popcorn soon overwhelm our capacity to deliberate, regulate, and release. When unknown-speed innovation forces us blunder and breathless, democratic institutions get

dizzy, citizens lose confidence, and humanity risks losing consciousness.

Therefore, the challenge for the masters of the universe this week is not simply one of fitting digital circles into square regulations or digital wallets into everyone's pocket. It is one of factoring human digestion into the digital domain.

Fortunately, these digital deities understand a simple truth: capital may be adventurous, but institutions require certainty. Pension funds, insurers, universities, sovereign investors, and banks are far more likely to deploy resources at scale when the rules of the road are clearly marked.

Wyoming has emerged as a safe haven for studying this horizon. The Cowboy State has positioned itself as a forward-looking, global-friendly jurisdiction for corralling blockchain and digital asset innovation into the future.

The state's leadership sees that regulatory clarity matters more than regulatory volume, and its politicians have brought this to U.S. Congress. The Digital Asset Market CLARITY Act seeks to establish comprehensive federal frameworks for digital assets and to distinguish the regulatory responsibilities of the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. CLARITY goes beyond regulating. It seeks to replace years of uncertainty and "regulation by enforcement" with statutory certainty, clearer definitions, registration pathways, and compliance standards for exchanges, brokers, dealers, and custodians.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Senate jammed the CLARITY plan before it could fly. Why? The bankers back home like their bull-and-chain-on-money. And they fear that blockchain would drag them into anarchy and shadow gross.

This speaks loudly to why globally interoperable norms on digital assets cannot wait on legislatures. Today's digital legends can shoot more quickly and can outsmart and outlive the sheriff. They will continue this week, establishing governance without government for settling their stakes worldwide.



AI generated image

Their self-fashions. CLARITY-aligned thinking can gather toward broader institutional participation in the U.S. Their actions also inform other jurisdictions seeking to balance innovation, investor protection, and competitiveness in the rapidly evolving marketplace — which is already global.

Yes, the challenge for mapping extends far beyond the United States. Digital assets are inherently transnational. Blockchain ignores borders. Smart contracts do not stop at customs checkpoints. Decentralized finance operates within networks that are

globally by design. As a result, nationally fragmented digital asset regimes increasingly seek forms of integration under broadly applicable standards and norms.

Critically, all need to be self-driven and self-enforcing, not subject to bureaucracy and market control by a slender base of operators, whether in Silicon Valley, Wall Street, or elsewhere. This evolution begs for a larger transformation in global management itself.

The traditional multilateral model — governments negotiating with governments — remains indispensable. But it is no longer sufficient. We are entering an era of multi-modal management, one in which authority, expertise, cooperation, and legitimacy flow simultaneously through governments, corporations, financial institutions, digital communities, universities, civil society organizations, and increasingly autonomous technological networks.

To build global trust at scale, we must close mountain passes to connect digital pioneers and the world's multilateral government institutions, such as the United Nations and multilateral development banks.

Multilateral Accountability Associates is identifying such pathways for connecting extraordinary digital capabilities with existing, globally legitimate frameworks capable of sustaining trust at scale. But the United Nations Organization itself could use some orienting. The twentieth-century UN helped manage industrial-era globalization. Now the twenty-first century requires evolving the Organization into something more networked, more responsive, and more technologically enabled. The status-quo bricks-and-mortar architecture of global governance requires a new vernacular, a virtualization capable of incorporating the innovations underpinning digital assets and decentralized systems.

Coincidentally, candidates for UN Secretary-General each declare that today's floundering Organization needs such reform and re-purposing. This heightens the moment of opportunity before us. One mountain pathway maps us toward developing a virtual twin of the United Nations — a UN decentralized autonomous organization (DAO).

A UN DAO would function as a complementary platform to the bricks-and-mortar United Nations. It would be a programmable governance platform capable of automating verifiable routine actions across the UN's three foundational pillars: peace and security; economic and social development; and human rights. Through trusted data feeds, conditional smart mandates, transparent verification systems, and modular decision tools, such a virtual architecture could increase accountability, accelerate operational responses, and reduce diplomatic friction while preserving human judgment where politics and values remain indispensible. This is not a vision of machines replacing diplomacy. It is a vision of machines strengthening diplomacy. It would prove humanity's capacity to harness digital tools instead of being harnessed by them.

So, CLARITY and a UN DAO would seek the same objective, but at different scales. One seeks to establish transparent rules, defined authorities, and verifiable accountability for digital assets within the United States; the other extends those principles to the global commons. CLARITY would acknowledge that twenty-first-century markets require governance frameworks designed for networked systems. A UN DAO would apply that same logic to international cooperation itself, transforming multilateral institutions from largely analog mechanisms into digitally enabled platforms of trust, transparency, and rapid coordinated action.

This suggests that the future need not be centralized or chaotic, but rather pro-

grammable, accountable, and gradually global.

If blockchain, digital assets, and artificial intelligence are to form such a virtuous circle instead of a doom loop, they must become instruments of shared prosperity rather than isolated advantage. They must help create systems in which innovation scales trust, broadens participation, and strengthens accountability.

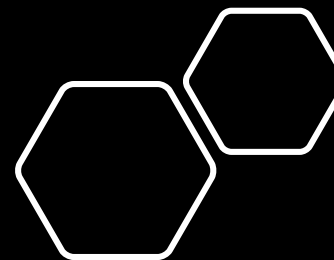
Silicon Valley's digital utopianism has found fertile opportunities and is imagining Rocky Mountain highs in its future. But to get there it must exercise responsibility as outward as its influence. It must shepherd blockchain innovation, AI capability, regulatory clarity, and multilateral legitimacy into a common framework through which humanity can manage itself effectively — and prevail. The future of digital assets ultimately depends on a regulatory regime as sophisticated as digital technology itself.

This week's cattle drive of tech titans to Wyoming arrives at precisely the right moment to ponder and act. As a private event, it will circle its wagons as much as possible, but eventually it must break camp, revealing its course forward for digital-asset gold.

The ultimate goal remains refreshingly simple.

A world where technology does not merely multiply wealth, but rather multiplies opportunity. A world where digital transformation enhances human dignity. A world where, at long last, 1 = 0 = everybody.

Hugh Dugan is President of Multilateral Accountability Associates and former White House Senior Director in the National Security Council.



Key Terms and Concepts

- **Blockchain and Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT):** A decentralized, cryptographically secured database shared across a network of computers. Unlike traditional centralized databases managed by a single authority (such as a central bank or corporate server), a distributed ledger records transactions immutably across multiple nodes. *Example:* Land registry systems where ownership records cannot be altered retroactively without network consensus.
- **Decentralized Autonomous Organization (DAO):** An organization governed by transparent rules encoded as computer programs (smart contracts) on a blockchain, rather than through hierarchical corporate boards or centralized human management. Decision-making is typically conducted through tokenized voting by community members. *Example:* A community-managed development fund that automatically disburses grants when a quorum of stakeholders votes in favor of a proposal.
- **Smart Contracts:** Self-executing digital contracts with the terms of the agreement directly written into lines of code. They automatically verify, facilitate, and enforce performance when predetermined conditions are met, eliminating the need for intermediaries. *Example:* An automated parametric crop insurance protocol that releases payouts to farmers instantly when satellite weather data confirms a drought threshold has been crossed.
- **Tokenization and Digital Assets:** The process of converting rights to an asset—tangible (like real estate or gold) or intangible (like intellectual property or carbon credits)—into a digital token on a blockchain. This allows fractional ownership, near-instant settlement, and programmable liquidity.
- **Digital Davos:** A conceptual metaphor describing high-level summits where global technology titans, venture capitalists, blockchain architects, and policymakers assemble to deliberate and shape the future architecture of global digital governance, mirroring the traditional World Economic Forum at Davos.
- **Regulation by Enforcement vs. Statutory Clarity:**
 - *Regulation by Enforcement:* A reactive approach where regulatory bodies establish rules retroactively through ad-hoc lawsuits, enforcement actions, and penalties without clear, pre-existing statutory guidance.
 - *Statutory Clarity:* A proactive approach where lawmakers establish well-defined, codified legal definitions, jurisdictional boundaries, and compliance pathways upfront.
- **Multi-Nodal Governance:** A polycentric model of governance where authority, policy-making, and regulatory compliance do not flow solely from sovereign nation-states, but emerge through the synchronized interaction of governments, international bodies, private corporations, civil society, and autonomous algorithmic networks.
- **Virtual Twin / Digital Twin in Governance:** A digital simulation or software-driven counterpart of a physical institution. In multilateral governance, it refers to an algorithmic platform that automates verifiable, administrative, and data-intensive workflows while preserving human leadership for high-stakes diplomacy and ethical judgments.

- **Main Arguments and Substantive Analysis**
- **Core Thesis**
 - The contemporary global order is witnessing an unprecedented convergence between decentralized frontier technologies (blockchain, smart contracts, decentralized autonomous systems) and multilateral institutional governance. If left unregulated, rapid technological acceleration risks outstripping democratic institutions; however, if harnessed through structured statutory frameworks and multilateral integration, decentralized architecture can revitalize global governance, enhance institutional transparency, and foster shared human prosperity.
- **Key Substantive Points**
 - **Programmable Economic Architecture:** Digital assets have evolved beyond speculative cryptocurrencies into foundational, programmable infrastructure capable of organizing global supply chains, international trade settlements, and institutional accountability.
 - **The Velocity Gap:** Technological innovation moves at exponential speed, whereas democratic deliberation and institutional policy-making operate at linear, deliberative speeds. This asymmetry risks policy paralysis and erosion of public trust if governance cannot adapt.
 - **Necessity of Institutional Certainty:** While venture capital embraces volatility, institutional capital (such as sovereign wealth funds and pension managers) requires unambiguous statutory definitions, regulatory boundaries, and predictable compliance pathways before deploying scale capital.
 - **Transnational Frictions and Multi-Nodal Reality:** Digital assets and decentralized networks transcend territorial borders and customs checkpoints by default. Consequently, traditional Westphalian diplomacy (state-to-state negotiation) must expand into a multi-nodal framework that incorporates sovereign states, tech developers, international organizations, and digital communities.
 - **The Virtual Multilateral Institution (UN DAO Concept):** Multilateral institutions established in the mid-twentieth century face bureaucratic friction and operational fatigue. Creating a programmable, blockchain-backed virtual twin of international organizations can automate verifiable administrative tasks (such as humanitarian aid tracking, climate finance distribution, and treaty monitoring) while reserving human diplomatic capacity for political dispute resolution.
- **Counter-Arguments and Tensions**
 - *Techno-Deterministic Governance vs. Democratic Legitimacy:* Purely algorithmic governance risks reducing nuanced human problems to binary computational outcomes, potentially bypassing representative political processes and public accountability.
 - *State Sovereignty vs. Borderless Networks:* Sovereign states are inherently reluctant to cede monetary control and regulatory oversight to decentralized, borderless protocols that operate outside traditional legal jurisdictions.
 - *Plutocratic Centralization:* Decentralized ecosystems frequently exhibit high concentrations of wealth and governance tokens among a small cohort of early adopters and tech elites, challenging the democratic premise of decentralization.

- **Historical Evolution of the Issue**

- **Pre-1990s (The Analog Multilateral Order):** Following World War II, global governance was anchored in centralized, state-centric architectures such as the United Nations, IMF, and World Bank. Cryptographic research remained confined to academic and defense spheres.
- **1990s to 2008 (The Rise of Cyber-Libertarianism and the Genesis of DLT):** The expansion of the commercial internet birthed the cypherpunk movement, which advocated for cryptographic tools to safeguard individual autonomy against centralized surveillance. The 2008 Global Financial Crisis catalyzed the creation of Bitcoin, presenting a decentralized alternative to centralized fiat banking systems.
- **2009 to 2017 (Smart Contracts and the Wild-West Phase):** The development of the Ethereum network expanded blockchain capabilities beyond simple peer-to-peer payments to programmable smart contracts and decentralized applications. This era saw rampant speculative volatility and illicit activity, triggering reactive enforcement actions by global regulators without clear legislative mandates.
- **2018 to 2023 (Sub-National Sandboxes and Institutional Frameworks):** Forward-looking sub-national jurisdictions (such as Wyoming in the US) and supranational entities (such as the European Union via the Markets in Crypto-Assets regulation) pioneered statutory frameworks. They created special depository institutions, recognized DAOs as legal entities, and established clear licensing pathways to attract compliant institutional capital.
- **Present Day (Multi-Nodal Multilateralism):** Global governance bodies, including the United Nations through initiatives like the Global Digital Compact, increasingly recognize that frontier technologies (AI, DLT, DAOs) require proactive multilateral norms, transitioning global governance from passive oversight to active technological integration.

THE CONVERGENCE: DIGITAL DAVOS MEETS THE UN



THE 'UN DAO' CONCEPT (A DIGITAL TWIN)

Decentralized autonomous organization



MULTIDIMENSIONAL IMPACTS



SOCIAL

Human-Centric vs.
Mechanized Diplomacy



ECONOMIC

Programmable Systems
vs. Shared Prosperity



LEGAL

Statutory Clarity vs.
Regulation by Enforcement



ETHICAL

Accountable Algorithms
vs. Political Value

KEY THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Code is Law
(Lex Cryptographica)

VS

Sovereign State
Authority



Decentralized
Networks

VS



Traditional
Hierarchy

UPSC CSE SYLLABUS INTEGRATION & NCERT LINKS

- Mapping to General Studies Papers:
 - GS II: International Relations
 - GS III: Technology, Economic Growth
 - GS III: Technology, Economic Growth
- NCERT Linkshud:
 - Globalization (<https://bit.globalization>)
 - International Forum ([International Organisations](#))

PRELIMS QUESTIONS PRACTICE (Illustrative)

1. What is a DAO? (a) [def] (b) [def] ...
(a) indicative ouransets?
2. How does DLT impact traditional
multilateralism?
3. Define "Statutory Clarity" in the context of DLT
governance.

- **Logical and Philosophical Foundations**

- **Lex Cryptographica vs. Legal Positivism:** At the heart of this discourse lies the tension between traditional legal positivism (laws enacted and enforced by sovereign states) and *Lex Cryptographica* (rules enforced deterministically via cryptographic code). The emerging consensus is that code cannot entirely substitute for law; rather, statutory law must provide the legal parameters within which autonomous code operates.
- **The Collingridge Dilemma (The Pacing Problem):** Technology policy faces a fundamental paradox: early in an innovation's lifecycle, its social impacts cannot be easily predicted, making regulation speculative; by the time unintended consequences become glaringly apparent, the technology is deeply entrenched and difficult to regulate. Proactive, multi-nodal governance seeks to resolve this dilemma by instituting collaborative regulatory sandboxes before systemic lock-in occurs.
- **Habermasian Communicative Action vs. Algorithmic Consensus:** Philosopher Jürgen Habermas emphasized deliberative democracy, where legitimacy arises from transparent, reasoned public discourse among human citizens. When autonomous systems and DAOs handle resource allocation, there is an inherent philosophical risk of replacing empathetic, human ethical deliberation with cold, mechanical optimization.
- **Rawlsian Distributive Justice:** Applying John Rawls's "Veil of Ignorance," a technological and financial framework is truly just only if it improves the welfare of the least-advantaged members of society. Frontier technology governance must therefore be evaluated not by how efficiently it creates wealth for early adopters, but by how effectively it democratizes access to global financial and administrative public goods.



- **Multidimensional Analysis**
- **Social Dimension**
 - *Democratizing Financial Inclusion:* Decentralized ledgers enable unbanked and underbanked populations to access secure remittances, micro-lending, and identity verification without relying on costly intermediaries.
 - *Mitigating Digital Exclusion:* Without intentional public policy, the transition to blockchain-backed public systems risks widening the socio-economic digital divide, leaving digitally illiterate populations excluded from basic public services.
- **Political Dimension**
 - *Erosion of Westphalian Hegemony:* Borderless, decentralized networks challenge the state's traditional monopoly over money issuance and cross-border capital flow monitoring.
 - *Rise of Non-State Technocratic Influence:* Tech founders and decentralized protocol communities now wield influence comparable to sovereign nation-states, requiring formal institutional engagement mechanisms.
- **Legal Dimension**
 - *Jurisdictional Fragmentation:* The mismatch between territorially bound national courts and placeless, distributed networks generates severe jurisdictional friction regarding asset recovery, taxation, and liability.
 - *Legal Personhood of DAOs:* Traditional corporate law struggles to assign civil and criminal liability when an autonomous protocol causes financial or social harm, accelerating the need for codified legal personality for DAOs.
- **Ethical Dimension**
 - *Human Dignity vs. Algorithmic Automation:* Entrusting high-stakes societal decisions (such as humanitarian aid distribution or refugee verification) to autonomous protocols risks undermining human dignity when exceptional, un-programmable circumstances arise.
 - *Accountability and Transparency:* Transparent ledgers provide unparalleled auditability to combat public corruption, yet total financial transparency must be balanced against individual privacy rights.
- **International Dimension**
 - *Multilateralism 2.0:* Incorporating decentralized architecture into the United Nations structure could reduce bureaucratic overhead, ensure tamper-proof delivery of development aid, and automate compliance with international treaties.
 - *Geopolitical Tech Competition:* Global standards for digital assets and smart contracts are becoming a battleground for geopolitical influence between major powers seeking to set the defaults for next-generation financial infrastructure.
- **Economic Dimension**
 - *Lowering Frictional Costs:* Programmable finance eliminates multi-day settlement cycles, foreign exchange markups, and correspondent banking fees in international trade.
 - *Macro-Financial Stability Risks:* Widespread integration of volatile digital assets into mainstream financial systems without adequate regulatory safeguards could transmit systemic contagion to traditional banking networks.



Linkages with NCERT Textbooks		
Class & Subject	Textbook Title	Chapter Name & Core Linkage
Class XII Political Science	Contemporary World Politics	Chapter 4: International Organisations: Relevant for analyzing the structural limitations of 20th-century multilateral institutions (UN) and the necessity of technological modernization and administrative reform.
Class XII Political Science	Contemporary World Politics	Chapter 7: Globalisation: Directly connects to how borderless digital networks and transnational financial technologies diminish traditional state control over economic borders.
Class XI Political Science	Political Theory	Chapter 3 & 4: Equality and Social Justice: Provides the normative framework to evaluate whether decentralized technology promotes egalitarian wealth distribution or deepens existing class inequalities.
Class XII Sociology	Social Change and Development in India	Chapter 4: Change and Development in the Rural Society & Globalisation: Useful for examining the socio-economic impacts of digital public infrastructure and financial technology on agrarian and marginalized communities.
Class XII Economics	Introductory Macroeconomics	Chapter 3: Money and Banking: Essential for contrasting traditional central bank fiat currency issuance, commercial bank credit creation, and sovereign monetary policy against decentralized digital assets and CBDCs.

- **Linkages with UPSC CSE Syllabus**
- **General Studies Paper I**
 - *Effects of Globalization on Society:* The transformation of social institutions, work culture, and local economies through decentralized, borderless technological systems.
- **General Studies Paper II**
 - *Important International Institutions:* Modernizing the United Nations structure, operational reform of multilateral agencies, and addressing institutional deficits in the 21st century.
 - *Government Policies and Interventions:* Statutory legislative design versus reactive administrative enforcement; establishing regulatory sandboxes for emerging sectors.
- **General Studies Paper III**
 - *Science and Technology:* Applications of Blockchain, Smart Contracts, Distributed Ledgers, and Artificial Intelligence in public administration, governance, and supply chains.
 - *Indian Economy and Issues:* Financial inclusion, modernizing digital payment infrastructure, regulating digital assets, and preserving monetary sovereignty.
 - *Internal Security & Cyber Threats:* Cross-border money laundering, terror financing vulnerabilities through unregulated decentralized platforms, and cybersecurity governance.
- **General Studies Paper IV (Ethics) & Essay**
 - *Ethics in Governance & Technology:* Maintaining human accountability in automated systems; preventing technological determinism from overriding human dignity; ethical distribution of technological dividends.
 - *Essay Themes:* "Technology as a Facilitator of Human Potential, Not Its Master"; "Re-imagining Global Multilateralism in a Fractured Digital Age."
- **Optional Subject Linkages**
 - **Political Science & International Relations (PSIR):** Theories of global governance, transnational non-state actors, erosion of state sovereignty, and institutional reform of international regimes.
 - **Public Administration:** E-governance, administrative accountability, algorithmic transparency, reducing bureaucratic red tape through smart contracts, and modern regulatory architecture.
 - **Sociology:** Digital capitalism, the emergence of a technocratic elite, changes in social stratification, and the impact of rapid technological shifts on social cohesion.

- **Way Forward and Policy Recommendations**

- **Establish Multilateral Algorithmic Standards:** The international community, through bodies like the UN and G20, must establish standardized, interoperable protocols for cross-border digital assets, preventing jurisdictional arbitrage and ensuring unified anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorist financing (CFT) compliance.
- **Shift from Reactive Enforcement to Codified Statutes:** National legislatures must enact comprehensive statutory frameworks that clearly distinguish digital asset classes, establish precise regulatory purviews (e.g., separating commodities from securities), and provide predictable registration and compliance pathways.
- **Implement Hybrid Multilateral Governance ("Human-in-the-Loop"):** International organizations should adopt a dual-track operational model: leveraging decentralized smart contracts to automate verifiable, routine tasks (such as humanitarian supply chain tracking and disaster relief fund disbursements), while maintaining human diplomatic oversight for negotiations, peacebuilding, and political mediation.
- **Expand Regulatory Sandboxes and Sub-National Innovation:** Governments should foster controlled testing environments—such as India's GIFT City (IFSCA) or state-level regulatory sandboxes—allowing developers and financial institutions to test decentralized innovations under direct regulatory supervision.
- **Leverage Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) as an Equalizer:** Rather than allowing digital ecosystems to be monopolized by private plutocrats, states must build and champion open-access, sovereign digital public infrastructure (modeled after the India Stack—Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker, and ONDC) to guarantee equitable public access to the digital economy.



- **UPSC Civil Services Examination: Mains**
 - **Mains 2022 (GS Paper 3):**
 - "What is cryptocurrency? How does it affect global and Indian financial systems? Discuss the need for a global regulatory framework to govern crypto-assets."
 - **Mains 2021 (GS Paper 2):**
 - "The long-awaited reform of the United Nations Security Council and its broader institutional architecture continues to face structural inertia. Examine how emerging global challenges demand a new paradigm of multilateral governance."
 - **Mains 2020 (GS Paper 3):**
 - "What are the major applications of blockchain technology beyond cryptocurrencies? Discuss its potential in revolutionizing governance and service delivery in India."
- **APSC Examination (Assam Public Service Commission)**
 - **APSC CCE Mains (GS Paper 3):**
 - "Examine the role of emerging digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain in transforming governance, enhancing administrative transparency, and preventing leakage in welfare delivery systems."
 - **APSC CCE Mains (GS Paper 5 - Assam Specific Context):**
 - "Discuss the potential of adopting Distributed Ledger Technology in land revenue management, flood relief distribution, and public procurement systems in Assam."

When anarchy imperils parliamentary democracy

Rahul Gandhi prefers extra-parliamentary method to challenge government, shuns debate on floor of the House. Alarming statement was made by him at the Rachnatmak Congress meet.

OPINION

SHUBHABRATA BHATTACHARYA



As we celebrate 80th Independence Day in the 77th year of our Republic, the hubbub of Parliamentary Democracy seems imperilled. Degradation of Parliamentary prerogatives have become a routine feature since the late 1980s. Never before has Parliament been so idle as witnessed during the Manmohan session which ended on 13 August, almost abruptly, as both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha were adjourned sine die on the last day of the Session, sans any business being transacted that day.

Addressing a meeting of Congress Rachnatmak (renewal) Department at the Manjushree Hall of the Constitution Club that evening, Leader of Opposition

Rahul Gandhi lamented, "We didn't let the House function..." and added "the so-called Chaudhary run away". Then, Indian democracy has indeed proved that it has a Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, who like Mahatma Gandhi in pre-Independence days, is the Godfather of Indian National Congress, but prefers the street and extra-parliamentary force over debate and discussion in the House.

Rahul Gandhi, of course, created a record of sorts by not being absent on any day of the session, unlike in the past, when he flew abroad when Parliament was in session. His activity, however, was not inside the House. They were confined mostly in the compound outside as he shied away from debate after demanding a statement from Home Minister Amit Shah, who after some radio-silence, had agreed to discuss the problematic day of the Session. But House could not function.

After yesterday by an MP dressed as a sadhu collecting funds for a temple in the past week, infinite exhibition went a step further

in this week. Newly-elected Rajya Sabha MP Pawan Khanna, reputed for his acidic, abusive statements as Congress spokesperson, carried a soft toy monkey in his hand and held a demonstration outside—a few Congress MPs who gathered around him also displayed soft toys. Rahul Gandhi's reaction to this monkey business is not known but it's understood that Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, otherwise an active participant in the demonstration outside, has chided Khanna.

Ruling NDA MPs twice came face to face with agitating Opposition MPs, carrying banners and placards. Parliament's security staff had to form a human wall to prevent the rival groups from indulging in fistbumps and clashing. Drunkenness was sent for a six. Parliament of India reached its nadir—competing with billingsgate, today fish market in Central London, is hellish.

Opposition feels elated, as its demand for referring the Bill to amend FCRA (Foreign Contributions Regulations Act) to a joint committee for wider discussion before it is introduced as legislation, FCRA, with which Opposition led by Congress is upset, is a legislation of Emergency origin. It was enacted in July 1960 to

"regulate foreign contributions and hospitality consistent with values of a sovereign, democratic Republic". Terms of the 8th Lok Sabha,



Rahul Gandhi addresses Rachnatmak Congress Convention, in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

elected in 1971 had expired in March 1976 and was extended by a year as Internal Emergency was on. Thus FCRA, whose purpose and intention were never in doubt, is essentially a legislation passed by Lok Sabha when it was perhaps not in a legitimate incarnation, on terms extended beyond normal terms. With passage of 80 years the initial scope of FCRA has expanded and the present government wants to make it stringent, especially to curb activities of NGOs (non-governmental organisations) which are not inconsistent with "values of sovereign democratic republic", as defined in the initial Indian Constitution law.

Opposition also has reason to feel comfortable as the proposed legislation on women's reservation, which they thought will be a bid to slide Delimitation or one-state one election by a side door, was not tabled. The need to muster two-third majority in Lok Sabha and in Rajya Sabha had seen a spate of defections on the eve of Monsoon Session. The 20 Trinamool renegades who joined a non-descript entity called NCP (Nationalist Congress Party of India), which hitherto had not even a municipal councillor in its ranks, continued to be referred in Lok Sabha records as members of AITC (All India Trinamool Congress) as Speaker, who initially had enthusiastically embraced them at his home in the inter-session period, wary of the outcome of the Shri Sena split case being heard by Supreme Court (court

has raised searching questions), did not accord them recognition as a group in Parliament. This of course did not deter "NCP" MPs from attending the weekly Mangal Milan of NDA MPs on Tuesdays. They had the privilege of being invited to tea with the Prime Minister—which incidentally was not extended to other members in this session.

On the eve of the session, BJP's recognition (access to environment, which essentially is echo-system—echoing a point of view repeatedly and effectively) had spread messages in social media saying both above legislation were certainly happening as BJP will muster necessary support. Credibility of the cadre led by the ecosystem will come under stress now as the ex-

pected did not happen. And this too goes against the Opposition.

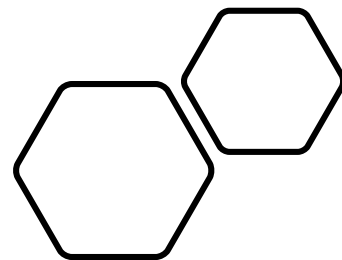
In between the Session outcome of a by-election created a ripple. It was whiplash, not a bang. The victory of Jan Suraj supreme President Kishor at Bankapur in Bihar cannot be compared to Manmohan in 1971, in which the sitting Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Tribhuvan Narayan Singh of Congress (B) lost to B.K. Dehshiri of Congress (I). Coming just before the 1971 Lok Sabha mid-term poll, Manmohan was a storm in the wind. Bankapur has no such claim to fame. However, the assessment of the Bihar unit of BJP while studying the setback, that the party failed to push its narrative, is worth taking note of.

Alarming statement was made by Rahul Gandhi at the Rachnatmak Congress meet, which suggests possible anarchy. "The Congress Party and the Opposition have started expressing themselves... until the day Narendra Modi resigns and Amit Shah steps down, neither of them will be able to sleep—unless they finally collapse and admit, this is beyond us, let us go." Mouthed at the Constitution Club, it was possibly the worst overheard on Constitution of India.

Rahul Gandhi wants Amit Shah to resign in the aftermath of injuries received by angry Cuckoo movement agitators

in New Delhi on 20 July. He has no such demands on Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren for the lathicharge on peaceful youth demanding fair selection in jobs in Ranchi. When asked, he told a media meet that he condones violence against youth in Ranchi. The Soren government has four Congress ministers, holding important portfolios like Finance and Health—Rahul has not asked them to quit.

Amit Shah had his way—legislations of Home Ministry and Cooperation Department were piloted by his Ministers of State, Nitinand Rai and Manish Kumar Mahesh, respectively, and passed by voice vote sans discussion. Among the few Bills passed by voice vote amidst dis and disruption was one concerning minerals—a day after the legislative action Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren wrote to the Centre protesting that the amendments adversely affected the interests of his state. Had his national ally and Jharkhand junior partner, Congress, not disrupted, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha MPs could have aired these concerns while the Bill was on anvil. By preferring drama outside and disruption inside, Opposition parties willingly forgo the option of placing their contrary view on the records of Parliament.



- **Key Terms and Conceptual Frameworks**

- **Leader of the Opposition (LoP):** A statutory position formalized under the *Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977*. The LoP provides institutionalized oversight, acts as the shadow head of government, and ensures constructive scrutiny. By convention, the LoP sits on key statutory selection panels (e.g., CBI Director, Central Vigilance Commissioner, Lokpal), embodying institutional checks and balances.
 - **Deliberative Democracy vs. Majoritarianism:** Deliberative democracy asserts that political decisions derive legitimacy from authentic public discussion and reasoned debate among equals, rather than the raw arithmetic of majority voting. Majoritarianism, by contrast, reduces democracy to numerical supremacy, risking the marginalization of minority perspectives and institutional oversight.
 - **"Grammar of Anarchy":** A phrase coined by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in his final Constituent Assembly speech on November 25, 1949. He warned that in an independent constitutional democracy equipped with legal avenues for redress, extra-constitutional methods—such as *Satyagraha*, civil disobedience, and non-cooperation—cease to be legitimate and instead foster constitutional instability.
 - **Voice Vote (*Viva Voce*):** A parliamentary voting procedure where the Speaker invites members to say "Aye" or "No" and decides the outcome based on vocal volume. While efficient for non-controversial matters, passing contentious structural or regulatory legislation via voice vote amidst parliamentary disruption bypasses recorded accountability (*Division of the House*).
 - **Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs) & Joint Parliamentary Committees (JPCs):** Specialized, multi-party legislative bodies tasked with detailed, clause-by-clause scrutiny of bills, budgetary demands, and executive policies away from the public glare. They act as consensus builders and the operational core of legislative accountability.
 - **Substantive Motions & Floor Coordination:** Substantive motions are independent self-contained proposals submitted for the approval of the House on matters of critical public importance. Floor coordination refers to the negotiated consensus between the Treasury and Opposition benches regarding the legislative calendar, debate allocations, and debate priorities.
 - **Anti-Defection Law (Tenth Schedule):** Inserted by the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985, to prevent political defections. However, its strict application through party whips has often suppressed intra-party dissent and individual legislative initiative, turning MPs into mere voting blocs.
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- **Main Arguments and Substantive Dynamics**

- The modern legislative process frequently witnesses a systemic tug-of-war between the ruling establishment and the opposition, creating institutional frictions across three substantive dimensions:
 - **Erosion of the Deliberative Floor:** The primary function of Parliament—acting as a national forum for structured forensic debate—is frequently compromised when sessions are characterized by persistent disruptions, sloganeering, and walkouts. When the opposition prioritizes agitational posturing over committee-level and floor-level debate, the constitutional floor is abdicated.
 - **Executive Bypassing and Legislative Output:** In response to persistent paralysis, the executive increasingly relies on procedural expedients: passing major policy reforms, amendments, and fiscal appropriations through voice votes without extensive clause-by-clause scrutiny. While this maintains quantitative legislative throughput, it damages the qualitative rigor, public legitimacy, and legal durability of the resulting statutes.
 - **Diminishing Utility of Parliamentary Scrutiny Mechanisms:** Traditional instruments of executive accountability—such as Question Hour, Zero Hour, and Calling Attention notices—frequently collapse during prolonged stalemates. Crucial public policies are consequently enacted without being tested against cross-party critique or submitted to the sober examination of Standing Committees.
 - **The Agitation–Deliberation Dichotomy:** A fundamental tension exists between street-level agitational politics and institutional constitutionalism. While grassroots mobilization is a legitimate democratic right under Article 19, substituting institutional parliamentary engagement with extra-parliamentary confrontation risks delegitimizing the legislative chamber itself.
 - **Counter-Arguments from Opposition Dynamics:** Proponents of aggressive parliamentary confrontation argue that when Treasury benches use brute majorities to deny discussions on pressing public issues, reject demands for JPCs, or curtail debate allocations, physical disruption and public demonstration become the only available mechanisms to signal dissent to the electorate.

- **Historical Evolution of Parliamentary Conduct in India**

- The relationship between legislative debate and political agitation has evolved across distinct historical phases:
 - **Pre-Independence Era (1853–1947):** Under the Indian Councils Acts and the Government of India Acts (1919, 1935), Indian nationalists utilized the Central Legislative Assembly not for disruptive obstruction, but as an arena of sharp, forensic debate. Leaders like Motilal Nehru, Vithalbhai Patel, and Lala Lajpat Rai deployed deep procedural mastery to expose colonial administrative failings while strictly maintaining legislative decorum.
 - **Nehruvian Golden Age (1952–1964):** The early Lok Sabhas set high benchmarks for institutional respect. Despite holding an overwhelming majority, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru treated parliamentary debates with solemnity, regularly attending sessions and according disproportionate speaking time and institutional dignity to small opposition groups led by figures like A.K. Gopalan, Acharya Kripalani, and Ram Manohar Lohia.
 - **The Transitional & Coalition Decades (1970s–1990s):** The post-Emergency era and the subsequent emergence of coalition governance decentralized political power. However, this period also introduced procedural degradation: the normalization of storming the well of the House, using Zero Hour for performative agitation, and utilizing disruptions as tactical bargaining chips.
 - **The Age of Disruption (2000s–2014):** Parliamentary obstruction transformed from an occasional exception into an accepted legislative strategy. Entire sessions were lost to confrontations over governance scandals (e.g., 2G spectrum allocation, Coal block allocations), with both major national parties justifying disruption as a legitimate parliamentary tactic when in opposition.
 - **Contemporary Era (2014–Present):** Marked by hyper-polarization, absolute single-party majorities, and frequent mass suspensions of lawmakers. The proportion of bills referred to Standing Committees has fallen significantly, while crucial structural reforms are increasingly contested through street mobilizations, judicial interventions, and extra-parliamentary campaigns.

KEY TERMS & CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS



Leader of the Opposition (LoP)
Shadow | key panels

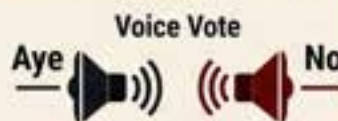
Deliberative Democracy
vs Majoritarianism



'reasoned debate vs brute majority
vs. brute majority arrow



'Grammar of Anarchy'



disruption bypassing
dsspassing recorded votes



DRSCs & JPCs
in deep scrutiny



Treasury Opposition
Substantive Motions
& Floor Coordination



Anti-Defection Law
(Tenth Schedule)

MAIN ARGUMENTS: SUBSTANTIVE DYNAMICS

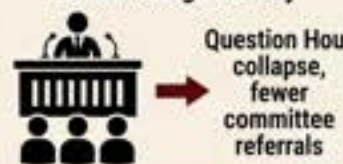


Erosion of Deliberative Floor
Disruptions and lost disruptions

Executive Bypassing

Ordinances → Voice Votes

Diminishing Scrutiny



Question Hour collapse,
fewer committee referrals

Agitation-Deliberation Dichotomy



Article 19
rights Institutional
decorum



AXIA
IAS ACADEMY
WISDOM ABOVE THE REST

A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS: DYNAMICS OF INDIAN PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF PARLIAMENTARY CONDUCT IN INDIA

- Pre-Independence (1853-1947)**
 - Vithalbhai Patel silhouette
 - Orderly forensic debate
- Nehruvian Golden Age (1952-1964)**
 - Prime Minister Nehru in deep respect for opposition, even with majority
- Transitional & Coalition Decades (1970s-1990s)**
 - Normalized storming the well
 - Zero Hour performative agitation
- Age of Disruption (2000s-2014)**
 - Lost sessions over scandals, routine obstructions
- Contemporary Era (2014-Present)**
 - Hyper-polarization, single-party majority, mass suspensions, extra-parliamentary campaigns

MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS OF LEGISLATIVE DYSFUNCTION



RESTORING THE AUTHENTIC TEMPLE OF DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

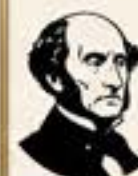
LOGICAL & PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS



Jürgen Habermas
'Communicative Rationality'
Uncoerced discourse



B.R. Ambedkar
'Constitutional Morality'
Adhering to institutional forms



J.S. Mill
'Vitality of Dissent'
On Liberty



Montesquieu
Checks & Balances

EXAM LINKAGES (NCERT, UPSC, APSC)



NCERT Class XI VIII, XII
Paper of Lass:
GS II, IV, Essay,
PSIR Optional



UPSC Paper IV:
'Legislature'
'Structure'
'Conduct'



APSC Paper IV:
'Freedom'
'Conduct'
'Ethics'

STRATEGIC WAY FORWARD: POLICY REFORMS



Opposition Days
Disruptive with special 'O' days



Mandatory Committee
Scrutiny: gear over
legislative process



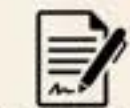
Anti-Defection
Balanced framework
with whip limitations



Neutral Speaker
British convention or
Independent tribunal



Minimum Sitting Norms
NCRWC recommendation
of 100-120 days



Privileges Codification
Structured penalties
under Article 105

Logical and Philosophical Foundations

The functioning of a constitutional republic rests on philosophical principles that balance majority mandate with deliberative oversight:

- **Jürgen Habermas's Theory of Deliberative Democracy:** Habermas posits that democratic legitimacy depends on "communicative rationality"—an uncoerced, reasoned discourse where the "forceless force of the better argument" prevails. When parliament descends into disruptive theatrics or majoritarian guillotining, communicative action collapses into raw strategic posturing.
- **Ambedkar's Constitutional Morality and Institutionalism:** Dr. B.R. Ambedkar recognized that constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment but must be cultivated. It demands strict adherence to institutional forms, mutual tolerance between political adversaries, and the abandonment of unconstitutional or extra-parliamentary methods once constitutional avenues for redress are established.
- **John Stuart Mill on the Vitality of Dissent:** In *On Liberty*, Mill argues that silencing minority dissent robs society of the opportunity to exchange error for truth, or to test received wisdom against robust challenge. A functioning legislature must safeguard the opposition's right to articulate alternatives, ensuring that state policies are refined rather than merely imposed.
- **Montesquieu's Separation of Powers and Checks & Balances:** The legislature's constitutional purpose is not merely to ratify executive intent, but to examine, alter, and monitor executive action. If the legislative branch becomes either a rubber stamp for the executive or an operational stalemate, the constitutional architecture of checks and balances breaks down.

- **Multidimensional Analysis**

- **Political Dimension:** Deepening political polarization creates a zero-sum mentality where consensus-building is viewed as weakness. The resulting institutional paralysis encourages the executive to govern via ordinances and delegated legislation, marginalizing the primary role of elected representatives.
- **Social Dimension:** Continuous dysfunction inside Parliament diminishes public confidence in democratic institutions. When citizens observe lawmakers engaging in physical confrontations, the moral authority of the state to enforce civility, civic duty, and the rule of law across broader society is eroded.
- **Legal and Constitutional Dimension:** Bypassing detailed legislative scrutiny leads to poorly drafted statutes filled with ambiguities and constitutional vulnerabilities. This shifts the burden of legislative correction onto the judiciary, triggering judicial overreach and prolonged litigation.
- **Ethical Dimension:** Elected representatives bear a fiduciary duty to the public under the Third Schedule of the Constitution. Engaging in intentional disruption while drawing state allowances constitutes a breach of public trust and a misdirection of state resources, running contrary to the core tenets of public service probity.
- **Economic Dimension:** A stalled parliament imposes direct fiscal costs (each minute of parliamentary sitting costs lakhs of rupees to the public exchequer) and indirect economic consequences. Ill-considered economic regulations, passed without stakeholder debate, create regulatory uncertainty, deter capital investment, and hamper policy continuity.
- **International Dimension:** India's global standing as the world's most populous democracy depends on the health and vitality of its institutional processes. Chronic legislative dysfunction and declining deliberative indices weaken the nation's soft power, democratic credentials, and diplomatic standing in global governance forums.

Linkages with NCERT Textbooks

- **Class XI – *Indian Constitution at Work*, Chapter 5 ("Legislature"):**
 - *Conceptual Focus:* Examines why we need a Parliament, the instruments of parliamentary control (Question Hour, Deliberation, Committees), and the constitutional mechanics of how a bill becomes an act.
 - *Pedagogical Link:* Helps students evaluate the gap between theoretical constitutional design and contemporary parliamentary operations.
- **Class XI – *Political Theory*, Chapter 2 ("Freedom") & Chapter 3 ("Equality"):**
 - *Conceptual Focus:* Discusses reasonable restrictions, the nature of democratic dissent, and the legitimate limits of political agitation in a constitutional system.
 - *Pedagogical Link:* Connects theoretical justifications of freedom of speech to the specific constitutional privileges enjoyed by legislators under Article 105.
- **Class VIII – *Social and Political Life - III*, Unit 2 ("Parliament and the Making of Laws"):**
 - *Conceptual Focus:* Introduces the basic role of citizens in lawmaking and the primary duty of parliamentarians to represent people's voices through debate.
 - *Pedagogical Link:* Provides the fundamental framework for assessing whether representative democracy is functioning according to its foundational mandate.
- **Class XII – *Politics in India Since Independence*, Chapter 6 ("The Crisis of Democratic Order"):**
 - *Conceptual Focus:* Analyzes the historical tension between institutional parliamentary functioning and extra-parliamentary mass movements during the 1970s.
 - *Pedagogical Link:* Offers historical context on how institutional decay can precipitate broader democratic crises.

Linkages with UPSC CSE Syllabus and Optional Subjects

- **General Studies Paper II (Governance, Constitution, Polity):**

- *Syllabus Sub-topics:* Parliament and State Legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges, and issues arising out of these.
- *Core Applications:* Decline of parliamentary scrutiny; role of the Speaker; efficacy of the committee system; structural reforms in floor management; Tenth Schedule challenges.

- **General Studies Paper IV (Ethics, Integrity, and Aptitude):**

- *Syllabus Sub-topics:* Probity in governance, ethical concerns in political life, foundational values of public service, constitutional morality.
- *Core Applications:* Ethical duties of legislators; misuse of public funds during disruptions; balance between partisan loyalty and national interest.

- **Essay Paper:**

- *Thematic Intersections:* "Parliament is the authentic temple of deliberative democracy"; "Dissent is the safety valve of the republic, but anarchy is its undoing"; "The test of democracy is not how the majority rules, but how the minority is heard."

- **Political Science & International Relations (PSIR Optional):**

- *Paper 1 (Political Theory & Indian Politics):* Deliberative democracy (Habermas); Representative governance (J.S. Mill); Gramscian hegemony; Ambedkar's constitutional thought.
- *Paper 2 (Indian Government and Politics):* Executive-legislature dynamics, party system, decline of legislatures, and civil society agitations.

- **Public Administration Optional:**

- *Paper 1 & 2 (Administrative Theory & Indian Administration):* Legislative control over administration, Parliamentary Committees, policy analysis, and the accountability of the executive to the legislature.

- **Strategic Way Forward and Policy Reforms**

- **Institutionalization of "Opposition Days":** Adopt the convention practiced in the UK House of Commons, where specific days (e.g., 20 days per session) are allocated exclusively for the opposition to set the agenda and initiate debates on subjects of its choice, reducing the incentive for floor disruptions.
- **Mandatory Pre-Legislative and Committee Scrutiny:** Establish a statutory requirement that all substantive non-emergency legislation must automatically be referred to Departmentally Related Standing Committees for a minimum time-bound review before being taken up for consideration and passing.
- **Reform of the Anti-Defection Framework:** Amend the Tenth Schedule in accordance with the recommendations of the *Dinesh Goswami Committee (1990)* and the *Law Commission of India (170th Report)*, limiting the issuance of party whips strictly to votes determining the survival of the government (e.g., No-Confidence Motions, Confidence Votes, and Money Bills).
- **Depoliticizing and Strengthening the Office of the Speaker:** Adopt the British convention where the Speaker formally resigns from their political party upon election to ensure institutional neutrality. Alternatively, implement the Supreme Court's suggestion (*Keisham Meghachandra Singh Case, 2020*) to vest disqualification powers in an independent permanent tribunal.
- **Enforcing Minimum Annual Sitting Norms:** Legislate a statutory requirement (recommended by the *National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution - NCRWC*) mandating that Parliament sit for a minimum of 100 to 120 days annually, preventing executive curtailment of legislative calendars.
- **Codification of Privileges and Automatic Penalty Protocols:** Systematically codify parliamentary privileges under Article 105(3) and establish clear, non-partisan rules that govern conduct within the well of the House, accompanied by automatic graded penalties administered by multi-party ethics committees.

UPSC CSE Mains Questions

- **GS Paper II (2023):** *"The role of the individual MPs has diminished over the years, and as a result, healthy normative debates on bills are rarely seen. How far do you think the Anti-Defection Law is responsible for this situation?"*
- **GS Paper II (2021):** *"Do Departmentally Related Parliamentary Standing Committees keep the administration on its toes and inspire reverence for parliamentary control? Evaluate the working of such committees with suitable examples."*
- **GS Paper II (2018):** *"Why do you think the committees are considered to be useful for parliamentary work? Discuss the role of the Public Accounts Committee in establishing accountability of the executive to the legislature."*
- **GS Paper II (2014):** *"The role of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha is crucial to the functioning of our parliamentary democracy. Discuss the challenges faced by the Speaker in ensuring impartiality and effectiveness."*
- **GS Paper IV (2020):** *"Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. We must realize that our people have yet to learn it." In the light of this statement, discuss the importance of constitutional morality in public governance.*

Spread of the secular poison in India

Secularism is now the bedrock of Hindu scepticism about their entire intellectual and spiritual heritage and the widespread disdain for their own ancient traditional rituals.

When one thinks of the advance of European secularism, we remember the great philosophers and scientists who disputed supernatural certainties to assert the supremacy of reason and scientific empirical knowledge. However, secular ideology was provided by the supremacy of a Christian worldview for almost 1,600 years. Christianity had become the undisputed state ideology of Rome by the third quarter of the 4th century AD. The recent work of historian Professor Peter Heather of Cambridge University, affirms the forceful promotion of Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire. It achieved exclusive ideological sway in the decades following its inauguration by Emperor Constantine in 325 AD and doctrinal formalisation by him, rather than the church, at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. In subsequent centuries, brutal military campaigns remained the modus operandi for enforcing the edict of Christ, whether in the Germanic lands by the formidable iconic Holy Roman Emperor, Charlemagne (ruling over 30,000 German pagans) beyond in the Slavic lands of eastern Europe during the Middle Ages and the Americas, but its spread faltered in Russia.

The onset of its substitution by secularism in Europe, following the 18th century Enlightenment, was associated with one profound unilateral sociopolitical outcome, the consequence of its unprecedented intellectual dynamic. Religion was not repudiated as such, but an attempt began to consign it to the private domain. Isaac Newton, emblematic of the triumph of scientific reason, was a deeply committed Last Testament of Arian conviction. The pioneer philosopher polymath of modern Europe, Rene

Descartes, sought to affirm the fundamental integrity of Christian truth by arguing some a priori human knowledge, beyond the empirical scientific, could only be of divine origin. Yet, the long and highly consequential retreat of European Christianity had begun. Its historical advance as the official state ideology, despite occasional political setbacks, had remained untoppled well beyond the 19th century progress of scientific ideas. Nevertheless, the unthinking disavowal of a scientific temper and the scepticism associated with the secularism that was replacing it did not penetrate popular mass consciousness unopposedly.

An aside on the effectiveness of Christian ideology for rulers is its two-fold ontology. The first was one single font of earthly monarchical divinity, with Jesus and an Almighty as its exclusive source, with all alternatives and divergences condemned as apostasy and advocates killed. It thus automatically and inflexibly delegitimised all rival divine claimants to rulership, the drawback of polytheism, which therefore proved dispensable. The second potent feature was the person of the emperor and monarch as the embodiment of divine rule and anointed by the grace of the Almighty as well. These two features are more unquestionably also characteristic of Islam and why rulers of communities with less exclusive faiths were often the first to embrace it in most societies that were to subsequently become fully Islamised.

All political orders originate through the use of political power, which inevitably means force of arms, but also require ideological endorsement as the essential counterpart for durable, legitimate and cajoling voluntary popular complicity.



OPINION

GAUTAM SEN

The modern European political class of the 18th century supplemented existing Christian ideology eventually for the right to rule with "nationalism". Its essential European ideological political incarnation was the success of massive imperial conquest to demonstrate racial supremacy as well. The masses of European society proved highly receptive to this depiction of their anointed, privileged place in the world. It also constituted an essential ideological machinery to sustain the political legitimacy of a deeply self-centred imperialist European ruling order and the huge domestic socioeconomic inequality over which it presided.

The succession to Christianity as the dominant ideological global interpretive construct created by the Enlightenment was to be secularism. The transmission of a secular form of self-knowledge and understanding of society back to non-western societies, India most of all, was achieved by the highly successful programmes to brainwash its elites through education and relentless legitimised propaganda. It was so extraordinarily suc-

cessful in India eventually that the standard bearers of secularism and insistence on its unquestionable intellectual, moral virtues, as well as its imperative desirability, were its own entire elite, including India's Jangha Parivar though, of course, not all its adherents. The ideological conviction of India's political and social elites that secularism was to be adopted and defended indefatigably was reinforced vastly by a diabolical accident of history.

For Jawaharlal Nehru and his successors, adoption of secularism as the ideology of the state was a potent instrument for maintaining Hindu identity and aspirations. This cynical subterfuge became almost unavoidable because Jawaharlal Nehru declined the population exchange offered on a religious basis by Pakistani leaders after Independence. Secularism then became the overarching political strategy with which to reassure India's Muslims, unsettled by the turmoil of partition. It was left to his daughter, Indira Gandhi, to introduce secularism as a central constitutional principle by imposing it illegitimately, in total violation of constitutional and procedural norms. By then, political calculations on the significance of the Muslim vote bank, to be mobilised by repudiating and reuniting Hindus, was becoming the governing dynamic of Indian political life, to be contested by the BJP eventually.

Hindus have experienced unwitting calamity for over a thousand years as a result of invasion by rapacious Muslims and Christian looters and despoilers. They lost all their heritage in northern India and it was permanently extinguished beyond the western border imposed on Hindus in 1947. So much that defunct Hindu civilisation was erased, from Sonmuth and Nalanda to Mathura and Kashi Vishnupur. Huge numbers of the individual repositories of the memory of Hindu civilisation and legacy, through prodigious hoards of memory, were slaughtered or exiled, along with millions of other hapless Hindus. They were turned into human excrement or subject to hard labour that ended their lives prematurely. The British conquerors did not engage in routine mass killings and enslavement, although the actual reality of their rule was devastating enough. But the British resort to indentured labour was a pretty close approximation to legal slavery. The greatest irony is that the descendants of indentured labourers, from Africa to the Indies, have become some of the most committed loyal advocates of Britain.

The 200-year period of British conquest and rule is turning out to have been extraordinarily consequential and not merely for its massive plunder. British colonial rulers originally planted the seeds of what has since become the catastrophe of India's contemporary caste political dynamics. Every possible division among India's Hindus was identified and accentuated suitably by Britain's colonial administrators and the church operating on their behalf. They institutionalised anti-Brahmin hatred across India, especially south of the Vindhyas, Maharastra and Punjab, most of all, where bitter hatred for Hindus is

renewing its very protagonists, the Shiba themselves. The cynical British intrusion into Indian society resulted in the lasting entrenching of secularism, which has since become the *modus vivendi* of faith for Hindus, a veritable coup of that against Hindu consciousness and identity.

As noted, secularism is now the bedrock of Hindu scepticism about their entire intellectual and spiritual heritage and the widespread disdain for their own ancient traditional rituals. The open-minded, and "humanist" perspectives of the Hindu past and all its ontological interpretation of life, which had derived from reflections of subtle signs over thousands of years re-created. They are increasingly on the anvil for hammer blows of permanent destruction. Yet, Christian secularism has no bearing on Hindu perspectives on the nature of life and its sustenance. The exposure of reason, scientific progress and practical adaptation to changing societal conditions of life are entirely integral to the Hindu Dharmic worldview, not external to it, as in the case of Christianity and Islam. Unfortunately, secular consciousness continues to destroy the Hindu sense of the self, which has to be rooted in the traditional historical legacy and intellectual reflections of their ancestors. They're becoming floaters out to sea, vulnerable to every fanciful transient fashion and whim, willing to turn against the foundations of their own material security, an impoverished national political order, against each other and, in the end, against themselves. The notorious recent NREG protest, sponsored by India's foreign agencies, is only the most recent example.

* Dr Gautam Sen, formerly taught at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

- **Key Terms and Conceptual Frameworks**

- **Secularism (Western vs. Indian Conception):** In classical European political philosophy, secularism denotes a strict institutional separation—a "wall of separation"—between the Church and the State, emerging from post-Reformation conflicts to confine religion strictly to the private domain. In contrast, the Indian constitutional tradition understands secularism as *Sarva Dharma Sambhava* (equal respect for all religions) and "principled distance," where the state maintains equidistant neutrality while retaining the locus standi to intervene for social reform (e.g., abolishing untouchability).
- **Epistemic Colonization:** The systematic suppression, delegitimization, and replacement of indigenous knowledge systems, ontological frameworks, and cultural memory by colonial institutions. It creates a condition where colonized societies view their own history, philosophies, and traditions exclusively through Western conceptual categories.
- **Ontological Monotheism vs. Pluralistic Darshana:** The philosophical divergence between religious traditions based on exclusive, non-negotiable scriptural dogma (where truth is singular and alternative claims are viewed as heresy) and Indic philosophical systems (*Darshanas*), which are inherently polycentric, experiential, and epistemologically plural (*Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti*).
- **Macaulayism and Elite Socialization:** The deliberate educational and administrative policy initiated during British colonial rule (originating with Thomas Babington Macaulay's 1835 *Minute on Education*) aimed at creating an indigenous elite class Westernized in taste, intellect, and values, who would act as cultural and political intermediaries.
- **Constitutional Morality vs. Civilizational Ethos:** The dialogue between adherence to modern constitutional values (such as liberty, equality, and rule of law) and the preservation of an organic, centuries-old civilizational ethos rooted in *Dharma* (righteousness and cosmic duty).

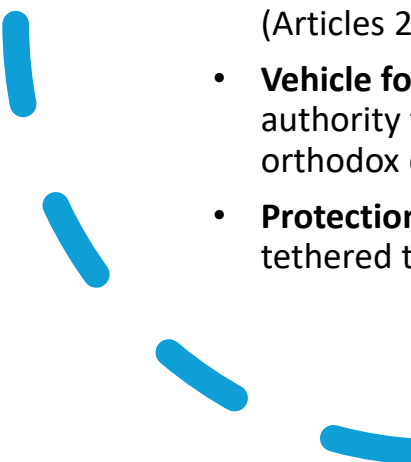
- **Core Theses and Substantive Debates**

- The contemporary intellectual discourse surrounding secularism in post-colonial polities revolves around its origin, its state-sponsored implementation, and its impact on indigenous cultural consciousness.

- **Core Theses**

- **Eurocentric Roots of Modern Secularism:** Modern Western secularism developed as a specific historical response to European religious wars, theological absolutism, and the political dominance of the Church. Applying this template universally ignores the pluralistic, non-dogmatic nature of non-Western traditions.
- **Colonial Institutionalization of Societal Fractures:** Colonial administrative techniques—such as decennial census categorizations, targeted legal codes, and separate electorates—formalized and deepened existing social distinctions, disrupting traditional mechanisms of social harmony.
- **Post-Colonial Statecraft and Cultural Alienation:** The uncritical adoption of a Western secular paradigm by post-independence elites created an intellectual environment where native spiritual traditions and traditional institutions were viewed with skepticism, while community-based identity politics flourished.

- **Counter-Arguments and Defenses of the Indian Model**

- **Essential Anchor for Plural Coexistence:** Proponents of Indian secularism argue that given the trauma of Partition and India's immense religious diversity, a secular constitutional framework is vital for national integration and the protection of minority rights (Articles 25–30).
 - **Vehicle for Progressive Internal Reform:** Unlike a passive state model, the Indian framework equips the state with the legal authority to eliminate regressive social practices, democratize religious spaces, and protect individual fundamental rights against orthodox coercion.
 - **Protection Against Majoritarian Hegemony:** Secularism serves as a constitutional safeguard ensuring that state power remains tethered to the rule of law rather than religious affiliation, preserving equal citizenship for every individual.
- 

Historical Evolution of the Discourse

The relationship between the state, religious identity, and public life in India has traversed distinct historical phases.

Ancient & Medieval Pluralism —► Colonial Engineering —► Constituent Assembly Debates —► 42nd Amendment (1976) —► S.R. Bommai (1994) & Modern Re-evaluation

- **Ancient and Classical Era (c. 1500 BCE – 1200 CE):** Political authority in ancient India was guided by *Rajdharmā*, where the state was duty-bound to protect moral order (*Dharma*) without enforcing theological conformity. Ashoka's Rock Edict XII explicitly advocated for mutual respect and growth in the essence of all philosophical traditions.
- **Medieval Transformations (c. 1200 – 1757 CE):** The advent of centralized political authorities introduced distinct interactions between Islamic jurisprudence and local customs. Alongside periods of sectarian tension and the destruction of religious centers, syncretic movements like Bhakti and Sufism flourished, creating shared cultural vocabularies.
- **Colonial Statecraft and Divide et Impera (1757–1947):** The British administration transitioned from non-interference to structured social engineering. Instruments such as the 1835 English Education Act, the 1901 Census under H.H. Risley, and the Indian Councils Act of 1909 (Morley-Minto Reforms) institutionalized communal identities as fixed political categories.
- **Constituent Assembly Deliberations (1946–1949):** The framing of the Constitution saw intensive debate. Leaders like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and K.M. Munshi consciously omitted the explicit word "secular" from the original Preamble, opting instead to weave substantive religious freedoms and equality directly into Articles 14, 15, 19, and 25–30 to allow the concept to evolve organically.
- **The 42nd Constitutional Amendment (1976):** The formal insertion of "Secular" and "Socialist" into the Preamble occurred during the Emergency, altering the explicit textual character of the Republic and sparking enduring debates regarding constitutional procedure and political intent.
- **Judicial Codification and Contemporary Debates (1994–Present):** The landmark *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India* (1994) ruling established secularism as an inviolable part of the "Basic Structure" of the Constitution. Modern discourse focuses on balancing minority rights with a Uniform Civil Code (Article 44) and decolonizing cultural institutions.

1. KEY CONCEPTS & DEFINITIONS

SECULARISM COMPARISON

WALL OF SEPARATION



WESTERN MODEL:
Western model with church/state separation

VS

SARVA DHARMA SAMBHAVA



INDIAN MODEL:
Diverse garden with interconnectivity of respect

EPISTEMIC COLONIZATION



Old Indian Manuscript



Modern English Textbooks

MACAULAYISM



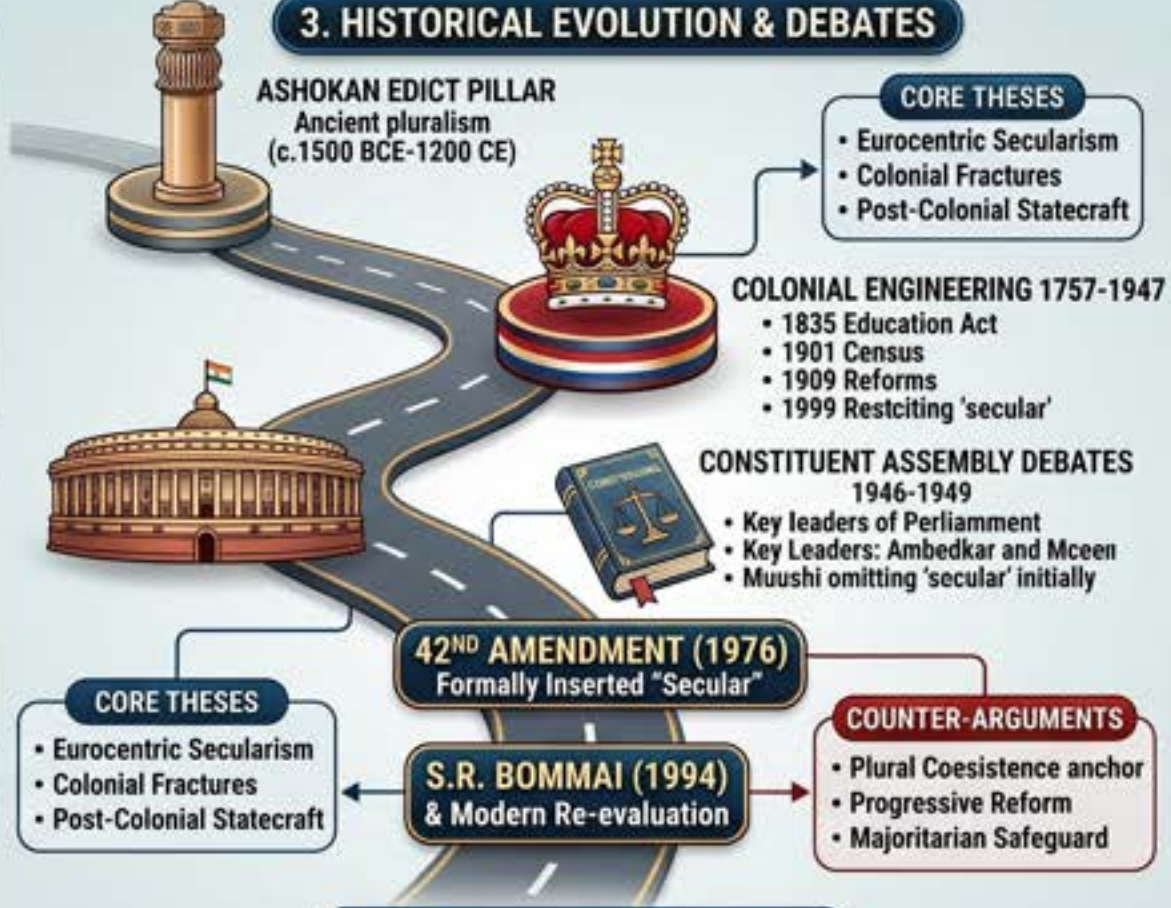
VS



Elite Socialization

CONSTITUTIONAL MORALITY VS CIVILIZATIONAL ETHOS

3. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION & DEBATES



SYLLABUS MAPPING MATRIX

GS PAPER 1

- Key Evaluation of Secularism
- State Moraling
- Social and Culture; Coediarial vs Spiritual Topics

GS PAPER 2

- Decolonization, Colloal. Bionory, Engneement
- Secularism, Concuurent/nouthosis
- Plorisitoilinary Balances

GS PAPER 4

- Key Econces, Culturon Historial
- Governunt of Biolly, and Factures & General Problems

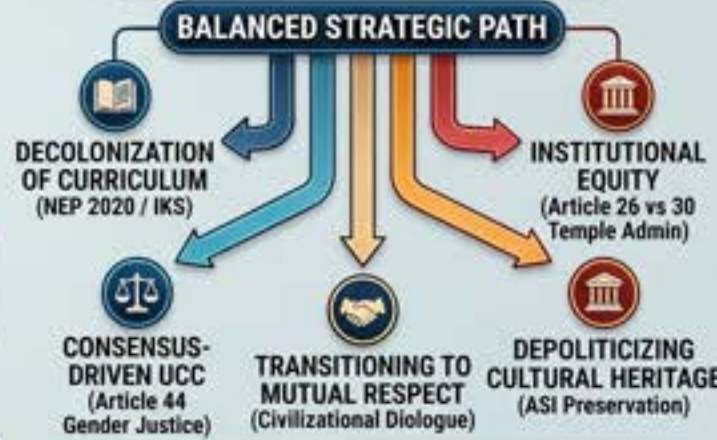
OPTIONALS & ESSAY

- Etnilionsals & Coating
- Rebated Bssorress Charomants
- Sprimor Topics
- Optionals & Essay

4. PHILOSOPHICAL DIVERGENCE (TABLE)

WESTERN PARADIGM	VS	INDIC PARADIGM
Cartesian Dualism		Non-Dualism/Holism
Material vs Spiritual		Matter & Spirit Integrated
Credal/Exclusivist		Experiential/Pluralistic
Institutional Religion		Cosmic Order (Dharma)

STRATEGIC WAY FORWARD



SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

GS 1: CHALLENGES TO CULTURAL PRACTICES

GS 2: SECULARISM BALANCE

APSC: SANKARDEV'S NEO-VAISHNAVITE MOVEMENT

(Representative Question Headings, Practicor: @panelundiosoonem 2023)

NCERT: NCERT Chapter (<https://iasanadert 2024>)

NCERT: NCERT Chapter (<https://lisert 2024>)

Logical and Philosophical Foundations

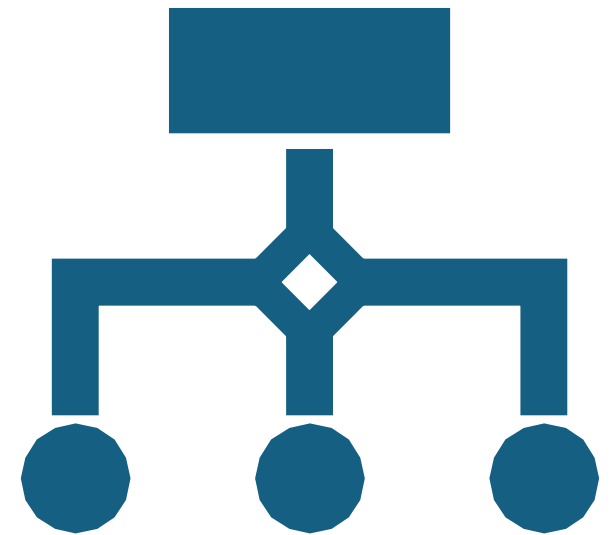
- **Cartesian Dualism vs. Indic Holism:** Post-Enlightenment European thought relies on binary categorization—sacred vs. profane, reason vs. faith, state vs. church. Indic philosophy (*Darshana*), particularly Advaita and Samkhya, approaches reality holistically, viewing material life and spiritual inquiry as interconnected dimensions of human existence (*Purusharthas*: Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha).
- **Semantic Misalignment (Religion vs. Dharma):** Translating the Latin *religio* (an institutionalized system of faith and worship bound by creed) to the Sanskrit *Dharma* (righteousness, cosmic order, duty, and sustainability) causes conceptual distortion. Applying policies designed to contain institutional church power directly onto decentralized traditions often restricts organic cultural practices.
- **Post-Colonial Epistemic Critique:** Sociologists and political philosophers (such as Ashis Nandy and T.N. Madan) argue that Western modernist secularism remains culturally alien to South Asian society. Because religion forms a core element of life for ordinary citizens, state-enforced secularization can paradoxically fuel communal polarization by delegitimizing traditional moral and pluralistic expressions.

Multidimensional Analysis	
Dimension	Key Observations and Analysis
Social	Identity Polarization: Societal debates often manifest as friction between self-identified traditionalists and modernists.
	Decolonization Consciousness: Rising public interest in reclaiming indigenous cultural memory, regional languages, and civilizational heritage.
Political	Electoral Dynamics: Movement away from traditional minority-focused electoral calculus toward broader cultural consolidation.
	Ideological Contestation: Debate over whether secularism functions as a neutral arbiter or as a tool for selective political mobilization.
Legal & Constitutional	Basic Structure Doctrine: Secularism remains an immutable constitutional principle under the S.R. Bommai (1994) precedent.
	State Regulation of Institutions: Scrutiny over asymmetric state control over Hindu temple endowments under Article 26 versus autonomy for minority institutions under Article 30.
Ethical	Pluralism vs. Relativism: Ethical imperative to uphold mutual respect (Tolerance as acceptance) rather than mere political accommodation.
	Constitutional Morality: Harmonizing collective civilizational identity with individual fundamental freedoms and human dignity.
International	Civilizational Soft Power: Projecting Indic principles (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, Yoga, Buddhist diplomacy) as global diplomatic assets.
	Global Human Rights Scrutiny: Managing international perceptions, foreign policy reporting, and geopolitical pressures regarding domestic religious freedom.
Economic	Temple and Heritage Economy: Religious tourism, pilgrimage circuits, and heritage revitalization contributing significantly to GDP and regional employment.
	Resource Allocation: Public debates over the equity and transparency of welfare schemes targeted by religious identity.
	Capital and Cultural Confidence: Linking indigenous intellectual capital and domestic enterprises to national economic self-reliance.



- **Linkages with NCERT Textbooks**
 - **Class 11 Political Science: *Political Theory* (Chapter 8: "Secularism"):**
 - *Conceptual Relevance:* Directly examines the Western model (mutual exclusion of state and church) versus the Indian model (principled distance and equal respect). Analyzes critiques of Indian secularism regarding minority appeasement, state intervention, and cultural rights.
 - **Class 11 Political Science: *Indian Constitution at Work* (Chapter 2: "Rights in the Indian Constitution"):**
 - *Conceptual Relevance:* Covers Articles 25 to 30, detailing the delicate constitutional balance between the individual right to freedom of conscience and community cultural-educational safeguards.
 - **Class 12 Sociology: *Indian Society* (Chapter 6: "The Challenges of Cultural Diversity"):**
 - *Conceptual Relevance:* Details communalism, regionalism, secularism, and nation-state dynamics. Discusses how colonial categories shaped contemporary social cleavages and minority-majority discourse.
 - **Class 12 Sociology: *Social Change and Development in India* (Chapter 2: "Cultural Change"):**
 - *Conceptual Relevance:* Explores Sanskritization, Westernization, modernization, and secularization, illustrating how colonial education and modern statehood transformed traditional hierarchies and self-identity.
 - **Class 8 Civics: *Social and Political Life – III* (Chapter 2: "Understanding Secularism"):**
 - *Conceptual Relevance:* Outlines the foundational rationale for separating religious authority from state power to ensure equality and non-tyranny of the majority in a democracy.

- **Linkages with UPSC CSE Syllabus**
 - **General Studies Paper 1 (Indian Society, History & Heritage):**
 - *Salient features of Indian Society and Diversity of India.*
 - *Effects of globalization, modernization, and secularization on social institutions.*
 - *Communalism, Regionalism, and Secularism:* Historical roots and contemporary expressions.
 - *Modern Indian History:* British administrative policies, Macaulay's educational legacy, and post-independence integration.
 - **General Studies Paper 2 (Polity, Governance & Constitution):**
 - *Preamble, Fundamental Rights (Articles 14, 15, 25–28), and Cultural/Educational Rights (Articles 29–30).*
 - *Directive Principles of State Policy:* Article 44 and the Uniform Civil Code debate.
 - *Judicial Doctrines:* The Basic Structure doctrine, *S.R. Bommai (1994)*, and state regulation of religious institutions.
 - **General Studies Paper 4 (Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude):**
 - *Human Values and Socialization:* Role of educational institutions, family, and cultural heritage in instilling ethical frameworks.
 - *Constitutional Morality vs. Public Sentiment:* Ethical dilemmas faced by civil servants while managing religious and public order conflicts.
 - **Essay Paper & Optional Subjects:**
 - *Essay Topics:* Deeply relevant to themes exploring cultural identity, modern governance, decolonization of knowledge, and unity in diversity.
 - *Political Science & International Relations (PSIR):* Indian Political Thought, Indian National Movement, Secularism in India, and Comparative Constitutionalism.
 - *Sociology:* Social transformation in India, challenges of secularization, modernization of Indian tradition, and caste-communal politics.





- **Strategic Way Forward**
 - **Decolonizing Education through Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS):** Align educational curricula with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 by integrating India's contributions to logic (*Nyaya*), linguistics, mathematics, ethics, and sustainability. This contextualizes historical learning while fostering modern scientific inquiry under Article 51A(h).
 - **Ensuring Institutional Equity in State-Religion Relations:** Review legal frameworks governing religious places of worship. Establish transparent, uniform norms regarding state intervention in Hindu temple administration to create parity with the institutional protections enjoyed by minority communities under Article 26 and Article 30.
 - **Consensus-Driven Implementation of Article 44 (UCC):** Approach the Uniform Civil Code not as a tool of cultural homogenization, but as a rights-based framework focused on gender justice, inheritance equity, and protection for vulnerable family members, developed through extensive stakeholder consultation.
 - **Transitioning from Passive Tolerance to Mutual Respect:** Move public discourse beyond Western-style political tolerance toward active civilizational dialogue (*Samvada*), grounding social harmony in indigenous pluralistic philosophy rather than administrative containment.
 - **Depoliticizing Cultural Heritage and Archaeological Conservation:** Strengthen autonomous institutions like the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and academic bodies to preserve, document, and study historical heritage transparently, relying on empirical science, epigraphy, and objective historiography.



- **UPSC Civil Services Examination (Mains)**
 - **GS Paper 1 (2023):** "Explain the role of geographical factors towards the development of Ancient India."
(Context: Civilizational evolution and cultural unity)
 - **GS Paper 1 (2021):** "How does Indian society maintain continuity in traditional social values in the face of modern challenges? Elaborate."
 - **GS Paper 1 (2019):** "What are the challenges to our cultural practices in the name of secularism?"
 - **GS Paper 1 (2018):** "'Caste system is assuming new identities and associational forms. Hence, the caste system cannot be eradicated in India.' Comment."
 - **GS Paper 1 (2014):** "How does the Indian concept of secularism differ from the Western model of secularism? Discuss."
 - **GS Paper 2 (2023):** "The Indian Constitution has successfully navigated the balance between fundamental individual rights and the protection of minority cultural rights. Examine."
 - **GS Paper 2 (2019):** "What can France learn from the Indian Constitution's approach to secularism?"
 - **GS Paper 4 / Essay (2022):** "The process of self-discovery is now technologically outsourced."



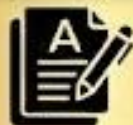
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