

VALUE Addition SPECIAL
**CURRENT ISSUES
ROUNDUP 2025**

**For General Studies
Preliminary & Main Examinations**





VALUE ADDITION SPECIAL

CURRENT ISSUES ROUNDUP 2025

For General Studies
Preliminary & Main Examinations

- This book offers a comprehensive coverage of 150+ important current issues spanning over a year. Each topic has been presented in a crisp and engaging manner, ensuring clarity and retention.
- These contemporary issues are important for Essay Paper & Prelims, Mains and Interview stages of upcoming UPSC/State PSCs/Judicial Services examinations.
- The book is also useful for students, general readers and researchers who are curious about recent developments related to ethics, society, polity, governance, economy, environment, technology and international relations, etc.

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Issues of Social Relevance

Ageing Population: Socio-economic Implications for India

India is witnessing a profound demographic shift marked by the rapid growth of its elderly population. According to the 'India Ageing Report 2023' by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), the number of individuals aged 60 and above is set to escalate significantly. By 2050, it is projected that one-fifth of India's population will be over 60 years old, surpassing the number of children aged 0-14.

This demographic transformation poses critical challenges and opportunities for social welfare, healthcare, and economic policies in the decades to come.

Definition

The ageing population in India refers to individuals aged 60 years and above, whose demographic presence is growing rapidly. This demographic segment is projected to constitute a substantial proportion of India's population by mid-century, presenting unique challenges in terms of healthcare, social security, and economic sustainability.

Trends

The ageing trend in India is marked by significant demographic shifts. In 2022, approximately 149 million individuals were aged 60 and above, comprising 10.5% of the population. By 2050, this demographic cohort is expected to double, reaching 347 million people, or 20.8% of the population. By the end of the century, it is anticipated that over 36% of India's population will be elderly. This ageing trajectory reflects broader socio-economic changes and will necessitate comprehensive policy responses to ensure the well-being and inclusion of India's senior citizens.

Challenges and Concerns

The rapid ageing of India's population poses several challenges:

- ❖ **Burden on Healthcare System:** The elderly often require more intensive and specialized healthcare services, which can strain the already overburdened public healthcare system. The prevalence of non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular disorders, cancer, and dementia, among the elderly further exacerbates the situation.
- ❖ **Erosion of Traditional Family Support:** The traditional joint family system, which has been the primary source of care and support for the elderly, is gradually eroding due to urbanization, changing social norms, and the rise of nuclear families. This leaves many elderly individuals without a strong social safety net.
- ❖ **Financial Insecurity:** A significant proportion of the elderly population in India lacks access to formal pension or retirement schemes, leaving them

vulnerable to financial insecurity and poverty in their later years.

- ❖ **Marginalization and Social Exclusion:** Elderly individuals, particularly those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, often face discrimination, neglect, and social exclusion, undermining their dignity and well-being.

Socio-economic Implications

The ageing of India's population has far-reaching socio-economic implications:

- ❖ **Declining Labour Force Participation:** As the proportion of elderly individuals increases, the working-age population may decline, leading to labour shortages and potential economic slowdown.
- ❖ **Increased Fiscal Burden:** The growing elderly population will place a greater demand on government resources for healthcare, social security, and other welfare programs, potentially straining public finances.
- ❖ **Changing Consumption Patterns:** The ageing population may lead to shifts in consumer demand, with increased spending on healthcare, pharmaceuticals, and age-specific products and services.
- ❖ **Intergenerational Tensions:** The changing demographic landscape may give rise to tensions between the younger and older generations, as they compete for resources and have differing priorities and expectations.

Way Forward

To address the challenges and harness the potential of an ageing population, a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach is required:

- ❖ **Specialized Geriatric Healthcare:** Develop dedicated healthcare facilities and services tailored to the needs of elderly patients, including geriatric medicine and long-term care options.
- ❖ **Professional Training:** Provide specialized training for medical professionals in geriatric care to ensure they can effectively address the unique health challenges of older adults.

Malnutrition in Children: A Persistent Developmental Challenge

Malnutrition in children remains a significant development challenge in India, with over 56,000 children under five suffering from Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) with medical complications. These children are admitted to 1,129 Nutrition Rehabilitation Centres (NRCs) across the country. In addition to those requiring facility-based care, there are more than 1.1 million children with SAM who do not need hospitalization. Despite efforts, the number of children in NRCs has increased from 1.04 lakh in 2020-21 to 1.89 lakh in 2022-23, highlighting the persistent nature of this crisis. Addressing malnutrition effectively remains crucial for improving child health outcomes.

This issue aims to explore the definition, significance, issues, and impacts of malnutrition in children, while also suggesting a way forward to combat this pressing challenge.

Definition

Malnutrition refers to deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances in a person's intake of energy and/or nutrients. In children, it can manifest as:

- ❖ **Undernutrition:** This includes wasting (low weight-for-height), stunting (low height-for-age), and underweight (low weight-for-age).
- ❖ **Micronutrient Deficiencies:** Lack of essential vitamins and minerals, such as iron, vitamin A, and iodine, which can lead to severe health issues.
- ❖ **Overweight and Obesity:** Excess body weight that can lead to health complications, including diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

Issues

- ❖ **Socio-economic Factors:** Malnutrition is closely linked to poverty and socioeconomic status. Families with limited financial resources often struggle to provide adequate nutrition, leading to undernutrition in children. According to NIH survey, only 20.2% children were found to be stunted lived in the richest households, while the prevalence rate climbed to 43.6% among those living in the poorest households.
- ❖ **Lack of Access to Healthcare:** Access to healthcare services is crucial for preventing and treating malnutrition. In many low-income regions, healthcare facilities are inadequate, and families may lack the knowledge to recognize malnutrition symptoms.
- ❖ **Inadequate Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices:** Poor feeding practices during infancy and early childhood contribute significantly to malnutrition. India has 6.7 million 'zero-food children', or children between the ages of 6-23 months 'who did not consume animal milk, formula, solid, or semisolid food in the span of 24 hours', according to a recent study.
- ❖ **Gender Disparities:** Gender inequalities can exacerbate malnutrition. In some cultures, girls may receive less food and healthcare than boys, leading to higher rates of malnutrition among female children.

- ❖ **Climate Change and Food Security:** Extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods, can disrupt food production and availability, leading to increased malnutrition rates. An internal study commissioned by Ministry of Women and Child Development (2024) revealed that children exposed to climate hazards are more likely to be stunted, underweight, and more vulnerable to early pregnancies.

Impact

- ❖ **Health Consequences:** Children who are malnourished are more likely to suffer from diarrhoea, pneumonia, and other infectious diseases, leading to higher mortality rates. According to WHO, malnutrition is an underlying cause in over 60% of deaths resulting from diarrhoea.
- ❖ **Cognitive Development:** Stunted children often experience delays in mental development, resulting in poor school performance and reduced intellectual capacity. A 1% loss in adult height due to childhood stunting is associated with a 1.4% loss in economic productivity, according to World Bank estimates.
- ❖ **Economic Impact:** The economic implications of malnutrition are profound. According to the Global Panel, the global economy could lose up to \$3.5 trillion annually due to malnutrition, which is equivalent to \$500 per person.
- ❖ **Intergenerational Cycle of Malnutrition:** Malnutrition can perpetuate a cycle of poverty and poor health across generations. Children who are malnourished are more likely to become malnourished adults, leading to low birth weight in their own children and perpetuating the cycle.
- ❖ **Legal and Policy Frameworks:** In India, the Supreme Court has recognized the right to food as a fundamental right under the Constitution. In 2001, the court directed the government to implement the National Food Security Act, which aims to provide subsidized food grains to vulnerable populations.

Youth Unemployment in India

Youth unemployment in India is a growing crisis, as highlighted in the India Employment Report 2024 by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Institute of Human Development (IHD). The report reveals that nearly 83 percent of India's unemployed population consists of young people. Alarming, the proportion of educated youth, those with at least secondary education, among the unemployed has nearly doubled, rising from 35.2 percent in 2000 to 65.7 percent in 2022. This trend points to a significant challenge in absorbing India's educated youth into the labour market. This issue explores the causes of youth unemployment in India, the significance of addressing this issue, the various challenges faced, and the policy responses implemented to mitigate its impact.

Why addressing youth unemployment is crucial?

- ❖ **Economic Growth:** A high rate of youth unemployment can hinder economic growth, as a large segment of the population remains unproductive. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), youth unemployment can lead to a loss of potential output, which can have long-term repercussions for the economy.
- ❖ **Social Stability:** High levels of youth unemployment can contribute to social unrest and instability. Disillusioned youth may resort to crime or violence, leading to increased security concerns.
- ❖ **Human Capital Development:** Investing in youth employment is essential for developing human capital. Young people represent the future workforce, and their skills and productivity are vital for economic progress.

Issues

- ❖ **Mismatch Between Education and Job Market Needs:** The Economic Survey 2023-24, presented in Parliament, reveals that only 51.25% of India's graduates are considered employable, indicating a significant skills gap.
- ❖ **Informal Employment:** A significant portion of the youth workforce is engaged in informal employment, which often lacks job security, benefits, and adequate wages. According to the ILO, approximately 90% of workers in India are employed in the informal sector. This precarious employment situation can lead to underemployment and job dissatisfaction, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and unemployment.
- ❖ **Regional Disparities:** Youth unemployment rates vary significantly across different states and regions in India. For instance, states like Haryana, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand and Jammu & Kashmir have reported higher unemployment rates compared to states like Odisha and Maharashtra. These disparities can be attributed to differences in industrial development, infrastructure, and access to education and training opportunities.
- ❖ **Gender Inequality:** In India, the female labour force participation rate (LFPR) for people aged 15 and above in 2023 was 37%, compared to 77.2% for men. This gender gap in employment opportunities limits the potential of half the population and contributes to overall youth unemployment.

Implications

- ❖ **Economic Consequences:** High unemployment rates can lead to decreased consumer spending, reduced economic growth, and increased reliance on social welfare programs.
- ❖ **Social Consequences:** Youth unemployment can lead to social unrest and increased crime rates. Disillusioned young people may resort to illegal activities or join extremist groups, posing a threat to social stability.
- ❖ **Long-term Consequences:** The long-term consequences of youth unemployment can be detrimental to individuals and the economy. Young people who experience unemployment early in their careers may face "scarring" effects, leading to lower wages and reduced job prospects in the future.
- ❖ **Impact on Education:** High youth unemployment can also affect educational outcomes. Young people who are unable to find jobs may choose to pursue further education, but many drop out due to financial constraints or lack of motivation. This can lead to a cycle of underemployment and limited opportunities for skill development.

Way Forward

Addressing youth unemployment in India requires leveraging government initiatives like the Skill India Mission, PM-DAKSH, and PMKVY to bridge the skills gap through vocational training aligned with market needs. Promoting entrepreneurship via the Startup India Scheme can spur job creation and economic growth by providing financial support and mentorship.

Additionally, enhancing job creation through initiatives like Rozgar Mela, investing in infrastructure, addressing regional disparities, and updating educational curricula will boost employability and economic growth.

Updating educational curricula to align with market demands, emphasizing lifelong learning, and reducing bureaucratic hurdles for startups will further boost employability and stimulate job creation across the country, as the future of the nation depends on the ability to harness the skills and talents of its youth, ensuring that they have the opportunities they need to thrive.

Adultery and Related Intricacies

In November, 2023, the Parliamentary Committee on Home Affairs suggested that adultery (Section 497 of the IPC) should be re-instituted as a crime in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023. Whereas in the *Madras Bar Association vs. Union of India* (2021) case, the Supreme Court clarified that for a validating law to be considered valid, it must effectively rectify the flaw identified in the initial judgment. However the finally enacted BNS-2023 doesn't mention adultery as an offence. However, a new offence has been added in BNS by way of Section 84 of the BNS which penalises a man for enticing the wife of another man so that she may have illicit intercourse with any person.

About the Adultery Law

- ❖ **Section 497** mandated that *whoever has sexual intercourse with the wife of another man, without the consent or connivance of that man, such sexual intercourse not amounting to the offence of rape is guilty of the offence of adultery and shall be punished (The law does not punish his wife, since it presumes that only a man can seduce a woman into a sexual act).*

Ruling of the Court

- ❖ In **Joseph Shine vs Union Of India (September 27, 2018)**, a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court led by then **Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dipak Misra**, and comprising current CJI D Y Chandrachud, and Justices A.M. Khanwilkar, R.F. Nariman, and Indu Malhotra, unanimously struck down Section 497 of the IPC on grounds that included discrimination.
 - Currently, in India, adultery is not considered a crime, but **it can be a ground for divorce** under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, and the Special Marriage Act, 1954.

Societal Issues Resolved by Decriminalising Adultery

- ❖ **Gender Equality:** The decriminalization of adultery was a significant step towards gender equality.
 - It recognized that women should not be treated as the property of their husbands, and both men and women are equal under the law.
- ❖ **Individual Autonomy:** The evolving understanding of marriage emphasizes individual autonomy and personal choices.
 - The right to make decisions about one's body and personal relationships has gained prominence.
 - In **V. Revathi v. Union of India (1988)** case, the Supreme Court held that Section 497 of the IPC was discriminatory against women and violated the Constitution of India and observed that adultery is a private matter.
- ❖ **Focus on Consent:** Consent has become a central theme in discussions about adultery.
 - The emphasis is on ensuring that all sexual interactions are consensual, regardless of marital status.

- ❖ **Reform of Personal Laws:** The debate surrounding adultery has also fueled discussions about broader reforms in personal laws related to marriage, divorce, and family matters.
 - These discussions are aimed at making laws more equitable and sensitive to evolving social norms.
- ❖ **Violation of Fundamental Rights:** The court emphasized the fundamental right to make choices as integral to human liberty and dignity.
 - **Section 497 restricted women's autonomy** in making these choices, violating Article 14 (equality) and Article 15.
 - In **Sowmithri Vishnu v. Union of India (1985)** case, the Supreme Court held that Section 497 of the IPC was violative of Articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution.

Challenges of Adultery

- ❖ The courts stated that misconduct of adultery must have some nexus with the employee's duties in order to be subject to disciplinary action.
- ❖ There is ambiguity regarding whether the armed forces may still take disciplinary action for adulterous acts under their special legislations.
- ❖ There are cases in which allegations of adultery have directly or indirectly been used as a tool to hamper the employee's ability to discharge their duties.
- ❖ Determining whether or not an act of adultery has a nexus with an employee's duties can be a challenging task, particularly in cases where the alleged act is consensual and voluntary.

Way Forward/ Conclusion

If came into force again, adultery law can be reformed to make it more equitable, with equal punishment for both men and women, and with provisions to prevent the misuse of the law. Also, a women can also be perpetrators of adultery which can be reduced by empowering women.

Educating people about the importance of fidelity and the negative consequences of adultery could help to reduce its occurrence through schools, community organizations, and the media.

Custodial Deaths in India

The Supreme Court has emphasised the necessity of adopting a "more rigorous approach" when considering bail applications from police officers charged in cases of custodial deaths. According to a report from the National Campaign Against Torture (NCAT), there were 112 reported cases of death in police custody during 2019-2020, followed by 100 in 2020-2021, and a total of 175 in 2021-2022. Uttar Pradesh held the record for the highest number of deaths (448) in judicial custody.

Custodial Death

- ❖ Custodial death refers to a death that occurs while a person is in the custody of law enforcement officials or a correctional facility. It can occur due to various causes such as the use of excessive force, neglect, or abuse by the authorities. Death can be in **police custody** or **judicial custody**.

Issues Associated with Custodial Deaths

- ❖ **Violation of Fundamental Rights:** Custodial death is against the basic right of individuals to be treated fairly by the law. It is a violation of articles 20, 21 and 22 of the Indian Constitution.
 - India is a signatory of the **United Nations Convention Against Torture (UNCAT)** which prohibits inhuman treatment of people in judicial and police custody.
 - In **Joginder Kumar vs. State of U.P and others, 1994** the Court observed that the rights under **Articles 21 and 22(1)** of the Constitution need to be recognised and must be protected. The Court issued guidelines to ensure the protection of these rights. The Magistrate shall determine whether all the requirements are fulfilled and obeyed by the police authority.
- ❖ **Police Misusing the Custody:** Sometimes, police misused the Custody and causing torture to the victims. Harassment is prevalent among the police and leads to many sufferings to the victims.
 - In **Nilabati Behera vs. the State of Orissa case**, the victim had died due to the harassment and beatings by the police. In **Yashwant and others v. the State of Maharashtra 2018 case**, the Court found the police personnel involved in the incident of custodial deaths, to be liable under Section 330 of the Indian Penal Code for causing voluntary hurt to extort a confession from the victim.
- ❖ **Against Moral Values:** Sometimes, the police authority abuses the convicted even before the formal arrest, claiming injuries occurred prior to custody.
 - In **J. Prabhavathiamma vs. the State of Kerala and others, 2007**, case pertained to the death of a scrap metal shop worker in custody, Court held that such heinous acts by police cannot be pardoned because they will affect the law and order and it would encourage police officers to

exercise their power arbitrarily.

- ❖ **Illegal Detention:** Depriving an individual of their personal liberty without following the process of law amounts to illegal detention. It includes unlawful imprisonment, continuous restraint of a person at a place or restraining a person from reaching a place. It is a violation of Article 21 of the Constitution and leads to immense pain and suffering.
- ❖ **Rape of detainees:** Rape is one of the prevalent forms of custodial torture. An incident of custodial rape in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra in 1972, wherein a tribal girl named Mathura was allegedly raped by two policemen in the Police Station.
- ❖ **Fake Encounters:** It is a type of custodial death, and has recently been used in the headlines.
 - Pradeep Sharma, a former Mumbai Police '**encounter specialist**', has been sentenced to life imprisonment by the Bombay High Court for his involvement in the fake encounter in 2006. This landmark judgment marks the first conviction of police officers in a fake encounter case in India.
- ❖ **Legal and Systemic Failures:** There is lack of accountability and effective legal frameworks to address and penalize custodial abuses and deaths.
- ❖ Despite existing laws, such as Section 330 of the IPC, which penalizes causing hurt to extort confessions, enforcement is lax, and convictions are rare.
 - Under Section 304 of the IPC, the police officer can be punished for 'culpable homicide not amounting to murder. Section 304A can also be applied if the custodial death occurred by the negligence of the police officer.

Ways to Improve/ Conclusion

The alarming figures for custodial deaths show a sad state of law and order in India. Certain steps can be taken to put an end to custodial deaths; like eleven guidelines laid down in the landmark case of **D.K. Basu v. State of West Bengal, 1996** should be properly implemented. The police personnel must make the memo of the arrest at the time of arresting the accused. Relatives or friends of the accused must be informed regarding the arrest of the accused as soon as possible. A medical examination of the arrestee must be conducted within 48 hours of his detention. A stringent legal provision needs to be introduced to punish personnel who abuse their power.

Women-led Development

“To awaken the people, it is the women who must be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves”. Recently, the Prime Minister of India asserted that the country has entered a phase of women-led development where girls constitute 43% of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education stream students — among the highest in the world — and even women’s self-help groups are becoming unicorns. However, still more emphasis is needed to ensure women have equal opportunities, decision-making power, and control over resources.

Issues that Deserve Special Attention

- ❖ **Low Participation of Women in Work Force:** Out of the population of working women, more than 90 percent work in the informal sector.
 - They are either self-employed or casual workers, predominantly in agricultural and construction sectors.
 - This means that they face increased exploitation, poor working conditions, lack of mobility, and higher risk of violence. Thus, discourages women from entering the workforce.
- ❖ **Patriarchal Social Norms:** There is low support in Indian society for working women. This arises from patriarchal structures, which dictate that women prioritise their domestic responsibilities over professional aspirations.
 - The disproportionate burden of household duties, accompanied by mobility and safety constraints results in women forgoing their employment.
 - A recent NITI Aayog report states that women in India spend 9.8 times more time than men on unpaid domestic chores (against a global average of 2.6 as reported by UN Women).
- ❖ **Marital Rape:** Prior to 2013, the definition of ‘rape’ under Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, was a narrow one, including only sexual intercourse within its ambit.
 - It was only after the infamous Nirbhaya gang-rape case that the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 (Anti-Rape Bill) was passed under which the definition was enlarged to include acts like penetration, insertion of objects, etc.
 - However, a noticeable peculiarity is that the definition of rape, even after the amendment, does not recognise ‘marital rape’ as ‘rape’, unless the wife is under 15 years of age. The stand taken against criminalizing it is that it would lead to degradation of the institution of marriage in our society.
- ❖ **Sarpanch-Pati Culture:** The concept of ‘sarpanch pati’ refers to the scenario where men relatives (mostly husbands) of elected women run office in place of them, while the women are expected to play a subservient role.

- Thus, it perpetuates gender inequality by marginalizing women and restricting their participation in governance. It undermines women’s agency and reinforces patriarchal norms.

Advantages of Women-led Development

In the Indian context, women-led development brings specific advantages that are tailored to the unique challenges and opportunities within the country.

- ❖ **Women’s Empowerment:** Women-led development promotes the empowerment of Indian women, who have historically faced various forms of discrimination and inequality. Empowered women can become agents of change, contributing to the overall progress of the society.
- ❖ **Economic Growth and Poverty Alleviation:** Women’s economic empowerment is directly linked to India’s economic growth and poverty reduction efforts. When women have access to resources, credit facilities, and skills training, they can start and grow businesses, leading to improved household incomes and upliftment of communities.
- ❖ **Education and Skill Development:** Investing in education equips women with knowledge, critical thinking skills, has the ability to make informed decisions. Further, the educated women are more likely to enter the workforce, pursue higher education, and actively contribute to society, driving India’s human capital development.
- ❖ **Political Representation and Governance:** Women-led development emphasizes women’s participation in politics and governance. Increasing women’s representation in legislative bodies, local governments, and decision-making positions leads to more inclusive and effective governance.
- ❖ **Social Transformation and Challenging Gender Norms:** Women-led development challenges traditional gender norms and stereotypes prevalent in Indian society. By promoting women’s leadership and showcasing their capabilities, it challenges the perception of women as passive participants. This cultural shift encourages society to value and respect women’s contributions, leading to greater gender equality and social transformation.

Legal, Constitutional & Governance Issues

Abuse of Preventive Detention Laws

In March, 2024, the Supreme Court has held that advisory boards under draconian preventive detention laws should not behave like mere "rubber-stamping authorities" for the government, but act as safety valves which stand between the capricious use of power by the state and the right to personal liberty.

What is Preventive Detention?

Section 151 of CrPC provides a police officer may arrest a person without any orders from the magistrate and without any warrant, if it appears to him that the commission of the offence cannot be prevented without arrest.

The **grounds of arrest** can be - state security, public order, foreign affairs, and community services.

Legal Remedy

❖ **Article 22 of the Constitution** of India provides essential safeguards for individuals subjected to preventive detention. This includes the provision for the formation of advisory boards, comprising individuals qualified to be High Court judges, tasked with reviewing detention orders every three months.

Issues and Concerns with Preventive Detention

- ❖ **Vague Definition:** In various state laws, there's no clarity on what grounds a person must be detained. Thus, law's ambit is rarely restricted to habitual offenders.
 - In **AK Gopalan Vs State of Madras (1950)** case the Supreme Court gave a green flag to Preventive Detention Act, 1950 & court ruled that Article 22 provides complete procedural safeguards with regard to preventative detention.
- ❖ **Human Right Violation:** It fails to offer procedural safeguards aimed at diminishing detainees' susceptibility to torture and discriminatory treatment, as well as preventing officials from exploiting preventive detention for subversive purposes.
 - In **Khudiram Das v. State of West Bengal (1975)** case the Supreme Court observed that power of detention is clearly a preventive measure & it should not be taken in any manner of the nature of punishment.
- ❖ **Misuse:** In several instances, it has been seen that such laws have been misused in vindictive manner. In several cases political parties have been seen misusing the laws to punish the members of opposition. Laws like the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967**, could potentially be exploited for preventive detentions, raising concerns about misuse and overreach
 - **E.g.** - During the COVID period, various state governments invoked **National Security Act (NSA)** on several opposition leaders and journalists.
 - In **Ameena Begum Case, 2023** the Supreme Court has underscored that preventive detention

should be an exceptional measure utilized in emergency situations and should not be employed as a routine practice.

- ❖ **Against Fundamental Rights:** Such laws are in clear conflict with the Fundamental rights. detaining a person on uncertain grounds as he could commit a crime infringes the Fundamental Rights under **Art 19 and 21**.
 - In **Ankul Chandra Pradhan Case, 1997 case**, emphasized that the primary objective of preventive detention is to avert harm to the security of the state rather than to administer punishment to individuals.
- ❖ **Impact on Democracy:** There are concerns regarding the compatibility of preventive detention with democratic principles, given its circumvention of the traditional judicial process.
- ❖ **Scope of Manipulation:** District magistrates and law enforcement agencies may resort to preventive detentions as a means to control law and order issues, sometimes even in situations where it might not be warranted, leading to questions of abuse of power.
 - In **Amed Noor Mohammad Bhatti V. State of Gujarat, 2005 case**, the Court said preventive detention act is a necessary tool in the hands of the executive which authorizes them to arrest any person from whom reasonable suspicion arises that he can commit any cognizable offense or his activities are prejudicial to law and order to state and the police can arrest that person without warrant.

Conclusion

- ❖ **NCRB** data shows that out of the total 1,48,20,298 arrests made in 2021, 89,00,174 (**60.5%**) were made under the preventive arrest provisions of Section 151 of CrPC (now section 170 of BNSS). Therefore, this law must be enforced in rarest of the rare case.
- ❖ Also, different states have different laws related to this as Law and order is a subject under state list. Still the central government must urge states to have some **kind of uniformity through some model act, like Citizen Charter etc.**

The nature of the crimes under the laws must be clearly defined in a view to reduce the scope of ambiguity. The government needs to ensure that these laws are not misused and that they are used only when necessary to prevent any undue harm to individuals

Comparative Study of Democracies: India, USA, and European Models

Democracies across the globe are facing a critical juncture. This comparative study examines the models of India, the United States, and Europe - three vibrant yet distinct systems. Understanding their historical significance, from India's fight for independence to the US's revolutionary spirit and Europe's evolving union, is vital.

However, these models are not without challenges. Rising inequality, populism, and threats to democratic norms demand introspection and adaptation.

The success or failure of these democracies has a ripple effect on global politics, influencing everything from human rights to international security. By dissecting their strengths and weaknesses, we can have valuable insights for the future of self-governance worldwide.

The democratic models of India, the United States, and Europe have significantly influenced global politics by promoting freedom, equality, and justice. India exemplifies navigating diversity, the U.S. champions global democracy, and European democracies advance social welfare and human rights, shaping democratic institutions worldwide.

Challenges in these Democracies

Balancing Unity and Diversity

- ❖ In India, the ongoing tensions between the central government and regional parties over issues of federalism and autonomy, for example Bihar demanding special state status.
- ❖ In the United States, the deep political and cultural divide between urban and rural areas, as well as the ongoing debates over immigration and the rights of minority communities.
- ❖ In Europe, the challenges faced by countries like Germany, France, and the UK in integrating large immigrant populations, particularly from Muslim-majority countries, and addressing the rise of far-right, anti-immigrant political movements.

Combating Corruption and Ensuring Transparency

- ❖ India ranked 93 out of 180 countries in corruption perceptions index 2023. In the United States, the influence of money in politics, including the role of campaign finance and lobbying, has been a persistent issue, as highlighted by the ongoing debates over campaign finance reform.

Addressing Economic Inequalities

- ❖ India's income inequality is at a record high. According to world inequality lab, as of 2022-23, the top 1% of earners control a larger share of the country's income than ever before (22.6%). This places them among the wealthiest 1% in the world, surpassing even South Africa, Brazil, and the US.
- ❖ In the United States, the wealth gap has continued

to widen, with the top 1% of earners holding a disproportionate share of the country's wealth, while the middle class has struggled with stagnant wages and job insecurity.

- ❖ In Europe, the uneven impact of austerity measures implemented in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis has contributed to growing economic disparities, with some countries and regions faring much better than others.

Safeguarding Civil Liberties and Human Rights

- ❖ In India, concerns have been raised about the erosion of press freedom and the crackdown on civil society organizations, particularly those critical of the government.
- ❖ In the United States, the ongoing debates over issues like police brutality, racial discrimination, and the treatment of immigrants have highlighted the challenges in protecting civil liberties and human rights.
- ❖ In Europe, the rise of far-right political movements and the backlash against multiculturalism have led to concerns about the protection of minority rights and the rise of religious intolerance.

These examples illustrate the complex and multifaceted nature of the challenges faced by democracies in maintaining unity, combating corruption, addressing economic inequalities, and safeguarding civil liberties and human rights. Addressing these challenges requires a sustained and comprehensive approach that takes into account the unique historical, social, and political contexts of each country.

Way Forward

- ❖ To fortify democratic models, prioritize strengthening institutions and good governance. This means fighting corruption, ensuring transparency, and holding leaders accountable.
- ❖ Additionally, fostering social cohesion is key. Bridge economic divides, promote social justice, and create

Challenges before the 16th Finance Commission

Sixteenth Finance Commission has been constituted by the Government of India under Article 280 of the Constitution. Arvind Panagariya has been appointed as the Chief of the Commission with the main task of determining revenue sharing between Central Government and State Governments for a period of five years from April 1, 2026. It is a quasi-judicial body constituted by the President.

The Parliament has enacted the **Finance Commission Act, of 1951** which specifies the qualifications of the members of the Finance Commission as follows:

- ❖ The Chairman should be a person having experience in Public Affairs.
- ❖ The four other members should be selected from amongst the following:
 - a judge of the High Court or one qualified to be appointed as one.
 - a person who has specialized knowledge of finance and accounts of the government.
 - a person who has wide experience in financial matters and administration.
 - a person who has special knowledge of Economics.

These four members in 16th Finance Commission are - Shri. Ajay Narayan Jha, Smt. Annie George Mathew, Dr. Niranjan Rajadhyaksha, Dr. Soumya Kanti Ghosh (part-time).

16th Finance Commission: Challenges

- ❖ **Difficult Fiscal Environment:** The relationships between the Union and some States have become more and more acrimonious and the competition for fiscal resources is acute. The finances of both the Union and the State governments have deteriorated sharply in recent years. The pandemic pushed the aggregate fiscal deficit and public debt to **13.3% and 89.6% of GDP**, respectively in 2020-21.
- ❖ **Structural Issues:** Some of the urban local governments do not have basic infrastructure and human resources. While in some states regular elections are not conducted for the local bodies. This affects their functioning and delivery of services.
- ❖ **Co-existence of the GST Council:** The GST Council is a permanent constitutional body that decides on tax rates and other matters related to GST. Its decisions can affect the revenue projections and calculations made by FCs for sharing fiscal resources. There is a need for a mechanism for FCs to revisit their numbers due to GST Council's decisions or vice versa.
- ❖ **Centrally Sponsored Schemes Eroding the Autonomy of States:** Many of Centrally Sponsored Schemes operate in the subjects listed in the State List. Though numerous committees appointed by the Government

of India recommended restricting the CSS to areas of national importance, all that has been done so far is grouping them under 28 broad umbrella heads without any effective reduction in their number.

- ❖ **Freebies:** Another important issue that needs to be addressed by the FC-XVI relates to the growing 'freebie' culture by the States and the Union, and a few States reverting to the old pension system threatening the fiscal stability of the country. The Finance Commission may hold consultations with all the stakeholders to arrive at a consensus and devise a mechanism to restrict freebies, which are not in the nature of subsidies and not welfare promoting.
- ❖ **Parallel Agencies:** The growth of parallel agencies and schemes like **MP/MLA Local Area Development Schemes** distort the federal structure and weaken ULBs' financial and operational autonomy.
- ❖ **Covid-19 Pandemic:** The Covid-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption and uncertainty in the economy and public finances. The Sixteenth FC will have to take into account the impact and implications of the pandemic on the fiscal situation and performance of Centre and States, as well as their expenditure needs and priorities.

Way Forward

- ❖ FCs should aim to provide adequate and predictable resources to the Union and state governments, based on their respective constitutional responsibilities and expenditure needs. They should also ensure a fair and transparent distribution of resources among states.
- ❖ They should also incentivise them to improve the quality and effectiveness of public spending, especially in priority sectors such as health, education, infrastructure, etc.
- ❖ FCs should also explore new avenues and mechanisms for enhancing cooperative and competitive federalism in the country.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the 16th Finance Commission's recommendations are vital for equitable fiscal distribution and state development. Hence effective implementation is crucial to address regional disparities and enhance financial stability and governance across states.

Economic Issues

Challenges in Protecting Intellectual Property Rights

Intellectual Property (IP) rights are vital for innovation and economic growth, yet protecting these rights is a significant global challenge, especially in major economies like India. The US Administration's 2024 Special 301 Report highlights India as one of the most challenging environments for IP protection and enforcement. This report, by the Office of the United States Trade Representative, places India on the Priority Watch List, alongside Argentina, Chile, China, Indonesia, Russia, and Venezuela. Persistent issues such as piracy, counterfeiting, and inefficient judicial processes underscore the complexities of safeguarding IP rights in India's dynamic market.

Intellectual property rights serve as the backbone of **innovation** and **creativity**, providing inventors, artists, and companies with the necessary **incentives** to invest time and resources into developing new ideas and products. These rights not only **foster economic growth** but also **drive technological advancement** and **cultural enrichment**.

Challenges

- ❖ **Digital Piracy and Cybercrime:** The digital age has ushered in unprecedented challenges for IP protection. Online piracy of copyrighted content, including music, movies, and software, continues to plague creative industries.
- ❖ **Global Supply Chains and Counterfeiting:** The complexity of global supply chains has made it easier for counterfeit goods to infiltrate legitimate markets. This not only impacts brand value and revenue but also poses serious health and safety risks to consumers, particularly in industries like pharmaceuticals and electronics.
- ❖ **Patent Trolls and Litigation Abuse:** Patent assertion entities, often referred to as "patent trolls," acquire patents solely to file infringement lawsuits against companies, stifling innovation and burdening the legal system.
- ❖ **Emerging Technologies and IP Protection:** Advancements in artificial intelligence, blockchain, and biotechnology present new challenges in defining and protecting intellectual property. Questions arise regarding the patentability of AI-generated inventions and the ownership of data in blockchain systems. The lack of clear legal frameworks in these areas creates uncertainty for innovators and investors.
- ❖ **International Harmonization and Enforcement:** Despite efforts to standardize IP protection globally through agreements like the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), significant disparities remain in the enforcement of IP rights across countries. Developing nations often struggle to balance IP protection with access to essential goods and technologies, leading to conflicts with developed economies.

Intellectual Property Rights in India

India has long been committed to preserving intellectual property rights both domestically and internationally. Through initiatives like the "KAPILA, Kalam Programme for IP Literacy and Awareness," India addresses barriers in its innovation ecosystem, particularly in higher education institutions. This program raises awareness about the value of IP, filing processes, and relevant laws.

As a member of the World Trade Organization, India adheres to the TRIPS Agreement and is also a member of the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Key legal provisions include the Indian Patents Act of 1970, the Design Act of 2000, the Trademarks Act of 1999, and the Geographical Indications of Goods Act of 1999.

Concerns of the Indian IPR System

- ❖ **Evergreening of Patents:** Section 3(d) of the Indian Patent Act 1970, amended in 2005, prohibits granting patents for new forms of known substances unless they significantly differ in efficacy. This restriction prevents the evergreening of patents, posing challenges for pharmaceutical companies seeking extended protection for their innovations.
- ❖ **Compulsory Licensing:** Compulsory licensing (CL) allows the government to grant entities permission to use, manufacture, import, or sell a patented invention without the patent owner's consent under specific conditions like national emergencies. This provision, while aligning with the WTO's TRIPS Agreement, raises concerns among foreign investors about potential misuse, impacting India-EU FTA negotiations.
- ❖ **Data Exclusivity:** Indian law lacks provisions against the unfair commercial use of test data submitted for market approval, a point of contention for foreign investors. There is a demand for a data exclusivity law in India to protect such data from being exploited by competitors.

Way Forward

To address the challenges in protecting intellectual property rights, a multi-faceted approach is necessary. This includes strengthening international cooperation to harmonize IP laws and enforcement mechanisms,

Startup Ecosystem in India

India is the 3rd largest startup ecosystem with 1.25 lakh startups involving 12 lakh youth who are directly linked with them. Further, more than 45 percent start-ups in the country are women-led.

Challenges before the Startup Sector in India

In view of achieving this transformation at scale, the Indian startup ecosystem must focus on developing solutions that allow businesses in key sectors to meet goals of national importance.

- ❖ **Issues arising out of Regional Imbalance:** India is a diverse country; in such a situation, it is a difficult task to expand the understanding of startups to the majority of the population of the country and its wider land area. Hence, the benefits of startups are getting restricted to a limited segment of the population and geographical area.
- ❖ **Digital Divide:** Many regions in India and the population living in them especially the remote hilly and border areas are still not aware of technical services like internet and computers.
- ❖ **Finance Related Issues:** A huge amount is required in the form of working capital for setting up and running a startup. It has been found that many startups are initially self-financed using the founders' own savings or capital from the family.
- ❖ **Remuneration Challenges:** Joining a startup as an employee is not an attractive career option for many job seekers. Because the failure of the starter as a result of the inherent risks may lead to re-employment hazards for such persons.
- ❖ **Complicated Regulation Mechanism:** Government of India has introduced several policies and schemes to ease the business environment of startups. However, it has been found that the current regulatory framework is not able to provide suitable conditions. For example, the "angel tax" introduced in 2012 to prevent money laundering discourages investment in the startup sector.
- ❖ **Larger Rural Population:** In addition to the above, more than 65% of the population in India resides in rural areas which have very low purchasing power. In such a situation, better markets are not available for the products and services of the startup sector.

Efforts for the development of Startup Sector in India

- ❖ **Self-certification based Compliance Regime:** The objective of this arrangement is to reduce the regulatory burden on startups so that they can focus on their core business while keeping the cost of compliance low.

- ❖ **Simple Norms for Public Procurement for Startups:** It aims to provide equal opportunities for startups as compared to experienced companies. In case of tenders floated by the Government or PSUs, the Startups will be given relaxation in the criteria of 'Experience/Turnover' except for the quality norms.
- ❖ **Establishment of new Research Parks:** Seven new research parks will be set up to develop breakthrough innovations on the lines of the research parks established at IIT Madras. For this an initial investment of Rs.100 crore per institution has been resolved by the government.
- ❖ **Initiation of Innovation Centric Programs for Students:** The Government of India has started several programs to promote research and innovation among young students like Abhinav Core, Nidhi, Uchchatar Avishkar Yojana, etc.

Way Forward

- ❖ **Bridging the Digital Divide:** For better development of rural areas, there is a need to bridge the infrastructure gap, promote digital literacy and make people more aware about the digital world. In this regard, the Digital Literacy Campaign by the Government is a right step.
- ❖ **Promoting Startups in the Agriculture Sector:** There is a need to promote startups in the agriculture sector to overcome the obstacles in the development of agriculture. Startups can be promoted through structural changes in the agriculture sector. For example, agritech-startups like Otipy, Salam Kisan etc.
- ❖ **Startups in Technology:** The recently released Draft Space Policy provides that 'Indian companies' can undertake the design, development and sale of satellites, address related communication systems. They can set up satellite system through a satellite developed or purchased by themselves.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while challenges persist, the Indian startup ecosystem is poised for significant growth. With sustained efforts to address existing barriers and leverage the available opportunities, India can continue to enhance its position as a leading startup destination on the global stage.

Issues Related to International Relations & National Security

Contemporary Relevance of the United Nations

In an era of rapid global change, the relevance of the United Nations is under scrutiny. Calls for reform, particularly of the Security Council, underscore the need for the UN to reflect contemporary geopolitical realities. India, the world's most populous country, remains excluded from permanent membership, a situation criticized by experts and supported by the US government. This article explores the pressing need for UN reforms, examining how the inclusion of diverse, influential nations like India could enhance the UN's effectiveness and legitimacy in addressing 21st-century challenges.

Need for UN Reforms

- ❖ **Ineffectiveness in Crisis Response:** The UN's inability to effectively address the Ukraine conflict, leading to its discussion in non-traditional forums like the G20.
- ❖ **Lack of Representation:** The permanent members of the Security Council (US, UK, France, Russia, China) do not reflect current global power dynamics, excluding emerging powers like India, Brazil, or Japan.
- ❖ **Limited Decision-making Power:** India, despite being the world's most populous country and a significant economic power, lacks veto power in the Security Council.
- ❖ **Outdated Power Structure:** The US veto power shielding Israel from UN action in Gaza, despite widespread global calls for a ceasefire.
- ❖ **Inability to Adapt:** The rise of India and Saudi Arabia as important power centers with their own strategic autonomy, which is not reflected in the UN's current structure.
- ❖ **Risk of Irrelevance:** The Global South's willingness to do business with Russia despite the Ukraine conflict, viewing it as "Europe's war" rather than a global concern.
- ❖ **Need for a Global Arbitrator:** The potential for increased regional conflicts and arms races in a multipolar world without a strong, representative UN to mediate.

These examples illustrate the specific ways in which the current UN structure falls short and underline the pressing need for reforms to address these issues.

Challenges in Reforms

Here are the key challenges in UN Reform, along with examples:

- ❖ **Resistance from existing Power Structures:** The five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US) are unlikely to willingly give up their privileged positions and veto power.
- ❖ **High Threshold for Amendments:** Any amendment to the UN Charter requires a two-thirds majority (129 out of 193 states) in the General Assembly and ratification by two-thirds of member states, including all permanent members.

- ❖ **Regional Rivalries and Competition:** Pakistan opposes India's bid for a permanent seat; Argentina and Mexico contest Brazil's claim to represent Latin America.
 - ❖ **Disagreement on Representation Criteria:** In Africa, Nigeria (largest democracy), South Africa (historically largest economy), and Egypt (oldest civilization) all have competing claims for representation.
 - ❖ **Veto Power Abuse:** Russia's use of veto power to block resolutions on Ukraine, Mali, Syria, and North Korea, demonstrating the potential for permanent members to obstruct Council actions.
 - ❖ **Outdated Power Dynamics:** Europe, with only 5% of the world's population, controls 33% of Security Council seats in any given year.
 - ❖ **Inequitable Financial Contributions:** Japan and Germany, the second and third largest contributors to the UN budget, lack permanent seats despite outweighing four of the five permanent members in financial support.
 - ❖ **Resistance from Medium-sized Countries:** Countries that won't directly benefit from reforms, such as Indonesia feeling diminished by the prospect of an Indian seat, actively work to thwart changes.
- These challenges highlight the complex web of political, historical, and structural issues that have prevented meaningful reform of the UN Security Council despite decades of debate and calls for change.

Way Forward

In March 2024, India, on behalf of the G4 nations (Brazil, Germany, Japan, India), presented a detailed model for Security Council reform, proposing new permanent members elected democratically by the General Assembly and showing flexibility on the veto issue.

- ❖ **Expanded Membership:** The G4 model suggests increasing the Security Council's membership from 15 to 25-26, with six new permanent members and four or five non-permanent members.
- ❖ **Addressing Representation Gaps:** The model stresses the need to address the lack of representation, particularly in the permanent category, to avoid exacerbating current imbalances.

Debate on the Decolonization Process and its Impact on Global Power Dynamics

The debate on the decolonization process and its impact on global power dynamics is complex and multifaceted. As the Pan-African movement marks its 105th anniversary in 2024, it is essential to acknowledge its role in shaping the intellectual foundation that advanced decolonization. For decades, Pan-Africanist dialogue in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas championed principles of peace, democracy, and human rights to guide newly independent African societies. However, the fundamental struggle for freedom, dignity, and autonomy is shared across oppressed populations worldwide, from Africa to Asia and beyond.

This article examines the challenges, significance, and impact of decolonization on global power dynamics, highlighting the ongoing struggle for self-determination and the enduring effects of colonialism.

Decolonization has been a pivotal force in the evolution of global power dynamics. The creation of new states has altered the composition of the United Nations and international relations. The newly independent nations, often with diverse ethnic and linguistic groups, have become vocal advocates for decolonization and self-governance, influencing the United Nations' stance on these issues.

The decolonization process has also been influenced by superpower competition, particularly during the Cold War, as the United States and the Soviet Union vied for influence in the newly independent states.

Challenges

- ❖ **Ethnic and Communal Divisions:** The decolonization process has highlighted existing ethnic and communal divisions, particularly in countries like Malaysia and Singapore. Balancing the interests and rights of different ethnic groups while forging a sense of national identity has been a significant challenge. This challenge is exemplified by the separation of **Singapore from Malaysia**, which underscored the difficulties in maintaining unity and addressing political fragmentation.
- ❖ **Tensions Between Nationalism and Colonial Legacy:** The transition from colonial rule to independence brought forth debates about the preservation of cultural heritage and traditional values versus the modernization and Westernization introduced by colonial powers. Striking a balance between national identity and the legacy of colonial influences has been a delicate task, as seen in the efforts of countries like **India and Nigeria** to balance traditional values with modern governance structures.
- ❖ **Border Disputes and Territorial Claims:** Border demarcation and territorial integrity became contentious issues that required careful negotiation and diplomacy. For example, the **India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir and the Eritrea-Ethiopia border** dispute became contentious issues that required careful negotiation and diplomacy.
- ❖ **Economic Dependency and Resource Distribution:** The sudden need to establish self-sustaining economies and equitable resource distribution posed significant challenges. Ensuring economic stability and reducing disparities were crucial goals for countries like **Ghana and Tanzania**, which faced the task of redistributing resources and developing their economies post-independence.
- ❖ **Political Fragmentation and Unity:** The decolonization process led to the creation of multiple independent states, each with its own political and administrative system. For instance, the separation of **Singapore from Malaysia** underscored the difficulties in maintaining unity and addressing political fragmentation. Similarly, the breakup of the **Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland into Zambia, Malawi, and Zimbabwe** highlighted the challenges of political unity.
- ❖ **Minority Rights and Citizenship:** The issue of minority rights and citizenship became central during decolonization. For instance, when **India gained independence from British colonial rule in 1947**, it faced significant challenges in addressing the rights of various minority groups within its diverse population. Similarly, **Sri Lanka** struggled with the rights of the Tamil minority post-independence.
- ❖ **Role of Former Colonial Powers:** The continued influence of former colonial powers, either politically or economically, posed challenges to full sovereignty and autonomy for the newly independent nations. Negotiating terms of cooperation and asserting national interests were key concerns.

Ethical Dimensions of Caste Census

The debate over a nationwide caste census in India has gained traction following a recent survey in Bihar, revealing that 63% of its population belongs to the Extremely Backward Classes (EBC) and Other Backward Classes (OBC). Socio-economic statistics highlight significant disparities: Scheduled Tribes (ST), Scheduled Castes (SC), and OBCs consistently report lower per capita consumption and higher poverty rates compared to other groups. This ongoing issue reflects the complex intersection of caste and socio-economic deprivation in India, raising ethical questions about data use and policy impacts.

This article explores the ethical dimensions of caste census, key ethical issues, the challenges they present, and the way forward.

Challenges and Concerns

Implementing a caste census presents several challenges, including the technical difficulties of accurately defining and categorizing castes. The diversity of castes and sub-castes in India complicates the data collection process, leading to concerns about the accuracy and reliability of the information gathered.

Additionally, the political implications of a caste census can lead to resistance from various stakeholders, as seen in the government's reluctance to enumerate castes beyond Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

Furthermore, the potential for misuse of caste data raises concerns about discrimination and violence against marginalized groups.

Ethical Issues

1. Social Justice vs. Social Division

The caste census presents a dilemma between using data for social justice and potentially reinforcing social divisions. While the data can help address historical discrimination, there's a concern it might perpetuate caste-based thinking.

2. Transparency vs. Privacy

Collecting caste data enhances transparency in policy-making but raises privacy concerns. The ethical challenge lies in balancing the need for comprehensive data with individuals' right to privacy.

3. Equality vs. Affirmative Action

The census data could support affirmative action policies, but this creates tension with the ideal of a caste-blind society. The ethical question is whether such data-driven policies promote or hinder long-term equality.

4. Administrative Efficiency vs. Complexity

While detailed caste data could improve policy implementation, it adds complexity to administration. The ethical consideration is whether the benefits of nuanced policies outweigh the challenges of a more complex system.

5. Historical Accountability vs. Forward-Looking Policies

❖ The census could provide a basis for addressing historical injustices, but there's an ethical debate

about focusing on past wrongs versus creating forward-looking policies.

6. Representation vs. Meritocracy

Caste data could enhance political representation for marginalized groups, but it raises ethical questions about balancing representation with meritocracy in various spheres.

7. Data Integrity vs. Political Manipulation

While accurate caste data could inform better policies, there's an ethical concern about potential manipulation of this data for political gains. Ensuring data integrity is crucial for ethical use.

8. Representation and Equity

One of the primary ethical concerns surrounding a caste census is the issue of representation. Accurately capturing the population of various caste groups is essential for ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities. However, the challenge lies in defining and categorizing castes in a way that reflects the complex social fabric of India. Ethical considerations must guide the process to ensure that marginalized groups are adequately represented and that their voices are heard in policy-making.

9. Informed Consent

Ethical data collection requires obtaining informed consent from individuals participating in the census. Participants should be fully aware of how their data will be used and the potential implications of disclosing their caste identity. Ensuring informed consent is essential for respecting individual autonomy and fostering trust in the census process.

10. Affirmative Action and Equity in Resource Allocation

A caste census can provide valuable data for implementing affirmative action policies aimed at addressing historical injustices. However, ethical dilemmas arise regarding how to allocate resources equitably among different caste groups. Policymakers must navigate the complexities of ensuring that affirmative action measures are based on accurate data while avoiding the potential for resentment or backlash from other groups.