



Written by: Abhijeet Pimparkar (B. Tech, M.A. Political Science)

PSIR Model Answers

UPSC-CSE Mains 2025

Compiled by

Abhijeet Pimparkar (B.Tech COEP, M.A. Political Science)

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POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

PAPER- I A Political Theory and Indian Politics :

1. Political Theory: meaning and approaches.

Explain the Philosophical approach to the study of Political theory. [2025/10m/150w/1a]

The philosophical approach, aka normative approach engages with conceptual and moral questions in political theory. It is not content with describing how politics works, but tries to evaluate its working on norms and make suggestions to improve it.

Plato & Aristotle can be said to be the earliest political philosophers. While Plato pursues an ideal state, Aristotle tries to make it more practical, but still employing normative approach.

In modern theorists, Rawls can be said to be the proponent of philosophical approach. Rawls uses imaginary 'veil of ignorance', thought experiment etc. and tries to arrive at theory of justice which will have universal applicability.

We can contrast philosophical approach with empiricism. While empirical analysis can tell us how institutions operate, it is silent on whether they are just, or desirable. Philosophical approach enables normative critique—even at times when empirical data will say otherwise.

Unfortunately, since philosophical methods rely on speculation, sometimes it is also criticized as “armchair philosophy”. Further, the value judgments can be biased (e.g. Eurocentrism), and there is always a difficulty applying normative principles in real world politics.

However, despite limitations, the philosophical approach is indispensable. It has ability to raise the questions, challenge the status quo and in process better our political lives. [208 words]

Provide a comparative analysis of behavioural and institutional approach to the study of political theory. [2025/20m/3a]

The behavioural approach emerged in the mid-20th century as a reaction against purely normative and legal-institutional approaches to politics. Its central idea is that politics consists of observable human behaviour and it seeks to explain patterns and regularities in these behaviours.



Behaviouralists argue that focusing on humans and their psychological determinants gives us more predictive insights. This makes political science a more “scientific” discipline.

In contrast, the institutional approach centers on rules, organizations and structures. It sees political behaviour as heavily constrained these institutional frameworks. For them, institutions are central to explaining stability, change, and outcomes.

Since behaviouralism focuses on human behaviour, it studies why individuals act as they do, how attitudes form, and how social or psychological factors influence decisions. Institutionalism, by contrast, focuses on macro-level factors i.e. institutional designs, laws and rules, governance structure etc.

David Easton is a pioneer of behavioural political science. He developed the “political system” model, defining politics as the “authoritative allocation of values”. Easton places emphasis on inputs, process, outputs, and feedback in political behaviour, trying to develop scientific model of behaviour.

Institutionalists scholars on the other hand, contend that individual behaviour must be understood in the context of institutions and statutes. For them, same individuals in different institutional settings behave differently.

It is important to note that these approaches are not completely rivals. In fact, a hybrid model can be developed. While institutional analysis help explain variations across geographies because of laws and structures, behavioural insights help explain variation within these institutional settings i.e. why two individuals under the same institution behave differently.

This synthesis gives political theory both empirical robustness and structural sensitivity—a balanced method to understanding politics in all its complexity. [282 words]

2. Theories of state : Liberal, Neo-liberal, Marxist, Pluralist, post-colonial and Feminist.

What is the Marxist and liberal approach towards the state? On what grounds the theoretical differences between them are premised? Explain. [2025/20m/2a]

On the spectrum of ideologies, while liberalism is regarded as centre, Marxism tends to be classified as far left, with fascism forming the far right.

In the liberal tradition, the state is conceived as a necessary institution that safeguards individual rights and ensures order. Marxists, on the other hand, view the state as fundamentally tied to class relations and economic structure.



For Marxists, state is part of the superstructure: it reflects and serves the interests of the class that controls the economic base. As Marx puts it, in capitalist societies, the state is the “executive committee of the ruling class.” Consequently, the laws, institutions, and policies of the state are shaped exclusively by the by capitalist interests.

For Marxists, since state cannot be reformed to serve the working class; it must be overthrown. Stateless society is ideal for Marxists.

In stark contrast to Marxism, liberals view the state as a neutral body. State is allowed to intervene only to enforce laws, to protect liberties, and ensure fair competition.

For liberals, government powers should be constrained to prevent tyranny and infringement on individual freedom. Under state protection, individuals enjoy rights. Right to life, liberty, property, expression etc.

Liberals trace origin of state to the tradition of consent. A contract in a state of nature, as premised in the ideas of Hobbes and Locke. Unlike Marxists, liberals believe the state and society can be reformed progressively through constitutional and institutional changes rather than revolution.

On a fundamental level, we can trace the origin of liberalism to the emerging middle class, who wanted to create a space for itself in a medieval society. Marxism, on the other hand, originated as an ideology of marginalized, depressed, labour class. While middle class is hopeful of their progression and have a positive view of the world, Marxist don't see any hope, thus suggesting extreme measure of violent revolution.

At extreme, both the ideas are harmful. While extreme liberalism (classical liberalism) neglects social welfare, adopting full-fledged Marxist model can lead to regression and removal of incentives from society, killing innovation and progress. Thus, a balance in the form of social-liberal state sought in the ideas of Rawls is desirable. [363 words]

3. Justice : Conceptions of justice with special reference to Rawl's theory of justice and its communitarian critiques.

Explain how Rawls used the liberal and egalitarian perspective to develop his concept of distributive justice. [2025/15m/2c]

Instead of choosing one over the other, Rawls's theory of justice aims to reconcile liberal idea of individual freedom with egalitarian concerns of fairness and equality. He embeds liberal liberties within a distributive scheme.

In his theory, Rawls proposes two key principles chosen under the original position behind a veil of ignorance.



In first, Rawls proposes maximum equal liberty. Each person has an equal right to a scheme of basic liberties. This is the pure liberal idea—protecting civil, political and personal freedoms.

In the second principle of Rawls proposes equality of opportunity and difference principle. In this, social and economic inequalities are permissible only if they (a) benefit the least advantaged (the difference principle) and (b) are attached to offices open to all under fair equality of opportunity. The second principle suggests an accommodation of concerns which are often raised by socialists/ egalitarians.

However, despite this attempt of reconciliation, Communitarians are critical of Rawls. For them, (Michael Sandel, Charles Taylor) Rawls still champions individualism and neglects social embeddedness, community values etc.

Amartya Sen, another scholar of social-liberalism, also criticizes Rawls as emphasizing ideal institutions and perfect justice, over pragmatic approach.

Despite criticism, Rawls's theory is a landmark because it demonstrates that liberalism need not be blind to inequalities. Sen's theory can be said to be a further evolution of Rawls, where the state remains responsible for the results and not mere processes. [233 words]

4. Equality : Social, political and economic; relationship between equality and freedom; Affirmative action.

Write a note on the relation between equality and liberty from the multi-cultural perspective. [2025/10m/150w/1b]

Since early political philosophy, liberty and equality have been intertwined yet often in tension. While liberalism focused on liberty, equality is a central concern for Marxist-socialist scholars. The tension become even more acute in contemporary multicultural societies.

In a such a society, distinct cultural groups may have different conceptions of freedom and norms. The uniform application of liberal rules may disadvantage minority cultures, while overly concern for minorities will discourage the majority.

Will Kymlicka, in Multicultural Citizenship, defends group-differentiated rights within a liberal egalitarian framework. However, he distinguishes between immigrant ethnic groups and national minorities. For him, national minorities deserve self-government rights and special representation. Such schemes need not be extended for immigrants.

Bhikhu Parekh argues for a pluralist multiculturalism. Like communitarians, he sees individuals as culturally embedded. Thus, equality and liberty must be mediated by mutual respect and intercultural dialogue. Parekh's approach does not blindly grant all



cultural claims; he calls for negotiation and balance between individual rights and group identities.

Thus, multiculturalism brings up yet another perspective to the debate between equality and liberty. These concepts cannot be understood abstractly but also must be grounded in the cultural conditions of living persons. [194 words]

5. Rights : Meaning and theories; different kinds of rights; Concept of Human Rights.

6. Democracy : Classical and contemporary theories; different models of democracy—representative, participatory and deliberative.

Explain the Macpherson's view on power. [2025/10m/150w/1c]

Power broadly means the capacity of actors to influence, or direct others' actions. However, Power isn't just domination; it also involves enabling actualization of capacities.

MacPherson critiques "possessive individualism" that individuals are proprietors of property, independent from society. He argues this view conceals deep structural inequalities that limit people's real power.

According to Macpherson there are two dimensions of power. Extractive and developmental power.

In extractive power, one set of actors extract resources, labour, or obedience from others. MacPherson sees capitalist systems granting owners extractive power over non-owners.

Developmental Power, on the other hand enables individuals to realize their capacities, and engage in self-development. MacPherson frames this as "creative freedom," the ability to pursue one's potentials—not hampered by structural inequality.

While the extractive power is restrictive, developmental power is positive, about enabling. MacPherson's ideal democracy is a system with minimal extractive power and maximal developmental power.

Thus, MacPherson's view on power transforms the meaning of democracy. From a system that protects freedoms to one that cultivates capacities. His model remains a strong normative benchmark to judge the progress of a democracy. [182 words]

Explain briefly the elite theory of democracy. [2025/10m/150w/1e]

The core argument of elite theory is that real political power lies not with the masses but with a relatively small class of elites. Even democratic institutions ultimately function through elite rule. Power with the masses is a myth.



According to elitist scholars, power is concentrated and it rarely trickles down. Democratic processes serve more to legitimize elite control than to transfer real authority. This is also the argument of Marxist scholars, who view the state as mere instrument of minority capitalist class to control majority worker class.

The origin of this theory can be traced even in the works of Plato & Aristotle, who suggested that some are born masters & others as slaves. Even Indian political thought delegates the duty to rule to Kshatriyas, who number far less than Vaisyas and Shudras.

In modern context, Pareto introduced the idea of circulation of elites, where elite groups (Lions and Foxes) alternate control but power never rests with masses.

Robert Michels famously formulated the Iron Law of Oligarchy, which states that all organizations, even democratic ones, inevitably concentrate power in elites.

Similarly, C Wright Mills has given the concept of 'power elites.' After analysing US Politics, Mills concludes that USA is also an oligarchy. Federal politicians, top leaders in military, corporate class etc. wield the real power in US democracy.

Thus, we can say that elitist theory of democracy offers a realistic diagnosis of power concentration in contemporary societies. [239 words]

7. Concept of power : hegemony, ideology and legitimacy.

Do you think that legitimacy acquired by consent or manufactured by indoctrination is an essential element in maintenance of political rule? Justify your answer with relevant examples. [2025/15m/4c]

Legitimacy denotes the acceptance by the governed that the rule of a regime is lawful, rightful, and deserving of obedience. It is regarded as crucial because it makes coercion less costly and governance more stable.

Naturally, governments and rulers seek legitimacy via various means like elections, welfare policies, ideology etc.

Interestingly, legitimacy need not always be organic. It can be manufactured by methods like ideology or institutions. Gramsci for example, suggests that a ruling class must establish hegemony so that people accept its rule as "common sense." Similarly Althusser introduces the concept of ideological state apparatuses that work to interpellate individuals with dominant ideology.

It should be noted that either natural or manufactured, legitimacy is essential in maintaining the rule. Political rule survives because people, even when dissenting, accept certain bounds.

Without legitimacy, rulers must rule by coercion. As said earlier, coercion is costly, unpopular and unstable.



Thus, we see that even authoritarian regimes use methods like propaganda, censorship, controlled elections to manufacture legitimacy. The examples of China and North Korea can be cited as an example.

Similarly, the loss of legitimacy can be seen as the prime examples behind the American and French revolutions. This is also acknowledged by Aristotle when he suggests that State must be seen as just to command obedience.

However, a regime with purely manufactured legitimacy is relatively difficult to sustain, while that earned through participation, and justice is more resilient. Thus, legitimacy is fundamental in governance. However, the way it is secured shapes its sustainability. [251 words]

8. Political Ideologies : Liberalism, Socialism, Marxism, Fascism, Gandhism and Feminism.

Mention the difference between Italian and German brands of fascism. [2025/10m/150w/1d]

Fascism is an ultranationalist political ideology that glorifies the state and enforces unity through strong leadership, symbolism etc. However, fascism is not monolithic. While we can quote multiple historical variants, the ones witnessed in Italy and Germany during inter-war period, figure prominent.

In Germany, Nazism placed racial purity and antisemitism at its ideological core. The Aryan race concept, persecution, and genocide were central in Hitler's propaganda. On the other hand, the racial undertone was neither original nor very strong in Italy.

In Italy, the state remained the supreme entity. Mussolini's slogan: "All within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state." In Nazi Germany, the Party (Nazi Party) often dominated state machinery; the Führer (supreme leader) principle overshadowed party and state in Germany.

In economic policy, Italian fascism emphasized corporatism as a middle path between capitalism and socialism: organizing society into corporative bodies (workers, employers, state) under state coordination. Nazi Germany retained stronger private property and capitalist enterprise under state control or direction; the regime prioritized military rearmament over wholesale corporatist restructuring.

However, whether in Italian or German guise, fascism concentrates power, suppresses dissent, demands obedience, and undermines liberal pluralism. The differences in emphasis (race, terror, corporatism) do not make one version benign.

Hannah Arendt warned that totalitarian ideologies are threats precisely because they seek to dominate every sphere of life and destroy the space of free judgment. Therefore,



all variants of fascism—whether cloaked in state corporatism or racial ideology—must be resisted, checked, and prevented from gaining power. [251 words]

Explain how the slogan 'the personal is political' addresses the issue of women's oppression and discrimination ? [2025/15m/3c]

The phrase 'personal is political' emerged from second-wave feminism in the late 60s. It then became widespread after Carol Hanisch's essay "The Personal Is Political" (1970). Through her essay, Hanisch argues that private, individual experiences of women are in fact rooted in social structures, and power relationships.

When we say 'personal' is 'political', it challenges the traditional separation between the public/political and the private/personal spheres. As feminist scholars suggest, many issues that women face in the home, family, relationships etc. i.e. personal sphere, are deeply political because they reflect systemic patriarchy.

This was also the conclusion of Betty Friedan, when she did survey of American women, only to conclude that patriarchy is the reason behind women issues.

This understanding is pivotal in feminist struggle. This brings out an individual woman's struggle from personal sphere to public one. The issues like abortion, child care, body image, domestic abuse are brought into the field of policy discussion, thus demanding collective solutions.

On the other hand, it is also be argued that 'personal is political' over-politicize every detail of personal life. It blurs the boundaries, risking intrusion of state in personal sphere. Further, overemphasis on structural issues can also shift the burden from individual to state.

However, it remains an essential tool for exposing the systemic discrimination and seek gender justice for all womenkind. [221 words]

9. Indian Political Thought: Dharamshastra, Arthashastra and Buddhist Traditions; Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Sri Aurobindo, M. K. Gandhi, B. R. Ambedkar, M. N. Roy.

"State does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress." - Mahatma Gandhi. Elucidate. [2025/15m/3b]

Beyond his contribution to Indian freedom struggle, Gandhi is regarded for his ideas on state, politics and philosophy.

For Gandhi, individuality is not about autonomy, but also about self-governance. Gandhi sees each person as having a capacity for self-rule (swaraj) that must be cultivated. Individuality is not freedom from all restraint but freedom rooted in inward discipline, where one does not need external coercion.



According to Gandhi, true progress is driven not by acquisition of material resources or power, but by the growth of morality within us. If individuals do not change inwardly, institutions remain corrupt or oppressive regardless of reforms.

Owing to this understanding, Gandhi was deeply critical of the modern centralized state. In his view, it stifles individuality.

The state externalizes authority. It relieves individuals of responsibility, turning persons into subjects, passive instruments rather than moral agents.

As the state grows, individuals become reliant on it for services, protection, and decision-making, thwarting individuals self-governing capacities.

Thus, Gandhi suggested the model of state is rooted in swaraj and decentralization. He envisaged political units grounded in local autonomy i.e. village republics, each community managing its affairs. He also suggests nonviolent state, where coercion is minimal and moral authority predominates.

We can appreciate the wisdom of Gandhi in what he foretold can indeed be seen in contemporary politics. There is overdevelopment of state, be it in West or East, and the parallel erosion of individual and community. [236 words]

10. Western Political Thought : Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, John S. Mill, Marx, Gramsci, Hannah Arendt.

Karl Popper presents a defence of the open society against its enemies. Elaborate. [2025/15m/2b]

In *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Popper labels Plato, Hegel, and Marx as principal threats to open society.

In his explanation, Popper contrasts open society with closed society. In an open society, individuals are free to criticize and debate. The doctrines, be it religious or political are not immutable. Popper calls it as test of falsification, which any scientific theory should possess.

Popper envisions individuals as autonomous agents. He advocates incremental changes, akin with scientific experiments. For Popper, openness means being wary of ideologies that suppress dissent or claim monopoly on truth.

Consequently Popper is critical of the ideas of Plato, Hegel & Marx.

Plato is an enemy because of his holism, sacrifice of individual for sake of community. Plato also preaches essentialism, rejecting material reality and asking for us to believe in metaphysical world.



Popper views Hegel as a philosophical progenitor of historicism: the idea that historical development follows toward a determinate end. He is critical of Hegel's idea of state spirit, again a metaphysical concept like Plato's theory of knowledge.

On similar lines, Popper criticizes Marx's historicism and determinism. Marx views history as a necessary progression driven by class conflict toward communism.

Thus, Popper's presents a strong defence of liberalism by attacking the stalwarts like Plato and Marx.

However, despite criticism, the theoretical utility of Plato, Hegel & Marx's ideas cannot be denied, and their contribution to political science remains unparalleled. [235 words]

The foundational base of western democracy has been shaped by Locke's ideas of constitutionalism, freedom and property. Elucidate. [2025/20m/4a]

The roots of Western democracy go back to medieval Europe's experiments in limiting monarchical power and giving voice to commons. However, it was Locke who crystallized and systematized these democratic ideas, already in circulation.

In his political work, Second Treatise of Government, Locke elaborates a vision of government grounded in natural rights, consent, and minimal state.

Locke argued that government must be limited by natural law and the people's trust (Constitutionalism). He suggests separation of powers and right to revolt against the state that fails to respect natural rights.

Locke claimed individuals are naturally free and equal. The state has been created by consent, and the freedom has not been transferred in the process.

Locke is also a champion of right to property and suggest that this right existed with man even in state of nature (natural right). Property is product of one's labour and part of personality. He sees the protection of property as a central function of government.

While Locke has certainly laid foundational liberal structures of modern democracy, it has not been sufficient. The minimal role of state contributed to exploitation of labours and gave rise to Marxism.

Slowly all the democracies have adopted universal adult franchise. Locke's minimal role for government has been eclipsed by democracies that now guarantee education, health, social security and redistribution.

Thus Locke's legacy is essential, yet incomplete. His model gives structure, but democracy's vitality today comes from continually correcting that structure to serve all, not only the propertied few. [248 words]



Hannah Arendt analysed a few categories of vita activa. Explain. [2025/15m/4b]

Arendt uses the term vita activa (active life) to distinguish human life as engaged in doing, as opposed to the vita contemplativa (contemplative life).

She argues that Western tradition often placed contemplation above activity, but that the active life has its own dignity and needs careful analysis.

Arendt further divides the vita activa into three fundamental activities.

Labor – An activity that corresponds to the biological processes of human life like bodily needs. It is cyclical, necessary, and tied to survival.

Work – It is the activity of making durable objects, building a world that endures beyond immediate needs. It produces artifacts, tools, buildings, institutions — things that stabilize human existence.

Action – This is the most political of the three. Action involves speech, plurality, interaction etc. It is where people reveal themselves in the public realm.

Arendt sees action as uniquely human: without it, plurality, public life, and political freedom would be diminished. While labour and work tend to be located in the private realm (household, necessity), action belongs to the public realm of politics .

In an age of bureaucratic dominance, and individualism, Arendt's stress on action in the public sphere reminds us of the need for active citizenship and deliberation.

Arendt is also critical of modernity, saying that people are alienated because of overemphasis on 'work' and 'labour' and neglect of 'action'.

For Arendt, only through action, person reveals his identity. Actualize the capacity for freedom and reaffirm the reality of this world. [242 words]

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PAPER- I B Indian Government and Politics

1. Indian Nationalism :

(a) Political Strategies of India's Freedom Struggle : Constitutionalism to mass Satyagraha, Non- cooperation, Civil Disobedience; Militant and Revolutionary Movements, Peasant and Workers Movements.

Explain briefly the role of Peasant Movements after 1857 and before independence. [2025/10m/150w/5a]

During British rule, the peasants bore the brunt of colonial exploitation through land revenue, and forced cultivation of cash crops. In response, they organised various uprisings and movements to seek relief.

The initial phase of agrarian unrest was largely spontaneous and local in nature.

In the Indigo Revolt (1859–60), peasants of Bengal rose against Indigo cultivation. Similarly there were riots in Deccan in 1875 and peasants in Maharashtra attacked moneylenders due to mounting debts and loss of land.

With the spread of modern political ideas and the rise of nationalism, peasant struggles became more organised.

The Champaran Satyagraha of 1917 was led by Mahatma Gandhi himself, marking the entry of peasants into the national movement.

Then we also witness the rise of Kisan Sabhas and communist-led peasant organisations, which made agrarian issues central to nationalist politics. All India Kisan Sabha was formed under Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, and soon became the main platform of organised peasant activity.

We can say that the peasant movements in pre-independence period played a dual role — socio-economic as well as political. While seeking relief for themselves, these movements also laid the groundwork for post-independence agrarian reforms and the demand for social justice. [197 words]

(b) Perspectives on Indian National Movement; Liberal, Socialist and Marxist; Radical Humanist and Dalit.

Write a note on the Dalit perspective of Indian National Movement. [2025/10m/150w/5b]

The Indian National Movement is often viewed as a struggle for freedom from colonial rule. However, from the Dalit perspective, it was also a struggle for social justice, and equality.



While British rule partially disrupted traditional caste structure, Dalits remained economically marginalised and socially oppressed.

One of the early critique was Jyotirao Phule who even suggested that ‘British raj is better than Peshwa raj’. He revealed the plight of lower castes through his books and sought British assistance for caste reforms.

Later B.R. Ambedkar gave voice to the idea that freedom must also mean liberation from caste domination. The ideological clash between Ambedkar and Gandhi symbolised this tension. While Gandhi advocated reforms through Harijan upliftment, Ambedkar called for complete eradication of caste and political representation.

Dalit thinkers redefined nationalism to include social democracy, equal citizenship, and fraternity. Ambedkar insisted that “political democracy could not survive without social and economic equality”.

While the mainstream national movement succeeded in achieving political independence, it was the Dalit movement that laid the foundation for social justice in independent India. Their struggle expanded the meaning of nationalism—from mere transfer of power to transformation of society. [191 words]

2. Making of the Indian Constitution : Legacies of the British rule; different social and political perspectives.

3. Salient Features of the Indian Constitution : The Preamble, Fundamental Rights and Duties, Directive Principles; Parliamentary System and Amendment Procedures; Judicial Review and Basic Structure doctrine.

4. (a) Principal Organs of the Union Government : Envisaged role and actual working of the Executive, Legislature and Supreme Court. (b) Principal Organs of the State Government : Envisaged role and actual working of the Executive, Legislature and High Courts.

Legislature

Parliamentary committees are indispensable to the legislative process. It provides for the opportunity for cross-pollination between the two chambers of the Parliament. Discuss. [2025/20m/6a]

Parliamentary committees are smaller bodies constituted by the Parliament to examine specific matters in detail. This is done since such issues cannot be handled effectively in open sessions due to time and procedural constraints.



We can trace the origin of this idea of committees in the British parliamentary tradition. The Constitution empowers Parliament to make its own rules of procedure, under which such committees have been created. Over time, such committees have become integral to legislative process.

The bills referred to Standing Committees undergo clause-by-clause examination, inviting expert opinion and stakeholder feedback. This ensures better-quality laws. The Committees like Public Accounts (PAC) examine the implementation of policies and the utilisation of public funds.

One of the unique features of India's parliamentary committees is the joint participation of members from both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. This ensures what is often termed as cross-pollination between the two Houses.

While the Lok Sabha represents popular leaders, Rajya Sabha represents experience and wisdom. This contributes to sharing of diverse experiences and views, enhancing the quality of discussions.

Since these committees work away from media glare and political posturing, it allows members to work constructively across party lines. As Rajya Sabha is a permanent body, its participation ensures continuity and institutional memory across different Lok Sabhas.

The Parliament is a house of deliberation. Committees represent the core of this process. They transform Parliament from a debating forum into a functioning institution of accountability. Further, by enabling meaningful collaboration between both Houses, these committees ensure that legislative outcomes reflect consensus rather than contestation. [260 words]

Executive

Judiciary

Examine the constitutional provisions and nature of advisory jurisdiction of Supreme Court of India. Evaluate your answer with relevant examples. [2025/15m/6b]

The advisory jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of India has recently come into focus after the President sought the Court's opinion on the scope of powers of with respect to assent and reservation of Bills.

As suggested in Article 143, President can seek the opinion of apex court in a question of law or fact, which is of public importance. Additionally, President can also seek advice of court in disputes arising from out of any pre-constitution treaty, agreement etc.



Through this mechanism, Supreme Court acts as a constitutional advisor. However, the Supreme Court has the discretion to decline a reference. Nor is it binding on the president to abide by the court's opinion.

The first instance of use of this provision can be seen in Kerala Education Bill, 1958. The Court gave a detailed opinion on the validity of provisions affecting minority rights in education.

Similarly, in Berubari Union matter, the Court held that cession of Indian territory required a constitutional amendment, shaping India's foreign treaty practice.

Interestingly, the court the Court declined to answer the question in Ayodhya Reference 1993, holding it was not fit for judicial opinion under Article 143, and given the sensitivity of the issue.

In a constitution that envisages a separation of power between executive and judiciary, the advisory jurisdiction allows space for their intermingling. However, in practice it seems to have remained a political tool, with centre trying to pass responsibility to the courts as in Ayodhya case, or questioning the basis of Court's own judgement as recently happened. [255 words]

5. Grassroots Democracy : Panchayati Raj and Municipal Government; Significance of 73rd and 74th Amendments; Grassroot movements.

Enunciate the impediments to women's participation in local governance in the process of political decentralisation. [2025/20m/7a]

The participation of women in governance is a crucial component of political decentralisation. Not only ensures inclusivity but is necessary for social justice, and responsiveness.

Recognising this, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments reserved one-third of seats and leadership positions for women in local governance. Many states have since increased this quota to 50%, signifying a bold step towards gender-inclusive democracy.

However, despite the intent, the empowerment of women in local governance remains uneven. While millions of women hold elected positions, their substantive participation faces structural and cultural barriers.

To begin with, deeply rooted social norms discourage women from active political engagement. In many cases, elected women representatives act as proxies for their husbands or male relatives, popularly known as Sarpanch Pati. The issue is further complicated by lack of education and political awareness.



Apart from societal factors, the structural issues also play a key role. Irregular meetings, lack of training, poor infrastructure and overall masculinist approach to governance restrict women's effectiveness.

Even political parties nominate women only to fulfil the quota requirement, not based on merit or leadership skills. A phenomenon known as tokenization.

At extreme, in some regions, women representatives even face harassment or social backlash for challenging entrenched social order.

Thus, constitutional provisions need to be assisted by ground level changes to increase women participation. Along with skill & training programmes, strict enforcement against proxy representation is needed.

Political parties need to promote women's participation beyond quotas and recognize their leadership skills. Women's participation is not just a constitutional requirement but a necessity for meaningful decentralisation. [259 words]

6. Statutory Institutions/Commissions

How far has been the National Human Rights Commission successful in achieving its objectives? Comment. [2025/10m/150w/5e]

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was established in 1993 to protect human rights and ensure accountability of the state.

Since inception, the organization has played a notable role in mainstreaming human rights discourse in India. The Commission has intervened in matters such as custodial deaths, encounter killings, bonded labour, manual scavenging etc.

In 1998 the NHRC recommended against the deportation of Chakma refugees and argued that it violates their right to life. Ultimately forcing the state to withdraw. Similarly in 2002 Gujarat riots, NHRC recommended the transfer of cases of riot victims from Gujarat to other states on account of atmosphere of fear and intimidation.

NHRC has also enhanced India's credibility in international human rights forums, especially during reviews by the UN Human Rights Council.

However, despite these contributions, the NHRC faces several structural and operational constraints. It has limited powers and its recommendations are non-binding. It cannot inquire into cases older than a year or involving private individuals.

For India's democracy to be truly rights-oriented, the NHRC must evolve from being a recommendatory body to an enforcement-capable institution. Mere investigation into violations is of no use if justice cannot be ensured. [193 words]



There is a debate on the procedure for appointment of the Chief Commissioner and Election Commissioners to the Election Commission of India. Analyse its various aspects. [2025/15m/7c]

According to Article 324 of Constitution, the appointments of election commissioners is to be made by the President subject to a law made by Parliament.

Thus recently, the Parliament enacted the new rules for appointment of election commissioners and terms of office (2023). While the rules were much needed, the new act has triggered the discussion on the topic.

According to the new act, the selection committee consists of Prime Minister, LoP in Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the PM. The act replaced the interim, court-devised panel (PM + LoP + CJI).

Since the process is now codified by law, this is a step in right direction. It replaces the ad-hoc measures which were in place so far.

However, as often criticized, two of three members belong to the executive, enabling de-facto control over the appointment. The law even validates recommendations despite a vacancy in the panel.

Comparing with other countries, UK follows an independent appointments process. The candidates are recommended by the Speaker's Committee and then approved by the House of Commons. There is strong parliamentary involvement and minimal executive dominance.

Similarly in USA, while the President nominates, Senate confirms the seats.

Thus in Indian case, the balance can be brought back by restoring an independent constitutional actor e.g., CJI and or at least by adding Speaker/Rajya Sabha Chairperson in the panel.

The eligibility can also be widened to permit eminent jurists and judges or election scholars/administrators.

free and fair elections is the first prerequisite of a thriving democracy. Thus, the independence of Election Commission is must to ensure that Indian democracy maintains its vibrancy. [270 words]

The decision to conduct Population Census-2027 has reopened the debate on delimitation in India. Discuss its various aspects. [2025/20m/8a]

The recent announcement of Population Census has revived discussions not only on the long-pending caste census and reservations, but also on delimitation.



Delimitation refers to the redrawing of boundaries of election constituencies. This is done to ensure that each constituency represents roughly equal population. The exercise is carried out by an independent Delimitation Commission.

The exercise is expected to happen after every census. However, it also means that states that successfully implemented family-planning programmes will be penalized as proportion of their seats will reduce. Thus, Parliament imposed a freeze on delimitation from 1976 to 2000 and again till 2026.

The foremost issue in delimitation is the change in demographics since 1971. While the population of northern states have increased significantly, that is not the case with southern states which implemented population control initiatives.

Then there is also a question of fresh data on caste populations, adding a new dimension to the debate. The current reservations are not exactly proportional to the populations of these sections and the fresh data will expose disparities in representation across communities. This could fuel demands for proportional political representation.

While an argument is made that the new delimitation would punish the southern states for better governance and population control. However, giving consideration to other criteria like area or development or weighted representation will overshadow the fundamental principle of democracy i.e. one man one vote one value.

Thus, the exercise presents a delicate case. While delimitation is constitutionally necessary its implementation amid vast demographic and caste disparities poses serious political challenges. [255 words]

7. Federalism : Constitutional provisions; changing nature of centre-state relations; integrationist tendencies and regional aspirations; inter-state disputes.

The recent developments in Indian Politics has not eroded the true spirit of federalism in India. Critically examine this statement with the help of appropriate examples. [2025/15m/6c]

The recent judgement of Supreme Court in State of Tamil Nadu v. Governor of Tamil Nadu, have brought forth the discussion on the powers of governor and the spirit of federalism.

The judgement curtailed a Governor's indefinite withholding of Bills passed by the State legislature. It seeks to balance the powers of central governments vis-à-vis states.

The powers of governor have been a matter of debate since independence. The central govt. has misused these powers multiple times, at times dissolving as many as 9 state assemblies. Eventually the Supreme Court had to intervene, bringing the use of Article 356 under judicial review (SR Bommai case).



The powers of Governor to choose the Chief Minister during hung assembly has also been a matter of contestation. In the recent case of Maharashtra, governor played an instrumental role in dismantling of Uddhav Thakrey government, and establishing a BJP coalition at the helm.

On similar lines, the powers of governor to withhold assent to bills has been a matter of contestation since long. In practice, this was as powerful as pocket veto, although constitution did not seem to envisage this. This has obstructed the passage of bills because of political differences, rather than principled use.

Thus, the recent development is in fact a step in the right direction. The Indian federalism stands strong, and instead of weakening, we can say that such developments strengthen the spirit of federalism in India. [236 words]

Delineate the key factors that have shaped the evolving political landscape in Jammu and Kashmir post 2019. [2025/10m/150w/5d]

The politics of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) witnessed a profound transformation since abrogation of Article 370. The amendment bifurcated the state into two Union Territories — J&K and Ladakh.

The development dismantled the state's semi-autonomous status and reoriented its relationship with the Union, triggering changes in multiple domains.

End of special status now meant that all the provisions of the Indian Constitution now apply to J&K, removing its separate constitution and flag. This move reduced the role of traditional regional parties like the National Conference (NC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP), creating space for national parties.

Following the abrogation, mainstream political leaders were detained for several months under preventive laws. This increased the power of bureaucracy in administration.

Post 2019, we also witness a shift in the public narrative from autonomy to development, security, and integration. Then there was also fresh redrawal of constituencies to reflect population and geography. The reservation for scheduled tribes was introduced for the first time.

As a result of these measures, we are witnessing a visible decline in large-scale militant activity. Unfortunately, the Pahalgam attack has created a setback for a while.

Thus, Jammu & Kashmir remains a work in progress. [195 words]



8. Planning and Economic development : Nehruvian and Gandhian perspectives; Role of planning and public sector; Green Revolution, land reforms and agrarian relations; liberalization and economic reforms.

Land reforms programmes led to some constitutional amendments. Comment. [2025/10m/150w/5c]

The land reform movement in India was one of the earliest socio-economic transformations. The efforts were inspired from the social ideals, and thus often clashed with the liberal ideas enshrined in Part 3 of the constitution.

Land reform measures were primarily enacted by state legislatures, as “land” is a State Subject. However, these laws soon faced challenges in courts for violating the Fundamental Right to Property under article 19 and 31.

Thus, very first Constitutional Amendment inserted the Ninth Schedule, placing certain state land reform laws beyond judicial review. More laws were placed under it in subsequent years.

In 1973, the apex court upheld the Ninth Schedule, but introduced the Basic Structure Doctrine. Even Ninth Schedule laws could be reviewed if they violated basic structure .

Further, the 44th Constitutional Amendment by the socialist Janata Govt. abolished the Fundamental Right to Property altogether, replacing it with Article 300A (a legal right). This effectively ended the constitutional obstruction to land reforms.

Thus, land reform was not only an agrarian transformation but also a constitutional and judicial evolution, clarifying the balance between individual and societal rights. Unfortunately, while these developments were significant, same cannot be said about the ground level transformation. [199 words]

With reference to Nehruvian perspective of planning and economic development, examine how the early phase of economic planning in India has laid the foundation of modern India's economic growth. [2025/15m/8b]

Jawaharlal Nehru’s approach to development was shaped the ideas of state-led economic growth, balancing social justice on the other hand. It sought to transform a poor, agrarian, colonial economy into a modern, self-reliant one.

Post independence, govt. established heavy-industries (steel, power) to raise the domestic capacity to make capital goods. This would make future investment would be less import-dependent.

The period also witnessed multipurpose river valley projects, the ‘temples of modern India’ in the words of Nehru. These projects delivered hydropower as well as irrigation, and set the stage for later agricultural breakthroughs.



The government also worked in the field of technology, laying foundations for Atomic Energy, space research and defence R&D. Multiple IITs and AIIMS as well as specialised institutes in agriculture were established.

As a results of all these monumental efforts, by the mid-1970s, India moved towards foodgrain self-sufficiency. This freed resources for industry and services—an essential precondition for sustained growth.

Unfortunately, the heavy hand of state in the economy also led to certain issues. The licence-quota-permit raj thwarted the growth of private sector. The high tariff walls reduced export competitiveness, and the PSU culture choked out the private players in the domain. This environment pushed many graduates from IITs to seek job abroad, washing away the benefits of these institutions.

While the Nehruvian economic model carried costs—controls and inefficiencies—it created the preconditions for take-off once incentives and markets were liberalised after 1991. Thus, the early Indian planning laid the foundation of modern India’s growth story.
[251 words]

9. Caste, Religion and Ethnicity in Indian Politics.

Caste remains a vital axis for political mobilisation in India. How would the caste census address the aspirations of people? Discuss. [2025/15m/7b]

From India’s first general election, caste has been a core axis of identity and mobilisation. Political parties have often appealed to caste groups for votes, nominated candidates from certain castes, and awarded benefits on caste-lines.

Over time, there has been inclusion of OBC quotas in education and employment, and there is increasing demand from hitherto ‘higher’ castes for their recognition as backward.

Since the existing arrangement is not completely based on updated and scientific data, caste census seeks to bridge this gap.

Currently, certain castes remain “invisible” in public statistics. Official enumeration would reveal their numerical strength as well as socio-economic status and regional patterns.

With finer caste data and socio-economic indicators, governments can design even further micro-targeting of affirmative action policies.

The census can also expose which specific castes within broad category (e.g. OBC) are lagging behind, prompting sub-categorisation.

Post census, the marginalized castes can also use the data as an evidence for their demands of quotas and socio-economic benefits.



However, the caste census alone cannot solve all problems. While the benefits are clear, there are chances of political misuse and deepening of caste identities. The updated data may raise concerns on the existing policies as well.

Caste remains, a central factor in Indian politics. However, we should not think that a caste-census will solve all the problems. The efforts for an egalitarian society must continue beyond caste census. [230 words]

10. Party System : National and regional political parties, ideological and social bases of parties; Patterns of coalition politics; Pressure groups, trends in electoral behaviour; changing socio-economic profile of Legislators.

Illustrate with examples how political parties in India have played a crucial role in drawing the historically disadvantaged groups into the mainstream political system. [2025/15m/8c]

Since ancient times, the Scheduled Castes and Tribes in India have remained socially disadvantaged and had very limited political voice.

Things changed drastically with Indian independence from British rule. A democracy with universal adult franchise was established, and the principle of one man, one vote, one value was adopted.

However, structural changes were still inadequate to change the social practices. In this, political parties have done an important work of bringing these disadvantaged groups in mainstream politics.

One of the important strategy was to form coalition of the depressed classes. BSP was quite successful in this, to the extent that it was the first Dalit led party to gain majority in a state assembly.

The regional parties like RJD in Bihar also drew support from backward castes and marginalized communities by promising representation and welfare.

Some Dalit parties / leaders also went with majority party like BJP. The association of Republican Party NDA can be cited as an example of this.

Then the mainstream political parties also try to woo the voters by measures like giving high position like president or speaker to leaders from these communities.

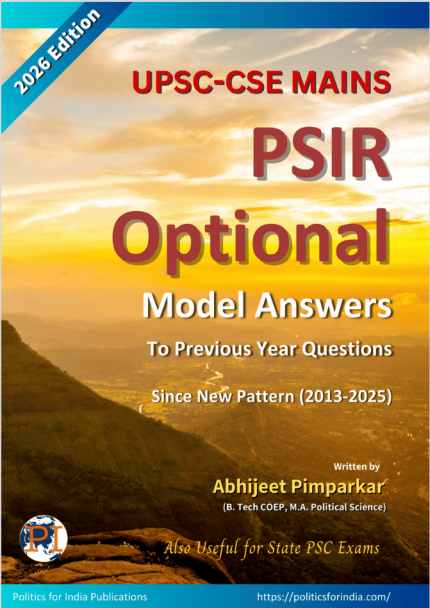
However, while the participation is encouraged, the political inclusion must go beyond symbolic representation to material empowerment. Only then can democracy truly deliver to those whose voices were long silenced. [217 words]



Written by: Abhijeet Pimparkar (B. Tech, M.A. Political Science)

11. Social Movement : Civil liberties and human rights movements; women's movements; environmentalist movements.

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PAPER-II A Comparative Political Analysis and International Politics :

1.Comparative Politics : Nature and major approaches; Political economy and political sociology perspectives; Limitations of the comparative method.

Discuss the psychological approach to the study of comparative politics. [2025/10m/150w/1a]

Comparative politics deals with comparing different states and politics. Thus, based on priorities and methods there are different approaches to it.

Psychological approach, in this regard focuses on the individual and group psychology and its effects on political matters. It focuses on attitudes, beliefs, value system, emotions etc. We can contrast psychological approach with institutional approach which shifts the focus to institutions and statutes (rather than people).

Applying psychological analysis, the excessive focus on individual rights in the West can be linked to the values of materialism, individualism etc., central to American psychology. On contrary, there is higher emphasis on culture and religion in Indian minds, which explains the right wing orientation of Indian politics.

Similarly, the recent shift to right wing in West can be explained on the basis of change in psychology of the concerned citizens, in response to the forces of globalization and immigration.

While the psychological approach is undoubtedly useful, it should be noted that politics cannot be reduced to a single factor like this. Thus, psychological approach can be used along with other traditional approaches to arrive at a more informed conclusions. [187 words]

2.State in Comparative Perspective : Characteristics and changing nature of the State in capitalist and socialist economies, and advanced industrial and developing societies.

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3.Politics of Representation and Participation : Political parties, pressure groups and social movements in advanced industrial and developing societies.



**Discuss the political socialization of open and closed societies.
[2025/10m/150w/1d]**

Socialization denotes the process of getting acquainted with the ways of society. Similarly, political socialization suggests a process whereby people develop an understanding of their political culture, identities, opinions, behaviour etc.

It is a process of perpetuation of political values across generations.

In an open society, variety of political norms and values flourish. Consequently, there are no restrictions on the process of political socialization. While such societies offer multiple options, excessive emphasis on openness can lead to development of postmodern, anarchical values and a confused society.

On the contrary, in a closed society there limitations on the agents of this process to pass on political norms to the next generation. Such states entertain only the behaviour that favour itself, though some revolutionary trends can also be observed if the state tries to be extremally oppressive or against a foreign state e.g. in case of British ruled India, or Arab Spring.

As suggested by Hannah Arendt, politics is the essence of human action. Thus, political socialization needs to be engineered correctly to enable actualization of human potential. [176 words]

**Of late, centrist and centre-left political parties have been facing setbacks while centre-right parties have been in ascendency the world over. Comment.
[2025/20m/3a]**

There is notable shift towards centre-right across the world. While this radical turn is somewhat worrying, given the history of last few decades, this should not come as a surprise.

In West, one of the most compelling explanations for the rise of the populist right is rooted in value-based conflicts. Ronald Inglehart's theory of post-materialism argues that with the rise of affluence, people began to prioritise values like autonomy, tolerance, environmentalism, self-expression etc. However, these postmodern values have compromised the societal morality, facing backlash from traditional sections.

A new divide, globalisation's winners vs. losers has emerged. Those benefiting from the knowledge economy and international networks are at odds with those suffering from industrial decline, automation etc. Then there is also issues of cultural clashes with immigrants, both legal and illegal.

All of these issues have been capitalized by right wing populist leaders, securing political power be it Trump in USA or right wing parties in Europe.



Similar developments can be observed in developing parts of the world. As in case of India, there is increasing cultural awareness and a proportional backlash against Western material values and a way of life.

There is also a feeling of historical injustice by the West and is being give a political expression. This can be attributed to increased capacities and awareness in such societies.

Thus, every country asserting self-reliance, there is possibility that the world order will once again turn to the billiards ball model, from existing complex interdependence.

However, these changes are also accompanied by a shift in polarity from West to East and how these new global leaders wield the newfound power will decide the future trajectory of global politics. [278 words]

4.Globalisation : Responses from developed and developing societies.

Global South-sensitive model of globalization would prevent the danger emanating from overcentralized globalization. Discuss. [2025/15m/3c]

The current model globalization is facing backlash from both advanced and developing worlds. While the resistance from third world existed earlier as well, the interrogation from the West is new.

This has raised serious questions on the nature and the centre of globalization.

The existing globalization has been created by the West to perpetuate their hegemony. While the formal colonization has ended, globalization has promoted neo-colonization.

Marxists scholars like Wallerstein capture this idea in his core-periphery model. The west is importing only raw materials from developing countries, exporting finished goods and services. This has continued the transfer of wealth.

With increased awareness and capacities with the South, we are witnessing a backlash against this. Thus, there is a strong need to create a model of globalization considering the concerns of third world as well.

At first, the WTO needs to be revitalized and the pending issues needs to be resolved. The hegemony the dollar has enjoyed so far needs to be revisited and a global currency backed by hard asset needs to be invented.

The world also needs technology transfer from North to South and an increased leeway to the global south as for as environmental issues are concerned.

Such changes may seem radical and impossible in a world where power is enjoyed by the West. However, if the current trend of autarky needs to be reversed, there is no other way than west ceding its power. [237 words]



5. Approaches to the Study of International Relations : Idealist, Realist, Marxist, Functionalist and Systems theory.

Neo-liberalism lightened neo-realism's dark view of international politics. Comment. [2025/10m/150w/1b]

The harsh reality of two world wars led to the rise of realism in theories of international relations. However, the relative phase of peace since 1950s have questioned the spirit of realism.

Neo-realism takes a turn from classical realism, suggesting that the 'structure' of international environment is such that states do not have choice. As Mearsheimer suggests, states are compelled to go for 'power maximization'.

This is indeed a dark view suggesting that states have no choice but fight. Such views promote military expenditure, weapons advancement and increase the risk for all.

The contemporary liberal theories counter this perspective. Contrary to structural realism, Joseph Nye suggests complex-interdependence. According to Nye, states have multiple, distributed stakes in each other and the going for war is no longer a feasible option.

Similarly, the functionalism as given by Friedman suggest that cooperation is indeed possible with a nuanced and step by step approach. The example of EU and ASEAN stands as an evidence of this

Thus, there is shift in global narrative from contestation to cooperation. While we're witnessing new rivalries and trade wars, we can take solace in the fact that a military confrontation still remains a distant reality. [197 words]

6. Key Concepts in International Relations : National interest, security and power; Balance of power and deterrence; Transnational actors and collective security; World capitalist economy and globalisation.

Transnational actors have qualitatively transformed the world by the way of their fresh insights and actions. Illustrate your answer with suitable examples. [2025/15m/2c]

As the name suggests, transnational actors are entities that operate across borders. Without formally assuming power, these actors influence global politics, and have become a defining feature of current global order.

The first instance in large scale intervention by such a transnational actors can be said to be the role played by the European East India Companies. Plundering the resources of third world, these actors soon amassed vast powers. This very much shaped the world order upto 19th century, when the power was gradually replaced by state actors.



In contemporary times, the American IT majors have amassed huge influence in global politics. These firms employ millions and have vast populations dependent on their services. This increases their bargaining power vis-à-vis states. The recent refusal by WhatsApp to share the encrypted message details with Indian government can be cited as an example of this.

The NGOs on similar lines also exercise huge control, particularly in domain of creating narratives. Through their reports, rewards and rankings, they seek to create or deny legitimacy for other actors. Unfortunately, such power is often used to promote the western values and narratives.

While the MNCs and NGOs act as agents of western states, the frustration with excessive intervention by the west have led to creation of yet another non-state actor i.e. terrorist organizations. Such entities often take shelter in failed states, trying to destabilize the better part of the world.

Thus, undeniably these actors have assumed large power and influenced world politics over centuries. While the roles of MNCs and NGOs can be steered to some extent, the actors like terrorists needs to be curbed altogether. [271 words]

7. Changing International Political Order : (a) Rise of super powers; Strategic and ideological Bipolarity, arms race and cold war; Nuclear threat; (b) Non-aligned Movement: Aims and achievements. (c) Collapse of the Soviet Union; Unipolarity and American hegemony; Relevance of non-alignment in the contemporary world.

“Trump’s return to the White House is a jolt to push the European Union to invest in its own defence and economic and technological revival.” Comment. [2025/15m/4c]

Over past few years, we are witnessing a steeper decline in US hegemony. The country has shifted gears to right wing politics, and we are witnessing the last ditch efforts to re-secure its position.

After 2nd World War, US assumed the responsibility for protection of European countries through NATO. In his last term, President Trump pushed the European allies to increase defence expenditure (4% of GDP), and his re-election means that the agenda will be taken further (now there is push for 5%).

While US assumed security responsibility of NATO nations so far, it needs to be understood that the US had vested interest in form of universalization of dollar. The status of dollar as reserve currency simply meant that US can print the money at its wish, exporting inflation to the world.

Currently, no such incentive exists. Thus, assuming security of its NATO allies is seen as a burden by the US. This is coupled with the backlash against globalization.



Further, the US also wants an increased defence export to its NATO allies. While this can be a short term solution for Europe, it needs to invest in defence technology if it needs to meet the target without excessive imports.

While this would be a worrisome development for Europe, this is positive development for India as the solidarity of West is breaking down. This will further contribute to decline in US hegemony and create space for newer actors like India. [241 words]

8. Evolution of the International Economic System : From Brettonwoods to WTO; Socialist economies and the CMEA (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance); Third World demand for new international economic order; Globalisation of the world economy.

9. United Nations : Envisaged role and actual record; Specialized UN agencies—aims and functioning; need for UN reforms.

The withdrawal of the United States of America from the World Health Organization is set to have far-reaching impacts on global health. Reimagining the existing WHO is vital for the global health agenda. Discuss. [2025/15m/2b]

Since its inception in 1948, WHO, is the leading global institution for public health. It has played a central role in setting global health norms, standards, coordinating responses, and eradicating diseases like small-pox, polio.

Interestingly, recently Trump initiated a formal withdrawal from the organization. The white house has alleged mishandling of the recent pandemic by WHO, and claimed unfair financial burden on the United States.

Historically, the U.S. contributed roughly 12-15% of WHO's budget. With it gone, the WHO will face a funding gap. The withdrawal of USA also harms legitimacy of the organization, affecting funding by other donors as well.

Along with funding, US also hosts state of the art health infrastructure. Loss of US membership will also affect data sharing, and health security partnerships.

With U.S. losing its seat at WHO, China will seek to fill the vacuum. This is even more problematic since China's involvement with Covid-19 virus is still not clear.

Above all, the withdrawal signals a retreat from global health cooperation and increasing the risk for all.

Thus, re-imagining WHO remains vital. To begin with, efforts should be made for a diversified and predictable funding. Shifting reliance on one or few donors to a broader base of member contributions.



With evolving climate change, the WHO also needs to broaden its agenda. There is also a need to include the research on ancient health sciences like Ayurveda, to increase the interest of emerging countries like India.

While the collective will of other countries can take the WHO forward, an effort still should also be made to bring back the world's largest economy onboard.

With rising environmental issues, we are witnessing plethora of complex health care challenges. Thus, revival of WHO is essential to ensure global cooperating while dealing with these emerging challenges. [296 words]

Collective security and responsibility to protect (R2P) are similar but different in scope, goals and methods. Explain. [2025/15m/3b]

Collective security suggests a system where a group of states agree that an attack on one is an attack on all. They commit to act together to repel aggression.

Responsibility to Protect (R2P) on the other hand, holds that each state has the primary responsibility to protect its population from genocide, war crimes etc. and that the international community must intervene (as a last resort) to ensure this.

While both the concepts talk about collective responsibility of nations, they are remarkably different.

Collective security deals with state attacking another state. Whereas, R2P is concerned about the treatment of state of its own citizens.

The end goal of collective security is to maintain international peace and deter aggression by countries. The purpose is to protect relatively weaker states, by the threat of collective strength. R2P on the other hands seeks to protect the citizens of a country from their own state from crime against humanity.

As far as methods are concerned, collective security relies on diplomatic, economic sanctions as well as use of military. R2P also relies of similar methods, but it can also start with capacity building or humanitarian measures.

While NATO can be cited as a vivid example illustrating the working of Collective Security withing a domain, the use of R2P has been quite politicized. It was used in Libya to justify NATO intervention, contributing to regime change. Conversely, the UN did not involve in the Syrian conflict, and the region witnessed mass atrocities.

We can say that in era of complex crises, the R2P framework can complement the collective security. It shifts the focus from state stability to human security. However, the use of R2P also remains controversial and guardrails must be introduced to deter its misuse. [289 words]



10. Regionalisation of World Politics : EU, ASEAN, APEC, AARC, NAFTA.

Latin America has made moderate success in countering US-led global economic order by framing various organizations emphasizing regional sovereignty, economic integration and alternative development. Discuss. [2025/20m/4a]

For much of the 20th century and into the 21st, the United States exercised dominant influence over Latin America's political economy. Through trade policies, conditional aid etc. the U.S. shaped the economic norms for these countries.

These arrangements often placed Latin American countries in subordinate positions. Their economies opened to U.S. capital and markets while their export portfolios became commodity-centric. It also constrained regional autonomy, encouraged dependence, and at times resulted in political instability.

However, we're witnessing a change as US is struggling to maintain its hegemony. Latin American states have begun building regional organisations, asserting sovereignty and reducing dependence on the U.S.

The Mercosur (Southern Common Market), formed 1991. The arrangement creates a customs union among Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Bolivia.

Similarly, Caribbean countries have established CARICOM. This has allowed these countries to form a uniform policy on areas like education, health etc.

Such regional governance frameworks allows these countries to negotiate as a bloc and develop autonomous trade policy. These countries are also increasingly pursuing strategic partnerships outside the U.S. orbit.

While the optics are positive, the success has been moderate. The Latin American countries continue to suffer from political uncertainty, affecting everything else. The institutions continue to be weak, and there is political divergence among member states. These countries still interface with global capitalist order and cannot fully escape dependency.

However, the assertion of autonomy by these economies, at least in theory represents an important milestone. The region can said to have evolved from a US dependency to a 'swing region'. With reducing US hegemony, and the de-dollarization on horizon, the Latin America will certainly witness better days. [272 words]

How successful has the 'ASEAN Plus Three' been in addressing regional problems? Support your answer with specific examples. [2025/15m/4b]

The ASEAN Plus Three (APT) is a regional framework comprising the ten member states of ASEAN and China, Japan, South Korea. The APT cooperation process officially began in 1997, on backdrop of 1997–98 Asian financial crisis.



The aim of APT was to deepen East Asian integration—economic, political and cultural. It seeks to build an “East Asian Community” with ASEAN at the core.

A key achievement of the forum can be said to be the Financial Stability Mechanism. The initiative and its currency swap arrangements that provide a regional safety net for crises. Then APT has also set up the APT Emergency Rice Reserve to enhance food security and coordinating regional responses to supply shocks.

Beyond economics, APT covers areas such as transport, energy, ICT, culture, education and disaster management.

However, there are many challenges that plague the APT initiative.

Similar to India’s position in SAARC, China fares disproportionate compared to other economies. Coupled with non-open, authoritarian nature of Chinese politics, it is seen with suspicion by other countries.

China has asserted itself in South China Sea and has active disputes with Japan, Vietnam as well as Philippines. Thus, these countries diversify their stakes by cooperating with India, USA etc. trying to balance the Chinese influence.

But as we enter a multipolar world, and as the Chinese hegemony starts descending, there is greater chance of closer cooperation and the truly creation of ‘East Asian Community’. [236 words]

11. Contemporary Global Concerns : Democracy, human rights, environment, gender justice terrorism, nuclear proliferation.

Explain the non-traditional security threats in the context of food and environmental crises. [2025/10m/150w/1c]

While the world seems to be making a fast progress in the field of technology & artificial intelligence, paradoxically the basic issues of environment and food security haunt us even more acutely.

Environmental issues – such as climate change, land degradation, water scarcity and pollution have now become central to government agenda.

The uncertain environmental events intensify stress on resources, agriculture, water, and infrastructure. This reduces nature’s capacity to support human population. There is also increase in events like forest fire, pest and diseases, affecting human security.

Further, environmental stress feeds into issues like crop failures pushing up food prices, and at times affecting food security. Such issues carry social ramification as well where sharp price rises may provoke protests, riots, or unrest.



The environment crisis also pushes people for migration, putting pressure on host regions and creating stress in social cohesion.

Thus, there is an urgent need to holistically understand and address these issues rather than making a progress in single direction. A global cooperation is much needed to ensure that such issues are solved before it's too late. [179 words]

Comment on the Red Lipstick Movement in the context of feminist rights. [2025/10m/150w/1e]

Red Lipstick movement is a symbolic act of literally putting up red lipstick as a form of protest against patriarchy and a symbol of women solidarity.

Historically, this method was adopted during the early 20th-century suffrage movement in the U.S. It has resurfaced in recent years as a visible sign of resistance, solidarity by the Left against far-right campaign of Donald Trump.

With notable shift towards extreme liberalism, the ideas like sexual expression, gender fluidity, have become mainstream, collectively called as Wokeism. Trump reacted strongly against it, recognizing only two genders in state policy, erasing transgender identity.

This movement challenges this idea. It opposes the patriarchal control over women's choices, including how they present themselves. It intersects with issues of body autonomy, appearance-shaming and gendered dress codes.

The popularity of the movement can be attributed to its simplicity. A simple act of putting a lipstick marks your participation in the wider movement.

However, this simplicity has also limited its impact. The movement is leaderless, and there is no specific agenda beyond symbolism. There is no yardstick to measure the success of movement with, what to speak if it's successful or not. [191 words]

The world currently has been in the throes of a twin process of 'democratic backsliding' and 'democratic backlash'. How would you explain this paradox? [2025/20m/2a]

Democracy literally means 'rule of the people'. The power with masses is the essence of democracy. While we witnessed the establishment of democracies almost all over the world in modern era, the trend seems to be reversing.

Democratic backsliding suggests when a democracy weakens, when the norms and institutions no longer represent the spirit they were created with.

Democratic backlash can be said to be a similar phenomenon but with a harsher and more sudden change. While backsliding suggests an organic, gradual change, backlash stems from a bad experience.



Written by: Abhijeet Pimparkar (B. Tech, M.A. Political Science)

Either in East or West, we're witnessing decline of democracy. There is emergence of right wing in US as well as Europe, with strong sentiments against immigration, multiculturalism etc.

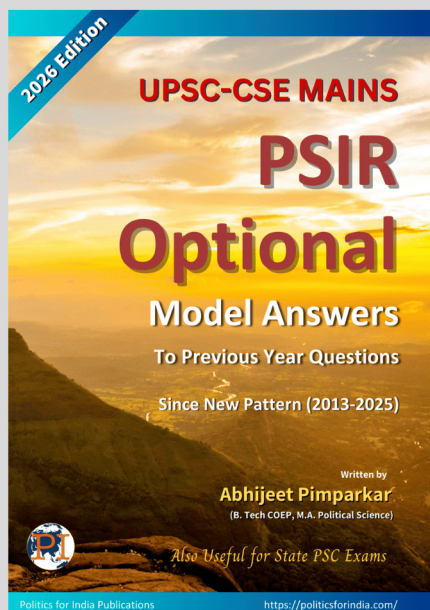
The democracy was imported in the third world to begin with, but barring few exceptions, it has not been able to hold the roots in such foreign lands.

In the advanced world, we can trace the phenomenon to the over-liberal policies of the state. The excessive freedom has led to ideas like postmodernism, wokeism etc. The globalization have also led to job losses, refugees and cultural clashes. Thus, people are opting for a strong, right wing, nationalistic regime, to reverse these changes.

In developing parts of the world, the reasons are different. People are seeing that the experiment of democracy has not been fruitful. While the authoritarian and soft-authoritarian states like China and ASEAN have made huge economic strides, same is not story with India, or its neighbours. Democracy is increasingly seen as responsible for delays and inefficiency.

While the developments are new, it should not come as a surprise. In a diverse world like ours, it is given that the institutions and systems will take the shape of people they govern. Thus, we are witnessing variants of democracy across the world, people trying to suit the system to meet their interests in best possible manner. [313 words]

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PAPER-II B India and the World

1. Indian Foreign Policy : Determinants of foreign policy; the institutions of policy-making; Continuity and change.

Would you agree with the contention that India's inclination to lean on a 'more aggressive hyper-realist posture' has gained a new momentum in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terrorist strike? Comment. [2025/10m/150w/5b]

Dealing with Pakistan has always been a matter of debate since Indian independence. The matter was further complicated with acquisition of nuclear weapons by Indian neighbour.

Notably, India did not do anything militarily after the 2008 terrorist attack. The response grew to surgical strikes in 2016, air strikes in 2019 and a full-blown missile attack inside Pakistan in response to recent Pahalgam incident. This is clear evolution of India's response, correctly characterized as 'aggressive hyper-realist posture'.

We can attribute this change to multiple factors. The increased stature of India in global order figures prominently. The US hegemony is on decline, and it needs India in upcoming multipolar order and in managing China.

There is also change in Indian approach to foreign policy. A right wing, nationalist government has shook off the title of 'swing state', maintaining independent decision making. This is also visible in purchasing of Russian oil, India's stand on Ukraine war etc.

Thus, Op. Sindoor symbolizes the new normal and also a watershed moment in Indian foreign policy posture. India has emphatically announced that it will set its own red lines and enforce them, global opinion notwithstanding. [189 words]

Critically analyze the different phases of India's foreign policy since independence. How justified, do you think, is S. Jaishankar's classification of the current phase as the phase of 'energetic diplomacy'? [2025/20m/6a]

Despite strong civilizational history, on eve of independence, India was a far weaker and a smaller player in global order of things. The policy of idealism, of non-alignment, was reflective of that. However, as Indian capacity and prowess grew it became more assertive and realist in its foreign policy.

From 1947 to 1991, the world was characterised by bipolar world order.

In this environment, India's response was to adopt the policy of non-alignment. Not identifying with either super power, while aiming to get political, security and economic support from both camps.



In the second phase from 1991 to 2008, India weaned itself away from non-alignment to a multipolar alignment. It adjusted its previous relations the USA and opened its economy for globalization. We also witness the signing of Indo US nuclear deal, marking even closer Indo US cooperation.

However, the global economic order once again received a major jolt with the 2008 collapse of US banking system. This marked the beginning of decline of US hegemony and rise of multiple poles in form of ASEAN, BRICS, China, India, Russia, etc.

Since then India has continued to characterize its foreign policy as multi-alignment, partnering with multiple partners at once based on issues and agendas.

India's Foreign Affairs Ministers also calls this "energetic diplomacy." The role of India is changing from a swing state to a pole in itself, and foreign policy needs constant manoeuvring. Thus, there is activism, multiple simultaneous initiatives and dealing with the old as well as emerging world order.

The use of the label 'energetic diplomacy' also describes India's ambition to play a vital role in global order, the one it has been denied last few centuries. [279 words]

2. India's Contribution to the Non-Alignment Movement Different phases; Current role.

Does the Non-Aligned Movement have any future in the wake of India's growing indifference towards it? [2025/10m/150w/5d]

NAM was created with the agenda of staying away from bloc politics of the cold war period. With the establishment of the US led world order in 1991, many experts questioned the relevance of NAM in a unipolar world.

India too has only maintained the ritual of attending NAM meetings. NAM do not find much mention beyond NAM summits nor does it figure high in Indian strategic calculation. Although a coalition of 120 countries, NAM does not wield significant power.

However, to deny any future for NAM would be an overstatement. As diplomat N. Krishnan reminds us, "dynamics of globalization have produced a whole set of new problems which the Non-Alignment Movement must take note of." The US hegemony is declining, the de-dollarization is suggested, and a multipolar world is emerging.

India has an ambition to play a major role in the global economy. And the leadership of the Non-aligned can provide a stage to voice itself.

Despite the achievement of NAM in early years, the long-standing goals of peace, development, and economic cooperation, remain to be realized. Thus, we can expect the movement to play an even bigger role in coming times. [193 words]



NonAlignment 2.0 underscores India's unique aspiration to emerge as a site for an alternative universality. Comment. [2025/15m/7c]

Since independence, India has seen different phases of Indian foreign policy. While the early phase was characterized by Non Alignment, the current phase is often called as Multi Alignment or Non Alignment 2.0

Currently, the world is in flux again, the western hegemony is in its last phase and the world is preparing for the Asia centric global order. In this environment, India seeks to assert its complete independence. It pursues the policy of multi-alignment.

This is particularly important as India's stature increases in global power, India becoming a pole in itself. It reinforces India's vision of a global order, with countries not exercising power over each other.

As suggested by Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale, multi-alignment gives India the capacity to be flexible and maintain decisional autonomy. Hedging is a delicate exercise, but there is no getting away from it in a multipolar world.

India's External Affairs Minister and a former diplomat S. Jaishankar, describes this as 'building strong partnerships with like-minded states on specific subjects'. India, he says will have to "nimble expand the space to pursue its interests and not be caught flatfooted by dogma".

While seen by the west as Indian opportunism, the current foreign policy aptly suits India's interests. In fact the same policy of interest based alliances has been pursued by the West over centuries, while the nomenclatures may have been different. [227 words]

3. India and South Asia : (a) Regional Co-operation : SAARC-past performance and future prospects. (b) South Asia as a Free Trade Area. (c) India's "LookEast"policy. (d) Impediments to regional co-operation: River water disputes; illegal cross border migration; Ethnic conflicts and insurgencies; Border disputes.

China's growing footprint and a tangible shift in power dynamics in Bangladesh has weakened India's leverage in Dhaka. Comment. [2025/10m/150w/5a]

India witnessed unprecedented phase of Cooperation with Bangladesh since 2009. However, the political landscape in Bangladesh went significant upheaval in August 2024, following the ousting of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The temporary government led by Muhammad Yunus is increasingly showing a divergence from its long-standing alignment with India, and a greater openness to Chinese partnership.



Bangladesh is increasingly looking to China for major infrastructure and investment projects. It is also willing to involve China in sensitive projects like water management of the Teesta River, or its port modernization. This complicates the security environment for India.

In fact, this marks a failure of India's Bangladesh policy. India's earlier assumption of privileged status in Dhaka has perhaps led to complacency. While India has funded projects, delays and other impediments have eroded goodwill.

While the full restoration of earlier government seem improbable, India must navigate the current situation. It needs to come with a holistic development partnership plan for its eastern neighbour.

Along with economic assistance, India also needs to draw its own red lines and communicate them. We're in a period of 'energetic diplomacy' as Dr. S Jaishankar suggests, and any complacency can prove costly. [193 words]

Discuss the potential role India can play in initiating a possible phase of trilateral economic engagement among India, China and Nepal. [2025/15m/8c]

Although a small country, managing Nepal has remained a challenge for India since independence. This can be partly attributed to the domestic politics of Nepal, partly to Chinese involvement, and to some extent, a failure of India's Nepal policy.

As Nepal is once again in a state of unrest, India can explore the option of trilateral engagement with Himalayan neighbour with China on board.

India, China, and Nepal share deep civilisational, cultural, and economic linkages. India has historical influence and geographical proximity to Nepal. Further, Nepal is dependent on India for trade and connectivity. Similarly Indo China share history of Buddhism and trade routes through Himalayas.

With Chinese involvement, India can initiate cross-border connectivity projects linking India-Nepal and China. Such trans-Himalayan corridors will boost the Nepalese economy. This can later be also leveraged to power grid connectivity for hydropower exchange and export.

Along with trade, the joint promotion of Buddhist and Himalayan tourism circuits can strengthen the people-to-people contact and soft power cooperation.

While there is certainly a trust deficit between India and China post-Galwan, we can subscribe the view of functionalism. A small cooperation in one area can have a spillover effect and can lead to larger cooperation.

Such trilateral engagement has potential not only to improve India Nepal relations, but can also show us the possibility of Indo China partnership. While the Asian century is



already here, a strong cooperation between Asian giants will allow us to take maximum benefit out of it. [245 words]

4. India and the Global South : Relations with Africa and Latin America; Leadership role in the demand for NIEO and WTO negotiations.

Trump's unilateral imposition of reciprocal tariffs on scores of countries poses impending threat to the future of the rule-based multilateral global trading system under the WTO. What options do the WTO members have to salvage the organization? [2025/15m/7b]

Since the first term of President Trump, the American trade policy has been marked by an aggressive and unpredictable use of tariffs. With his re-election in 2025, we are witnessing tariffs to the tune of 100% on several countries, completely disrupting the existing trade environment.

The core mandate of the WTO is to ensure a rule-based, non-discriminatory trading order. The most-favoured-nation (MFN) principle asks states not to take arbitrary measures or impose discriminatory tariffs. US has not only violated the WTO mandate, but it has also ensured that the WTO Appellate Body remains dysfunctional.

Although US justifies its actions on grounds of “reciprocity” and “America First”, it reflects American protectionism rather than multilateralism.

Thus, there is need for developing countries to come together and resurrect the WTO.

To begin with, member countries can propose reforms to the dispute resolution mechanism, taking into consideration the US concerns. Meanwhile, a temporary plurilateral arrangements can be instituted for dispute resolution among countries other than USA.

Further, the Doha Development Round's deadlock can be replaced by issue-based, flexible “plurilateral” agreements. This will allow willing members to cooperate on specific areas such as e-commerce, services regulation etc.

Additionally, middle economies like India, Japan, the EU, and Canada can form coalitions to present their demands in a unified manner.

Since the existing trade order is no longer serving the US interest, the pushback from world's largest economy is natural. However, developing countries also need to see WTO as enabler, rather than adjudicator. [246 words]



Discuss some of the key drivers of India's new interests in Africa which might help in developing long-term comparative advantage over China. [2025/15m/8b]

Africa is often called the “continent of the future”. It represents the last major frontier for global economic expansion. The continent has vast natural resources, young demography, and untapped market potential.

This has triggered a new phase of geo-economic competition. Emerging economies like India, China and Japan are trying to deepen their presence and secure long-term strategic interests in the region.

For India, Africa is important for its energy security as well as resources. Africa holds vast reserves of oil as well as critical minerals. Africa can also play an important role in food security and agricultural cooperation with India. Additionally, Africa also offers a growing market for Indian pharmaceuticals, automobiles, textiles etc.

Apart from trade relations, Africa is also important from strategic perspective. The coastal states of East Africa are crucial for India's maritime security and SAGAR initiative. Africa is also an important part of India's Solar Alliance (ISA) and India's OSOWOG (global grid) initiative.

So far, India has focused on capacity building of Africans and on sectors like IT, healthcare, education etc. While China follows a state-driven “resource-for-infrastructure” model, India's approach is more people-centric and demand-driven.

Thus, given the stakes and approach, India enjoys a softer image and historical goodwill vis-à-vis China.

However, India's comparative advantage will mean little unless it is strategically leveraged. India must institutionalise its Africa policy, and enhance its on-ground visibility through local partnerships.

Africa's rise offers India both an opportunity and a test. By blending strategic foresight with execution, India can not only secure its own future but also help shape an equitable global order. [262 words]

5. India and the Global Centres of Power : USA, EU, Japan, China and Russia.

Historical ties between India and Japan grew into a ‘special strategic and global partnership’. Comment. [2025/10m/150w/5e]

India and Japan share civilisational ties that date back centuries. However, this relationship has acquired a new depth and strategic turn in an evolving multipolar world.

Historically, Japan's engagement with India began through spread of Buddhism. There was also connect when Japan provided refuge to leaders like Subhas Chandra Bose and supported the Indian National Army during India's freedom struggle.



According to Kautilyan logic of 'neighbour's neighbour', the Chinese might and aggressiveness has acted as a strong push factor for Indo Japan. Their membership of QUAD or AAGC can be cited as mechanisms created to counter China.

Further the economies of India Japan are complementary, facilitating a stronger trade cooperation. While Japan is facing a demographic crisis and has surplus money to invest, India is young demography, in need of external investment and knowledge transfer. The Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail (MAHSR) project is prime example of such cooperation.

Apart from above, the joint efforts in space-technology, digital partnerships are also growing. We're seeing a greater push for educational, cultural exchanges and stronger people to people ties.

Thus, Indo Japan ties have truly matured into a genuine. partnership that will shape the future of the Indo-Pacific order. [195 words]

The tariff threats have pushed India and the European Union closer. Evaluate the India-EU partnership. [2025/15m/6c]

Steep and uncertain American tariff have put the global trade order in uncertainty. This has pushed countries to diversify their supply chains, pushing India and EU closer. This is visible as the India-EU FTA talks have intensified.

While FTA remains under discussion, India–EU trade is already large and growing. EU is India's second-largest trading partner, with goods trade around 120 bn Euros. Further, the Trade & Technology Council (TTC) was launched 2023 to drive cooperation on semiconductors, 5G/6G, AI, resilient supply chains etc.

Both India EU have kept the target of arriving at comprehensive trade deal by end of 2025. This will ensure stable, high-value markets for India and the prospects of technology transfer. For EU, a large democratic partner for resilient supply chains.

The alignment with EU's rules-heavy single market will also contribute to Indian export upgrades and push Indian firms up the quality ladder. There are also prospects of joint work on renewables, storage, green hydrogen among other futuristic initiatives.

Apart from EU as a whole, India also enjoys a strong bilateral relations with countries like Germany, France and Italy. India's defence partnership with France is too well known. Then there is also strong presence of Indian diaspora in the region, contributing to the stability of Indo Europe ties.

Thus, the push from USA have pushed India-EU together. While the relations have been strong so far, the best is yet to come. The partnership has huge potential, and India–EU partnership can become the trade corridor for the next decade. [253 words]



India continues to invoke its time-tested policy of strategic autonomy vis-à-vis both the United States of America and Russia by rejecting US' offer of mediation on Kashmir issue and by refusing to criticize Russia in its ongoing war against Ukraine. Comment. [2025/20m/7a]

India is a civilizational state. Indian history predates every other known history in the world. According to some accounts, India accounted for 20-25% of world GDP for good phase of history. There are also differences in the strategic culture of India vis-a-vis other countries of the world.

Given all these, India has always sought to maintain its independence in foreign policy, be it US offer of mediation in Kashmir or the Western objection to Indo Russia ties.

On Kashmir, India maintains the position that it is part of India, illegally occupied by Pakistan. Thus, any mediation will weaken its long-held position.

Similarly India enjoys a strong defence partnership with Russia, going back decades. Discounted Russian oil have cushioned India's import bill since 2022. Additionally, the as Mearsheimer suggests, US alone is responsible for the Ukraine War.

Thus, maintaining a strategic autonomy is the best policy for India in current global order. While the world is transitioning to multipolarity, India is still a developing country and its economic interest cannot be compromised.

Thus, India has gone for what is proudly calls 'issue-based alignments'. Partnerships based on issues and agendas in certain domains.

However, this stance by India also creates diplomatic complexity.

Moving close to the U.S. while retaining ties with Russia has been objected by the West. Similarly, maintaining close ties with Iran—challenges U.S. sanctions policy toward Iran. Indian policy is often seen as Indian opportunism by the West, akin to its policy of non-alignment.

However, when executed wisely, multi-alignment is not opportunistic—it is the exercise of earned sovereignty in a complex multipolar era, and India has every right to pursue it to secure its national interest. [278 words]

6. India and the UN System: Role in UN Peace-keeping; Demand for Permanent Seat in the Security Council.



7. India and the Nuclear Question : Changing perceptions and policy.

India's reluctance to perceive any 'existential threat' inevitably made the multilateral path to nuclear security a 'default option' until it decided to cross nuclear Rubicon in 1998. Identify and analyze some of the major reasons behind this shift in India's position on the nuclear question. [2025/20m/8a]

For nearly five decades, India avoided seeing any state as an “existential threat”, relying on external institutions like UN and hoping for global disarmament. Yet by 1998, New Delhi decided to cross this red line, entering the elite club of nuclear powers.

In the early years of independence, Indian foreign policy had quite an idealistic undertone. Nehru and later leaders viewed nuclear weapons as instruments of global insecurity. India championed disarmament in forums such as the UN.

Despite wars with Pakistan and China, none were seen as threatening India's survival.

Parallely, India developed peaceful nuclear technology and maintained a civil orientation. The 1974 test was famously labelled 'Smiling Buddha'.

Despite such background, India decided to acquire nuclear weapons by the end of century. Several reason can be attributed to this change in stance by India.

Beijing's growing arsenal, coupled with its strategic closeness to Pakistan, altered India's threat perception. India faced a two-front nuclear challenge.

Parallely, the world also witnessed the erosion of the multilateral disarmament framework. US and Russia continued to maintain large stockpile of nuclear weapons. The mechanism of NPT was highly discriminatory, legitimising nuclear apartheid.

Along with external factors, India also acquired technological maturity and domestic consensus by the 1990s. The scientific community and political leadership (across parties) began to agree on asserting nuclear sovereignty.

Thus, under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, India conducted a series of nuclear tests in May 1998. A culmination of decades of frustration with discriminatory regimes and growing external threats. This was followed by Pakistan declaring its own nuclear program, further validating India's actions.

We can say that India's shift was not an abandonment of its moral stance but a realist adaptation to the global order. The tests forced the world to recognise India as a responsible nuclear power, later legitimized by the Indo-US nuclear deal. [304 words]



8.Recent developments in Indian Foreign Policy : India's position on the recent crises in Afghanistan, Iraq and West Asia, growing relations with US and Israel; Vision of a new world order.

For India, a multipolar world order would also mean a multipolar Asia. Comment. [2025/10m/150w/5c]

It is a well-known now that a unipolar world order is giving way for a multipolar one. However, this also means there will be multiple power poles in Asia itself. India, thus needs to prepare for this upcoming regional order.

Regarding security, robust mechanisms are needed to manage boundaries with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and China. Andaman & Nicobar needs to be developed as a power-projection hub.

The regional connectivity projects like BBIN, INSTC should be completed on priority. While India must compete where it must, collaboration should be sought where useful. India ASEAN partnership is right step in this regard.

Further, we may also witness the withdrawal of USA from Asia as it weakens. The leadership vacuum needs to be filled by India. India's ISA leadership is a good example. India can seek Japanese or ASEAN partnership to develop a similar initiative in the region.

For India, a multipolar Asia is both shield and a stage. While India should build power at home, it should seek coalition of like-minded countries and deliver public goods across the neighbourhood. This will ensure that multipolarity becomes advantage for India. [186 words]

India maintains strong ties with countries that will assure a free and open Indo-Pacific and guarantee greater connectivity with rest of the world. Analyze. [2025/15m/6b]

Around 90% of India's external trade happens via sea route. Thus, a free and open Indo Pacific is crucial to maintain India's energy security and supply chain resilience.

The Indo-Pacific stretches from the eastern coast of Africa to the western Pacific. It hosts major trade routes and has critical chokepoints like the Malacca Strait.

China seeks to declare its assertive presence in the region through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It has secured multiple ports in the region through coercive agreements with smaller countries.

Naturally, India partners with multiple regional and extra-regional partners to protect its interests.



Written by: Abhijeet Pimparkar (B. Tech, M.A. Political Science)

In fast few years, India–US relations have transformed into a strategic partnership. India has signed all major defence agreements with USA. India then also partners other countries through forums like QUAD, created explicitly to contain China.

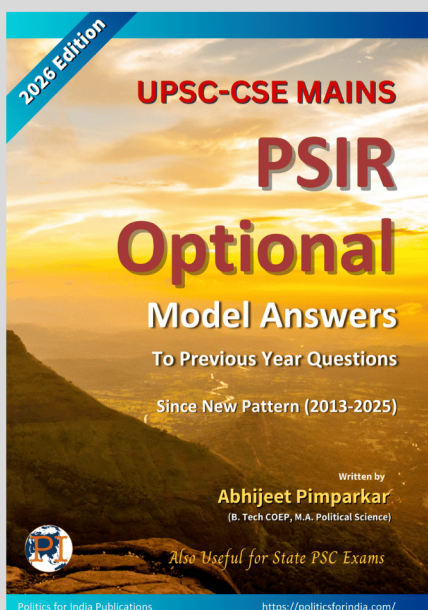
India Japan collaboration includes the Asia–Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), and investments in India’s Northeast connectivity projects. Then there are regular naval exercise of QUAD, as well as bilateral exercises with concerned countries.

Apart from major powers, India has also engaged with ASEAN to maintain free and open Indo Pacific. The recent case of India’s Brahmos export deal with Vietnam is a case in point.

Apart from these initiatives, India has also taken leadership role through forums like SAGAR, CDRI, IORA for the littoral countries of Indo Pacific. This will increase the stakes of other players in the region, making any unilateral action by China difficult.

Thus, India’s pursuit of a free and open Indo-Pacific is partnership-driven. Through such partnerships, India seeks to shape the emerging Asian order, and the role of Indo Pacific remains crucial in this regard. [274 words]

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