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MAINS ANSWERS FOR TEST-25

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1. Highlight the significance of and challenges associated with the Census in India. Discuss measures to overcome (150 words)

Introduction

A population Census is the process of collecting, compiling, analysing and disseminating demographic, social, cultural and economic data relating to all persons in the country, at a particular time in ten years interval.

India is recognised for its 'Unity in diversity' and the Census gives the citizens a chance to study this diversity and associated facets of their nation through its society, demography, economics, anthropology, sociology, statistics, etc.

Body

Significance and challenges associated with the Census in India

Significance

Comprehensive Source of Data: Census is a data collection exercise. It gathers knowledge about the demographic dividend of the nation which is vital for many purposes. Various surveys like health survey, education survey, agriculture survey, etc. are based on this comprehensive data.

Decision-making: Census is significant for any country for evidence-based decision making. The data collected through the Census is used for administration, governance, planning and policy-making as well as management and evaluation of various programmes run or to be introduced by the Government, NGOs, researchers, commercial and private enterprises, etc.

Policy-making: Census is responsible for taking the collected information “from a dwelling unit to the delivery unit”. It will boost coherence policy-making and scientific planning, resulting in optimisation of resources.

Demarcation: Census data is also used for the demarcation of constituencies and allocation of representation to the Parliament, State Legislative Assemblies and local bodies.

Challenges

Furnishing of false information: Due to fear of losing intended benefits of various schemes (or fear of losing citizenship this time) and lack of education, people fabricate and tend to provide false information. For example, people had apprehensions about the data collection of children not going to school and many-a-times they did not answer the survey questions.

Errors: There are two types of error during statistical exercise: Content error, and Coverage error which needs to be minimised.

Associated Costs: Huge expenditure (thousands of crores) is incurred by the government in conducting this exercise.

Abuse of Data: The availability of data with regional authorities has the potential for abuse of such data, as the concerned authority has access to everything about a particular family (ownership, caste, financial aspects, occupation, lifestyle, etc.).

Lack of community participation and inadequate training of enumerators to collect the precise and accurate data acts as a big challenge in conducting the Census exercise.

Way Forward

Measures to overcome

Strengthening the Data Quality: This can be done by minimising the coverage error and content error (through increased list of questions in the survey). It will help in changing the discourse of the government's programme implementation.

Organizing Campaigns: Launching of massive publicity campaigns in order to make people aware about the importance of Census in their life should be organized.

Capacity-Building: Proper training of enumerators (data collectors) and organizers should be organised.

2. Discuss the Disaster management act, 2005. Analyse the need for pandemic law in current situation facing the world (150 words)

Introduction

The Disaster Management Act was passed by the government of India in 2005 for the 'efficient management of disasters and other matters connected to it. However it came into force in January 2006.

Objective:

To manage disasters, including preparation of mitigation strategies, capacity-building and more.

Definition of a “disaster” in Section 2 (d) of the DM Act states that a disaster means a “catastrophe, mishap, calamity or grave occurrence in any area, arising from natural or man-made causes.

Body

Major Features of the Act:

The Act designates the Ministry of Home Affairs as the nodal ministry for steering the overall national disaster management.

Institutional Structure:

It puts into place a systematic structure of institutions at the national, state and district levels.

State and District Level

The Act also provides for state and district level authorities responsible for, among other things, drawing plans for implementation of national plans and preparing local plans.

- State Disaster Management Authority
- District Disaster Management Authority

Finances: It contains the provisions for financial mechanisms such as the creation of funds for emergency response, National Disaster Response Fund and similar funds at the state and district levels.

Need for pandemic law in current situation facing the world

India's large population poses an administrative challenge in dealing with any disasters, especially a pandemic such as COVID-19. However, Biological disaster of a national magnitude necessitates a close administrative and political coordination, led by Centre and followed by State governments, Disaster Management Authorities, and other stakeholders. In the true spirit of DM Act and federal structure, national and state political and administrative agencies should be more collaborative and consultative.

Issues like movement of migrant labourers, availability of food, arranging livelihoods to daily wagers, relief camps, entitlement of statutory minimum relief, etc. that directly affects millions in the country needs special attention. Incidentally, the 'Report of the Task Force to review DM Act' 2013 suggested that the present structure of various authorities under the DM Act are not conducive for carrying out the tasks it has been mandated to perform.

Success of effective implementation of the national and state decisions under the DM act is dependent on its ground level implementation; district administration and local-self-government institutions remain the best bet. As per mandate of DM act, a concerted effort is required to ensure that these bodies are administratively, politically and financially empowered.

Conclusion

Although the Disaster management act has undoubtedly filled a huge gap in the scheme of governmental actions towards dealing with disasters. Laying down elaborate plans on paper does not serve the purpose unless they are translated into effective implementation. Civil society, private enterprises and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can play a valuable role towards building a safer India.

3. Discuss the cobweb model of dynamic equilibrium with lagged adjustment. Explain how the existence of a stable equilibrium depends on the nature of the demand and supply curves (150 words)

Introduction

Cow Web Model

Cobweb theory is the idea that price fluctuations can lead to fluctuations in supply which cause a cycle of rising and falling prices. In a simple cobweb model, we assume there is an agricultural market where supply can vary due to variable factors, such as the weather.

Body

Assumptions of Cow Web Model

In an agricultural market, farmers have to decide how much to produce a year in advance –before they know what the market price will be. (supply is price inelastic in short-term)

A key determinant of supply will be the price from the previous year.

A low price will mean some farmers go out business. Also, a low price will discourage farmers from growing that crop in the next year.

Demand for agriculture goods is usually price inelastic (a fall in price only causes a smaller % increase in demand).

Cow web theory and price Divergence

Price will diverge from the equilibrium when the supply curve is more elastic than the demand curve, (at the equilibrium point)

If the slope of the supply curve is less than the demand curve, then the price changes could become magnified and the market more unstable.

Cow web theory and price Convergence

At the equilibrium point, if the demand curve is more elastic than the supply curve, we get the price volatility falling, and the price will converge on the equilibrium.

Limitations of Cow web theory

Rational expectations. The model assumes farmers base next year's supply purely on the previous price and assume that next year's price will be the same as last year (adaptive expectations). However, that rarely applies in the real world. Farmers are more likely to see it as a 'good' year or 'bad year and learn from price volatility.

Price divergence is unrealistic and not empirically seen. The idea that farmers only base supply on last year's price means, in theory, prices could increasingly diverge, but farmers would learn from this and pre-empt changes in price.

It may not be easy or desirable to switch supply. A potato grower may concentrate on potatoes because that is his speciality. It is not easy to give up potatoes and take to aubergines.

Other factors affecting price. There are many other factors affecting price than a farmers decision to supply. In global markets, supply fluctuations will be minimized by the role of importing from abroad. Also, demand may vary. Also, supply can vary due to weather factors.

Buffer stock schemes. Governments or producers could band together to limit price volatility by buying surplus.

4. What is Shrinkflation? Discuss the ways and implications of Shrinkflation?

Introduction

Shrinkflation

Shrink inflation is when a product downsizes its quantity while keeping the price the same. If we have to give an example then reducing the scoops of ice cream in a container or reducing the number of chips in a packet would count as Shrinkflation.

Shrinkflation occurs when goods shrink in size but consumers pay the same price. It occurs when manufacturers downsize products to offset higher production costs but keep retail prices the same.

Body

Ways of Shrinkflation

Shrinkflation can occur in different ways. It's not just the weight that will be compromised as it is not uncommon for companies to look for alternative options.

If consumers are aware that the quantity is constantly declining, they would switch or change brands.

To prevent this, a product can reformulate or remove ingredients while maintaining its price.

Though downsizing products reduce costs for manufacturers, it is an unfair practice for consumers.

It can lead to a loss of trust if companies fail to properly communicate with them.

Shrinkflation can lead to customer frustration and deterioration of consumer sentiment towards a producer's brand. However, it is quite common now a days for produce to practice Shrinkflation.

Implications of Shrinkflation

Price points become misleading when the basket of goods cannot always be measured by considering the product size.

Tackling Shrinkflation means tackling inflation. In India especially, inflation is a complex phenomenon caused by several factors, such as demand-pull factors, cost-push factors, and structural factors.

Therefore, we need a mix of macroeconomics policies to manage demand and supply, as well as address structural rigidities in the economy.

In India, the Right to Information has been recognised as a consumer right under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

This means that the consumer has the right to know the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard, and price of goods.

Therefore the Central Consumer Protection Authority needs to bring some guidelines to inform consumers when the weight of a product is reduced, instead of letting consumers be fooled by companies.

5. What is Cross elasticity of demand? Discuss the usefulness of Cross elasticity of demand and what does a positive and negative Cross elasticity of demand indicate? (150 words)

Introduction

Cross elasticity of Demand

The cross elasticity of demand is an economic concept that measures the responsiveness in the quantity demanded of one good when the price for another good changes. Also called cross-price elasticity of demand, this measurement is calculated by taking the percentage change in the quantity demanded of one good and dividing it by the percentage change in the price of the other good.

The cross elasticity of demand for substitute goods is always positive because the demand for one good increases when the price for the substitute good increases.

Alternatively, the cross elasticity of demand for complementary goods is negative.

Body

Usefulness of Cross elasticity of demand

Companies utilize the cross elasticity of demand to establish prices to sell their goods. Products with no substitutes have the ability to be sold at higher prices because there is no cross-elasticity of demand to consider.

However, incremental price changes to goods with substitutes are analysed to determine the appropriate level of demand desired and the associated price of the good.

Additionally, complementary goods are strategically price based on the cross elasticity of demand. For example, printers may be sold at a loss with the understanding that the demand for future complementary goods, such as printers ink, should increase.

Indications of Positive and Negative Elasticity of Demand

A positive cross elasticity of demand means that the demand for good A will increase as the price of good B goes up. This means that goods A and B are good substitutes. So those if B gets more expensive, people are happy to switch to A. An example would be the price of milk. If whole milk goes up in price, people may switch to 2% milk. Likewise, if 2% milk rises in price instead, whole milk becomes more in demand.

A negative cross elasticity of demand indicates that the demand for good A will decrease as the price of B goes up. This suggests that A and B are complementary goods, such as a printer and printer toner. If the Price of the printer goes up, demand for it will drop. As a result of fewer printers being sold, less toner will also be sold.

6. What is the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act? Discuss its significance. (150 words)

Introduction

The Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act of 2002 or SARFAESI Act, is a legislation that permits banks and other financial institutions to successfully recover bad debts.

Body

SARFAESI Act

SARFAESI Act of 2002 is “an act to regulate securitization and reconstruction of financial assets and enforcement of security interests and to provide for a central database of security interests created on property rights and for matters associated with or incidental thereto.

It is an acronym for Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interests.

It permits banks and other financial institutions to recover loans by auctioning off the defaulter’s residential or commercial assets.

Under this act, India’s first Asset Reconstruction Corporation (ARC), ARCIL, was established.

Secured creditors (banks or financial institutions) have rights to security interest enforcement under section 13 of the SARFAESI Act, 2002.

The SARFAESI Act of 2002 will now apply to all state and multi-state co-operative banks, according to the Supreme Court of India.

Banks can now seize and sell defaulters properties to recoup their debts.

Significance

Lengthy route: Before the law was enacted in December 2002, banks and other financial institutions were forced to take a lengthy route to recover their bad debts.

Slow recovery: The lenders would appeal in civil courts or designated tribunals to get hold of security interests to recovery of defaulting loans, which in turn made the recovery slow and added to the growing list of lender's non-performing assets.

Co-operative banks: Considering their size, for the smooth functioning of these co-operative banks, speedy recovery of defaulting loans is critical.

Allowing co-op banks recourse to the SARFAESI Act can expedite the process of liquidation or resolution.

Promotion of seamless transferability of financial assets by the ARC to acquire financial assets of banks and financial institutions through the issuance of debentures or bonds or any other security as a debenture

Entrusting the Asset Reconstruction Companies to raise funds by issue of security receipts to qualified buyers

Conclusion

It enables a secured creditor to enforce his security interest without the involvement of courts or tribunals.

In addition to these, there are voluntary mechanisms such as Corporate Debt Restructuring and Strategic Debt Restructuring, which allow banks to collectively restructure borrower's debt and take over a company's management.

7. Explain the implications of the EWS Quota and What do you mean by Horizontal and Vertical Reservation? Discuss in light of the recent Supreme Court judgment. (150 words)

Introduction

The 10 per cent EWS quota was introduced under the 103rd Constitution (Amendment) Act, 2019 by amending Articles 15 and 16. It inserted Article 15(6) and Article 16 (6).

It is for economic reservation in jobs and admissions in educational institutes for Economically Weaker Sections.

It was enacted to promote the welfare of the poor not covered by the 50 per cent reservation policy for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Socially and Educationally Backward Classes.

It enables both the centre and the States to provide reservations to the EWS of society.

Body

Types of Reservations

Vertical reservation: Reservation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other backward classes is referred to as vertical reservation. It applies separately for each of the groups specified under the law.

Horizontal Reservations: It refers to the equal opportunity provided to other categories of beneficiaries such as women, veterans, the transgender community, and individuals with disabilities, cutting through the vertical categories.

Challenges to the amendment

A challenge to the amendment may lie in the context of Article 16 by shifting how reservations can be provided in public employment.

Under Article 16(4), reservations for the backward classes (SC/STs, OBCs) are dependent on beneficiary groups not being 'adequately represented' but that has been omitted in the newly inserted Article 16(6) for EWS.

The amendment through Article 16(6) ends up making it easier for the state to provide reservations in public employment for EWS than the requirements to provide reservations for 'backward classes' under Article 16(4).

Supreme court might have its views on this. On the one hand, it is confronted with the reality that 'backward classes' like SC/STs and OBCs are disadvantaged along multiple axes.

On the other hand, it is now far more difficult for the state to provide reservations to these groups than the EWS. The response might well be that 'representation' is not the aim of EWS reservation and questions of 'adequacy' are relevant only in the context of representation claims like those of the backward classes under Article 16(4).

The Court's reasoning

If both vertical and horizontal quotas were to be applied together-and consequently, a high-scoring candidate who would otherwise qualify without one of the two reservations is knocked off the list-then the overall selection would have candidates with lower scores.

On the other hand, if a high-scoring candidate is allowed to drop one category, the court found that the overall selection would reflect more high-scoring candidates. In other words, the "meritorious" candidates would be selected.

Conclusion

Reservation is a form of positive discrimination, created to promote equality among marginalized sections and to protect them from social and historical injustice. The ruling will give clarity on the reservation and make it easier for governments to implement and apply reservations. More needy scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward-class candidates will be benefited if high-scoring candidates are recruited under the general category.

8. Examine the contribution of Cholas in the development of temple architecture in India (150 words)

Introduction

The Cholas (8th-12th century AD) are remembered as one of the longest ruling dynasties in the southern regions of India.

The reign of the Cholas began in the 9th century when they defeated the Pallavas to come into power. This rule stretched over for over five long centuries until the 13th century.

The medieval period was the era of absolute power and development for the Cholas. This is when kings like Aditya I and Parantaka I.

Body

Contribution of Chola in the development of temple architecture

From the 10th century onward, the Cholas more prominently started making structural temples

The gigantic Brihadeshwara Temple in Thanjavur is perhaps one of the finest examples of the Cholas' artistic brilliance

Inscriptional evidence in Chola art also points to the prominent role played by royal women and dancers in the patronage of art and architecture

One of the most celebrated patrons was the widowed queen of Gandaraditya Chola, Sembiyan Mahadevi.

An avid temple builder, she is well known for her contributions to temples such as Umamaheshvar Temple at Konerirajapuram, Tirukkurangadaturai Temple at Adaturai, and Tirukkotisvarar Temple at Tirukkodikkaval among other

Under the Chalukyas you had the basic design of the structural temples coming in and under the Pallavas, the rock-cut temple art emerged. But it is the scale of temple building activities under the Cholas that mark them out

The pyramidal vimana of the Brihadeshwara temple of 66 metres is one of the tallest buildings in antiquity

The Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple with its catenary-shaped vimana is also a unique engineering marvel.

9. Discuss the pros and cons of Collegium system in judiciary (150 words)

Introduction

Collegium system

It is a system of appointment and transfer for judges of the supreme court and High courts in India. The system has come to prominence through judgments of the supreme court of India. It is neither a statutory nor a constitutional body. The Supreme court collegium is headed by the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and comprises four other senior-most judges of the court.

A high court collegium is led by its chief justice and the four senior-most judges of that court. Names recommended by a high court collegium first get approved by the CJI and the supreme court collegium then only go to the government. Judges of the higher judiciary are appointed only through the collegium system.

Body

Advantages

- It increases secrecy. Ruma Pal, a former Judge of the Supreme Court of India, stated that this system is one of the best kept secret in the country.

It kept secret with the four walls of the body for proper and effective functioning of the institution that makes the system opaque.

- It makes judiciary independent from the politics.
- It separates the judiciary from the influence of executive and legislative.
- With the Government's influence judiciary can work without any fear and any sort of favour. This ensures the regulation of the doctrine of separation of power.
- There are many cases in which the judges of the Supreme Court transferred because of the political influences. So the power given to executive organ for transferring the judges would lead to decrease the independence of judiciary as well as it will stop the judiciary organ to work effectively.
- For fair functioning collegium system would be best as it ensures the independence and allows the judge to perform their duty without any fear or without any interference and influence.
- The executive organ is not specialist or does not have the knowledge regarding the requirements of the judge as comparative to the CJI.
- Collegium system ensures that the deserving one is sitting the position of the judge in Supreme Court.

Disadvantages

- This system does not provide any guidelines in selecting the candidates for the judge position of the Supreme Court because of which it leads to wide scope for the nepotism and favouritism.
- Because of which the deserving candidates are unable to appointed as the Judge.
- The collegium system does not have any criteria for testing the candidate as well as they don't investigate any background of the candidates and they are not accountable to any administrative body that may lead to wrong choice of the candidate while overlooking the right candidate.
- Already there are many cases pending in the Court, they are having limited time the power given to them for the appointment would lead to burden to Judiciary.

- The principle of check and balance is violated in this system.
- In India, three organs work partially independently but they keep check and balance and control on the excessive powers of any organ.
- As Judiciary is dependent on the executive for the appointment of the judges with the consultation of CJI and the senior most judges of SC; but this system gives the immense power to judiciary to appoint judges, so the check on the excessive powers would not be ensured and misuse of powers can be done.
- This system leads to non-transparency of the judicial system, which is very harmful for the regulation of law and order in the country.

Conclusion

All mechanisms for judicial appointment may have some advantages and disadvantages and therefore, no particular system can be treated as the best system.

Despite this to maintain public confidence in the appointment system and to ensure judicial independence the commission system is perhaps a very effective mechanism for judicial appointment.

10. Analyse the availability and usage of water in India. In the context of “One water” approach (150 words)

Introduction

One Water approach

‘One Water’ is the recognition that all water has value, regardless of its source. It includes managing that source in an integrated, inclusive and sustainable manner by including the community, business leaders, industries, farmers, conservationists, policymakers, academics and others for ecological and economic benefits.

The new water management approach, that also referred to as Integrated water resources management (IWRM).

Body

India is home to about 17% of global population but holds only about 4% of global water freshwater stocks. As per the Jal Shakti Ministry, the total quantity of usable water, annually, is about 1122 billion cubic meters (BCM). With the demand estimated to grow to about 1180 BCM in 2050, the annual per capita water availability may go down drastically. Furthermore, about 60% of Indian citizens live in rural areas and, as per census 2011, only about 18% in rural households had access to household tap water, while it stood at about 62% in urban households. Most of the rural women, the primary members entrusted with managing domestic water, face a high burden of fetching water from distances, which affects their health, livelihood opportunities, and overall dignity.

Another notable fact is that, more than 80% of rural water supplies depend on groundwater, which is depleting at alarming pace — declined by about 61% during the period 2007 to 2017 — due to over-exploitation and climate change impacts.

This should make us think seriously, about the needs of our people. Especially for ensuring safe, adequate, reliable and affordable drinking water supplies for all citizens, which as per The United Nations and The Supreme Court of India is an integral part of ‘right to life’.

It is not that there isn’t much work done. Since 2019, the Government of India, through the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), has provided Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) to six crore new households, covering about 48% of rural households as initially envisioned. Tata Trusts, through their Water, Sanitation & Hygiene initiative, has collaborated with 12 state governments to support the implementation of the JJM in about 3,500 villages, but more such initiatives need to emerge.



Conclusion

Ensuring water security and its sustainable use requires a bottom-up approach and this needs a rethink. Now is the time to act, before it's too late.

Source: Investopedia

Source: Economics. Help

Source: Legal service India

Source: The Times of India