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By- Shashank Tyagi
Ex Consultant, Office of Minister Social Welfare, GNCTD
Faculty - PSIR Optional, StudyIQ IAS

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Geopolitics at Glance

India-Seychelles Relations

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** India and the Global South
- **GS2**: India and its bilateral relations



Introduction

India and Seychelles share a longstanding, time-tested partnership rooted in historical, cultural, and robust maritime ties. Elevating this relationship, Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently visited Seychelles as the Guest of Honour for the Golden Jubilee celebrations of their National Day.

Evolution of India-Seychelles Relations:

Pre-Independence Period (1770-1975)

The First Inhabitants: In 1770, a small band of five Indians arrived in Seychelles as plantation labourers alongside French settlers and African slaves, becoming among the earliest recorded residents of the islands.

Colonial Governance: During British rule, Seychelles was governed for a time under the Bombay Presidency. This encouraged consistent shipping links, enabling the settlement of an Indian trading community (mainly from Tamil Nadu and Gujarat) that became closely woven into the Creole social fabric.

Post-Independence Period (1976-2014)

Diplomatic Relations: Upon Seychelles gaining independence on June 29, 1976, India promptly set up diplomatic ties, symbolized by the presence of the Indian Naval Ship INS Nilgiri at the celebrations.

Operation Flowers are Blooming (1986): India provided active support for Seychelles' stability. In June 1986, the Indian Navy sent INS Vindhyagiri to Victoria to help thwart an attempted coup against President France-Albert René.

Anti-Piracy & EEZ Patrols: As piracy escalated in the late 2000s, the Indian Navy started conducting regular patrols of Seychelles' Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to safeguard international shipping lanes.

Recent History (2015-)

The SAGAR Launch (2015): PM Modi's historic 2015 visit (the first by an Indian PM in 34 years) introduced India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision, positioning Seychelles at its centre. India unveiled the Coastal Surveillance Radar System (CRS) during this trip.

The Assumption Island Friction: In 2015, both countries signed an accord to build a joint naval facility on Seychelles' Assumption Island. However, domestic political shifts and sovereignty concerns in Seychelles caused the project to stall.

The MAHASAGAR Era (2024): The bilateral relationship has progressed into a nuanced, multi-aligned framework under India's expanded Vision MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions). Instead of purely military emphasis, attention has turned toward addressing climate change, digital governance, and maritime scientific research.

What is the significance of Seychelles for India?

Geopolitical Importance:

Strategic Location: Positioned in the Indian Ocean, Seychelles serves as a vital maritime neighbour to India. Its location offers India an important foothold in the region to offset the influence of other powers, especially China.

Security Cooperation: India and Seychelles have deepened military and security links, holding joint exercises and exchanging intelligence to address piracy and other maritime security threats.

Economic Importance:

Trade Relations: Seychelles represents an expanding market for Indian goods and services, such as pharmaceuticals, food items, and construction materials. Bilateral trade has grown considerably over the years.

Investment Opportunities: Indian firms are putting money into sectors like tourism, renewable energy, and fisheries in Seychelles, aiding the country's economic progress.

Environmental Cooperation:

Conservation Efforts: Seychelles is renowned for its biodiversity and distinctive ecosystems. India partners with Seychelles on conservation work, particularly regarding marine ecosystems and endangered species.

Climate Change: Both nations share worries over climate change effects in the Indian Ocean region and collaborate on sustainability efforts.

Cultural Connections:

Diaspora Ties: Roughly 5% of the Seychellois population is of Indian descent, forming a strong cultural link and "soft power" influence that helps stabilize the political relationship. This community plays a key role in reinforcing bilateral ties.

Cultural Exchange Programs: Numerous cultural activities, including festivals and art exhibitions, promote mutual understanding and build goodwill.

What is the significance of India for Seychelles?

Economic Importance:

Trade Relations: India is one of Seychelles' major trading partners. Indian goods, especially pharmaceuticals, food products, and textiles, are essential for the local market.

Foreign Investment: Indian investments in sectors such as tourism, energy, and infrastructure have supported Seychelles' economic growth and development, expanding local business prospects.

Strategic & Security Cooperation:

Geopolitical Stability: India's presence in the Indian Ocean assists Seychelles in balancing potential risks from other regional powers, strengthening the nation's strategic security setup.

Military Partnerships: Seychelles and India carry out joint naval exercises and training, reinforcing military bonds that help Seychelles maintain maritime security, especially against piracy.

Environmental Collaboration:

Sustainable Development: Both nations cooperate on efforts for environmental protection, focusing on marine biodiversity

conservation and tackling climate change, which holds particular significance for island nations like Seychelles.

Disaster Relief: India has offered assistance during natural disasters, demonstrating its commitment to supporting Seychelles during difficult times.

Cultural & Social Connections:

Diaspora Influence: A long-standing Indian diaspora enriches Seychelles' cultural landscape, encouraging cultural exchanges and building connections between the two countries.

Educational Initiatives: India provides scholarship programs for Seychellois students across various disciplines, expanding educational opportunities and nurturing long-term ties.

What are the challenges in the India-Seychelles relations?

Geopolitical Tensions:

Chinese Influence: Seychelles has been steadily deepening ties with China, which is a source of concern for India. Beijing's expanding footprint in the Indian Ocean could threaten India's strategic interests in the region.

Naval Competition: The presence of foreign naval forces, particularly from China, could complicate India's military and maritime strategies in the region, potentially causing friction.

Economic Issues:

Trade Imbalance: Although trade ties have expanded, a notable trade imbalance favouring India continues. This could raise concerns in Seychelles about over-dependence on Indian goods.

Investment Challenges: The execution of Indian investments can encounter bureaucratic obstacles or local pushback, delaying development projects.

Environmental Concerns:

Sustainable Development Pressures: Heavy development fuelled by foreign investments, including from India, could result in environmental damage, impacting Seychelles' rich biodiversity and ecosystems.

Climate Change Vulnerability: Being a low-lying island nation, Seychelles is especially exposed to climate change, and coordinating effective environmental measures can prove difficult.

Cultural & Social Issues:

Perceptions of Influence: Some Seychellois citizens view Indian influence as excessive, which may generate social tensions or anti-foreign sentiment, complicating diplomatic ties.

Cultural Integration: Balancing local culture with Indian influences can occasionally create friction, given that local identity holds significant importance in Seychelles' society.

Political Factors:

Domestic Opposition to Infrastructure Projects: A key challenge has been internal friction within Seychelles over joint agreements, such as the proposed joint coast guard facility on Assumption Island. Worries about compromised sovereignty have sparked public and political debate within the island nation.

Regional Instability: Political instability in neighbouring nations or within Seychelles itself can hinder broader regional cooperation and impact bilateral dynamics.

Maritime Security Threats: The region remains highly susceptible to non-traditional threats, including piracy, drug trafficking, and Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, demanding ongoing, resource-intensive coordination.

What are the various initiatives to boost the bilateral ties?

Special Economic Package: India announced a $175 million economic assistance package to support public housing, social infrastructure, e-mobility, health services, and capacity building.

Investment in Infrastructure: India has undertaken multiple infrastructure projects in Seychelles, including roads, hospitals, and housing, promoting development and reinforcing economic ties.

The Assumption Island Project: India and Seychelles signed an agreement to build a naval facility there. This would enable India to extend its presence in the Western Indian Ocean.

Joint Military Exercises: Regular naval drills are held, such as the "Varuna" exercises, centred on maritime security and anti-piracy operations, which strengthen military collaboration.

Coast Guard Cooperation: India has trained Seychelles' Coast Guard staff and supplied equipment, boosting Seychelles' capacity to safeguard its maritime interests.

Digital India Initiative: India has shared its expertise in IT and digital technologies to assist Seychelles in upgrading its digital infrastructure and services. India is actively exporting its "Digital Public Infrastructure" (DPI) model to Seychelles, such as UPI and other digital governance initiatives.

Training Programs: India arranges regular deployment of experts and professional training schemes, with more than 1% of Seychelles' population having undergone professional or vocational training in India.

Participation in Multilateral Forums: Both nations work together on various global platforms, such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and Colombo Security Conclave, where they can jointly tackle regional issues. Seychelles has officially

become a full member of the Colombo Security Conclave, cementing a regional security bloc with India, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, and the Maldives.

Blue Economy & Climate Action: As part of India's MAHASAGAR vision (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions), both countries are concentrating on:

Ocean Research: Agreements for joint ocean observation and maritime scientific research to safeguard coral reefs and manage fisheries.

Renewable Energy: India is offering technical assistance for power grid management and e-mobility solutions (electric buses/cars) to help Seychelles achieve its climate targets.

What Should be the Way Forward in India-Seychelles Relations?

Strengthen Maritime Security, Non-Maritime Security and Defense:

Operationalize Strategic Infrastructure: Speed up the joint development of facilities on Assumption Island to fight piracy, drug trafficking, and illegal fishing.

The Colombo Security Conclave (CSC): With Seychelles actively engaged as a full member of the CSC, India should use this platform to institutionalize joint action against maritime crimes, including illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, narcotics trafficking, and marine pollution.

Expand Real-Time Data Sharing: Integrate Seychelles more thoroughly into India's Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) for improved maritime domain awareness.

Increase Hydrographic Cooperation: Focus on joint hydrographic surveys, capacity building for the Seychelles People's Defence Forces (SPDF), and shared Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) to protect Seychelles' vast 1.3-million-square-kilometer Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Accelerate Green Energy and Climate Resilience:

Scale Up Solar Infrastructure: Set up distributed solar grids and solar-powered desalination plants across Seychelles' remote islands using Indian line-of-credit funding.

Enhance Disaster Risk Management: Train Seychellois first responders through India's National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to build resilience against sea-level rise and extreme weather.

Invest in Blue Carbon Projects: Work together on mangrove restoration and marine conservation projects to monetize blue carbon credits.

Export Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):

Deploy the India Stack: Help Seychelles establish unified biometric ID systems, digital payment gateways (like UPI), and paperless governance portals.

Boost Cybersecurity Support: Set up a joint cyber-security center in Mahé to protect Seychelles' financial and telecommunications infrastructure from state-sponsored threats.

Diversify Economic and Cultural Ties:

Promote Medical Tourism: Set up seamless medical visa pathways and direct healthcare referral networks between Seychellois hospitals and Indian medical centers.

Expand Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Links: Create B2B matchmaking platforms for Indian textile, pharmaceutical, and IT firms to partner with local Seychellois businesses.

Enhance Educational Exchange: Increase the number of Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) scholarships specifically tailored to marine biology, tourism management, and artificial intelligence.

India and its UNSC bid

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** India and the UN
- **GS2**: India and Multilateral Groupings



India's bid for a permanent UNSC seat reflects its status as the world's most populous nation, largest democracy, and a leading economic power. Securing this seat is crucial for global governance to mirror contemporary geopolitical realities. However, structural inertia, China's persistent veto, and procedural hurdles within the UN remain major challenges.

Why has the issue of UNSC reform gained renewed importance in the context of emerging global challenges?

Shifting Power Dynamics & Representation: The present structure grants permanent membership and veto power exclusively to the P5 (US, UK, France, Russia, and China), a setup that leaves out today's leading economic and demographic powers. Emerging nations — such as the G4 (India, Brazil, Germany, and Japan) — and the African Union argue that the council's legitimacy requires a balance of power that reflects the multipolar world of today.

The Veto Problem: The repeated use of the veto by permanent members (P5) has effectively frozen the Council's central mandate of maintaining international peace and security. Recent wars in Ukraine and the Gaza Strip, alongside regional escalations in West Asia, have seen opposing P5 vetoes block humanitarian aid and ceasefire resolutions.

Irrelevant Output: The Council's output has declined significantly, with fewer unanimous resolutions being passed as geopolitical polarization deepens. This paralysis has pushed countries to seek alternative security frameworks outside the UN, threatening the organization's continued relevance.

Populational Mismatch: The P5 now represent a shrinking minority of the world's population, making a system in which they hold absolute veto power over the remaining 188 member states increasingly indefensible and illegitimate.

Shift from Traditional to Non-Traditional Security Threats: When the UN Charter was signed, security was defined strictly in terms of state-on-state military conflict. Today's most

destabilizing challenges are cross-border, non-traditional in nature, and demand fluid, rapid global cooperation, such as:

Emerging Technologies & AI: The rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence, autonomous weapons, and cyberwarfare into state statecraft has created a regulatory vacuum. The UNSC lacks the consensus and specialized framework required to govern the international security implications of AI.

Climate Change and Scarcity: Climate-induced migration, resource scarcity (such as water crises), and natural disasters are increasingly driving regional conflicts.

Transnational Threats: Issues like pandemics, supply chain vulnerabilities, and transnational repression cannot be resolved using 1945-era definitions of national sovereignty.

Factors strengthening India's case for permanent membership in the UNSC

Demographics and Democratic Values: Representing approximately one-sixth of humanity, India is the world's largest functional democracy. Combined, the current five permanent members (P5) represent less population than India alone. Its inclusion would make the UNSC more representative of the global populace.

Economic Clout: India is one of the world's largest economies (the 5th largest by nominal GDP and 3rd by Purchasing Power Parity). Its economic growth and role in global trade and development make it an influential player on the world stage.

Global Peacekeeping: India is historically one of the largest troop and police contributors to UN Peacekeeping Operations. It has deployed over 250,000 personnel across dozens of missions globally since the UN's inception. India has suffered the highest number of casualties among all troop-contributing nations, demonstrating a profound, tangible commitment to upholding international peace and security under the UN banner.

Voice of the Global South: As a leader of developing nations and an active participant in platforms like the G20, India advocates for an equitable international order and improved representation for underrepresented regions.

Strategic Independence: India maintains robust diplomatic relationships across major geopolitical divides. It maintains strong ties with the West (via groupings like the Quad), historic strategic partnerships with Russia, and active leadership within the Global South (such as BRICS and G77). Its independent foreign policy and constructive approach to complex international issues make it an essential mediator for world peace.

Founding Member: India was a founding member of the United Nations, signing the Declaration by United Nations in 1942 before even attaining independence, and has faithfully upheld the principles of the UN Charter throughout its history.

Proven Track Record: India has served multiple terms as an elected, non-permanent member of the UNSC (most recently in 2021–22). During these tenures, it has consistently advocated for counter-terrorism frameworks, maritime security, and democratic majority-building rather than obstructionism.

Nuclear-Armed Status with Responsibility: As a nuclear-armed state with a declared "No First Use" policy and a commitment to a moratorium on testing, India presents itself as a responsible nuclear power. Its membership in key export control regimes like the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) is also highlighted to demonstrate its commitment to non-proliferation norms.

Challenges faced by India in securing a permanent seat in the UNSC.

The P5 Monopoly: The existing permanent members (USA, UK, France, Russia, and China) are highly reluctant to dilute their exclusive privileges, including their veto power.

Rigid Amendment Process (Article 108): Any expansion requires amending the UN Charter, which mandates a two-thirds majority in the UN General Assembly followed by ratification by all P5 members. This sets a virtually insurmountable barrier, as any single P5 nation can block the reform.

China's Reluctance: While China publicly advocates for greater representation of the Global South, it remains the only one of the five permanent members (P5) that has not explicitly endorsed India's permanent membership bid. This stance is widely seen as a strategic move to maintain its status as the sole Asian power with permanent membership and veto power in the Council.

The "Coffee Club" (Uniting for Consensus): This coalition — led by countries like Italy, Pakistan, Turkey, and Mexico — actively opposes the expansion of permanent seats. They advocate instead for expanding only the non-permanent, elected categories to prevent an exclusive club of new powers.

The Veto Dilemma and "Second-Class" Status: To bypass gridlock, some international factions have proposed granting India permanent status without veto power. India (along with its G4 partners: Brazil, Germany, and Japan) rejects this, arguing it would create a second-tier, unequal permanent membership.

India's Strategic Autonomy as a Double-Edged Sword: India's tradition of strategic autonomy paradoxically complicates its UNSC membership campaign. Western nations have occasionally questioned whether a permanently seated India would be a reliable partner in upholding the rules-based

international order, or whether its autonomy would introduce new unpredictability.

The IGN Process: Institutionalised Stalemate: The Intergovernmental Negotiations framework, established in 2009, was designed to advance reform but has become an instrument of delay. The IGN is plagued by a lack of official records, a lack of a single negotiating text, and endless bureaucratic delays used by opposing countries to stall progress.

How would permanent membership in the UNSC enhance India's role in global governance?

Amplified Voice for the Global South: As the largest democracy and a major economy, India would ensure that the interests of developing nations — such as climate finance, food insecurity, and global health inequities — are central to international security and decision-making. It would break the Eurocentric and post-WWII dominance of the P5, creating a more multipolar and democratically representative global governance architecture.

Reforming Global Institutions: With formal leverage, India could fast-track its advocacy for broader reforms across international governance architectures, including the World Trade Organization and International Financial Institutions, pushing for fairer representation.

Direct Influence on Rule-Making: Holding veto power would allow India to proactively shape the UN Security Council agenda on international peace and security and global counter-terrorism frameworks, cementing its status as an undisputed global power.

Insulation from Adversarial Resolutions: Currently, India relies on strategic partners (historically Russia) to block unfavorable resolutions regarding its sovereign matters, such as the Kashmir issue. A permanent seat would give India the independent capability to safeguard its core national security interests at the highest level.

Counter-Terrorism: India has long championed a comprehensive global framework against terrorism. Permanent membership would allow New Delhi to institutionalize stricter sanctions on cross-border terror networks and prevent adversaries from placing technical holds on blacklisting known terrorists.

Maritime and Cyber Security: India could spearhead global governance frameworks for emerging frontiers — such as securing vital Indo-Pacific sea lanes, regulating AI in warfare, and setting norms for state-sponsored cyberattacks.

Nuclear Governance and Non-Proliferation: As a responsible nuclear state with a clean proliferation record, India could strengthen rather than weaken the non-proliferation regime from within. It could advocate for a universal, non-discriminatory disarmament framework — challenging the NPT's inherent asymmetry between nuclear haves and have-nots — with the institutional weight of a permanent member.

Peacekeeping Reform: As a permanent member, India could directly shape peacekeeping mandates — ensuring missions are operationally realistic, properly resourced, and designed with input from nations that actually deploy troops. India could drive the professionalisation and accountability of peacekeeping.

Diplomatic strategies should India adopt to strengthen its prospects for permanent membership in a reformed UNSC

Demanding Text-Based Negotiations: India is calling for formal, text-based negotiations with clear milestones and timelines, arguing that the current format of open-ended discussions is no longer acceptable. This is a strategic move to make the reform process more substantive and result-oriented.

Deepening and Operationalising G4 Cohesion: India should institutionalise G4 coordination through dedicated diplomatic working groups that meet regularly, not merely at the margins of UNGA sessions. India should leverage its growing strategic partnerships with Germany (Indo-German partnership), Japan (Quad), and Brazil (BRICS, G20) to embed UNSC reform coordination within broader bilateral frameworks.

Engagement with the African Bloc: No reform can pass the UN General Assembly without the support of Africa, which commands 54 votes — nearly 30% of the entire UN membership. India must continue to deepen its footprint in Africa through lines of credit, digital public infrastructure (like UPI and Aadhaar-style tech transfers), and capacity building.

Neutralising or Circumventing Chinese Opposition: On issues where China seeks Indian cooperation — climate negotiations, WTO reform, G20 financial architecture — India should make cooperation contingent on Chinese movement on UNSC reform.

Strategic Engagement with the Islamic World: India's deepening relationships with UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Egypt — built on energy partnerships, diaspora remittances, and investment flows — should be leveraged to extract explicit UNSC reform support.

Support Most Vulnerable Nations: India should champion SIDS (Small Island Developing States) concerns — climate vulnerability, ocean governance, debt sustainability — giving small nations material reasons to support Indian permanent membership despite size asymmetries.

Leveraging Multilateral Forum Leadership: India should use its current multilateral leadership positions to build reform momentum. India's leadership in the Global Biofuels Alliance, International Solar Alliance, and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure should be framed as evidence of its capacity and willingness to lead global governance institutions.

Conclusion

A permanent seat for India in the UNSC would help align the institution with contemporary geopolitical realities and enhance the legitimacy of its decisions by making it more representative and credible. As an emerging global power aspiring to play the role of Vishwamitra, India is well-equipped to contribute meaningfully to addressing the evolving challenges confronting the UNSC and the broader international order.

Indo-Pacific

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** India and the South Asia
- **GS2**: India and its neighbourhood



Introduction

In a deeply symbolic gesture, the USA has taken steps to de-emphasize the broader "Indo-Pacific" narrative in favor of a more direct "Pacific-First" approach, going so far as to rename its military command back from INDOPACOM to PACOM (Pacific Command). Yet irrespective of these shifts in American policy, the Indo-Pacific continues to be indispensable to global trade, maritime connectivity, economic growth, and strategic stability. The Indo-Pacific stands as the single most vital concept in 21st-century geopolitics and strategy - a contemporary term describing a cohesive, interlinked, and dynamic super-region spanning two oceans.

What is the Indo-Pacific Region?

The Indo-Pacific region denotes the vast, interconnected maritime expanse that spans the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, encompassing the seas and straits that connect them.

Geographic Scope: Broadly speaking, the Indo-Pacific covers:

The Indian Ocean: Extending from the eastern coast of Africa and West Asia, past South Asia (India), all the way to western Australia.

The Pacific Ocean: Extending from the waters of East Asia and Southeast Asia across to the western coasts of North and South America.

The Connecting Waters: Vital maritime choke points such as the Strait of Malacca, which links the two oceans through Southeast Asia.

The Southeast Asian seas, particularly the South China Sea and the Strait of Malacca, constitute the essential geographical and economic link joining the two oceans.

What is the Significance of the Indo-Pacific Region?

Economic Significance

Global GDP and Population:

The region includes countries that make up over 60% of the world's population and produce over 60% of global GDP.

It contains four of the world's largest economies, namely the United States, China, India, and Japan, in addition to the dynamic ASEAN bloc.

Home to the world's fastest growing major economies (India, ASEAN states, China), the region contributes the largest portion of global GDP growth.

Maritime Trade Routes:

Vital sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) run through the region, including the Strait of Malacca, Lombok Strait, and South China Sea.

Roughly two-thirds of global maritime trade and the majority of global container traffic passes through Indo-Pacific waters.

Approximately 32.2 million barrels of crude oil transit through annually, with 40% of global exports originating from the region.

Natural Resources:

The region holds vast offshore oil and gas reserves, with the South China Sea estimated to contain 11 billion barrels of oil and 190 trillion cubic feet of gas.

It possesses significant mineral resources and fisheries, accounting for 10% of the global fish catch.

The oceans within the Indo-Pacific harbor immense biodiversity and are essential to global fish stocks. Sustainable management of these resources is critical for the food security of billions of people across the region.

Geopolitical Significance

Centre of Great Power Competition:

The region has emerged as the main theater of US-China strategic rivalry, with both powers competing for influence and control.

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) reflects concentrated efforts to expand Chinese economic and strategic influence, with investments surpassing $1 trillion as of 2023.

The Rise of India: The very concept of the Indo-Pacific underscores India's pivotal role as a rising democratic power. India's expansive geography, enormous population, and growing naval strength are viewed by many Western and regional powers as vital to sustaining a rules-based international order.

Security Dynamics:

The Indo-Pacific confronts complex security challenges, including territorial disputes in the South China Sea, tensions on the Korean peninsula, across the Taiwan Strait, and assorted regional conflicts.

The region houses 7 of the world's largest militaries, making it a critical zone for global security.

New Security Alliances: The region has become a birthplace for new global alliances such as:

The Quad: A diplomatic and security partnership among the US, Japan, India, and Australia centered on regional stability, maritime security, and technology collaboration.

AUKUS: A trilateral defense pact in which the US and UK are assisting Australia in acquiring conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarines to project power in the region.

Environmental Significance

Climate Change: The region is highly susceptible to rising sea levels, severe typhoons, and ocean acidification. Low-lying island nations in the Pacific confront existential threats, while mega-cities along the Asian coastline face heightened flooding risks.

Natural Disasters: It ranks as the most natural disaster prone region on the planet, necessitating coordinated responses to the effects of climate change.

What are India's key interests in the Indo-Pacific Region?

Security & Strategic Interests:

Maritime Security and Freedom of Navigation: India relies heavily on the Indian Ocean for nearly 95% of its trade,

including essential energy imports, making secure sea lanes and freedom of navigation critical.

Countering Chinese Influence: India seeks to offset China's expanding presence and assertiveness in the region, especially through China's Belt and Road Initiative and its militarization of the South China Sea.

Net Security Provider: India aims to establish itself as the leading "net security provider" in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). This entails partnering with regional players such as Sri Lanka, Maldives, Mauritius, and Seychelles to strengthen their maritime security capabilities and ensure that no single power dominates the area.

Economic Interests:

Trade and Investment: The Indo-Pacific region is pivotal to India's ambition of becoming a $10 trillion economy. India aims to expand trade, maritime connectivity, and economic integration throughout the region.

Act East Policy Integration: The Indo-Pacific vision represents the natural extension of India's "Act East Policy." India seeks to better connect its North Eastern states with the thriving economies of Southeast Asia via connectivity projects like the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway.

Supply Chain Resilience: In the wake of pandemic related disruptions, India's interest lies in diversifying its supply chains away from heavy dependence on a single nation. Collaborating with Quad partners on supply chain resilience in critical technologies such as semiconductors and pharmaceuticals constitutes a core economic objective.

Environmental & Resource Security:

Sustainable Use of Marine Resources: India seeks to promote sustainable management of fisheries, offshore energy resources, and maritime ecosystems to support long term regional prosperity.

Climate Change and Disaster Resilience: Tackling environmental degradation and natural disaster risks connected to the fragile Indo-Pacific ecosystems remains a key concern for India's regional engagement.

Regional Leadership & Diplomacy:

Promoting a Rules-Based Order: India champions a rules based order that respects international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This serves as a subtle means of countering unilateral territorial claims in the South China Sea and safeguarding freedom of navigation.

Strategic Autonomy: India employs the Indo-Pacific concept to reinforce its commitment to strategic autonomy. India insists that the framework must remain "inclusive" (not aimed against any single country) and emphasizes the importance of ASEAN's centrality.

Engagement with Regional Bodies: Active involvement with ASEAN, BIMSTEC, IORA, and other regional organizations helps India strengthen diplomatic ties and regional cooperation.

Cultural & Historical Links: India maintains longstanding civilizational, cultural, and diaspora connections across the Indo-Pacific, which support its soft power and influence within the region.

What are the major initiatives undertaken in the Indo-Pacific Region?

ASEAN Centrality:

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) forms the geographic and institutional core of the Indo-Pacific. All major powers (US, China, Japan, India) explicitly endorse ASEAN's centrality.

ASEAN fosters dialogue through forums like the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), keeping regional cooperation dialogue driven.

Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD):

A strategic security forum comprising India, US, Japan, and Australia.

Concentrates on regional security challenges, maritime cooperation, infrastructure development, and humanitarian assistance.

Key areas of cooperation include:

Maritime Domain Awareness: Sharing information and working to guarantee freedom of navigation.

Critical and Emerging Technologies: Collaborating on 5G technology, semiconductors, and supply chain resilience.

Health and Climate: Joint initiatives on vaccine production and distribution, along with climate change adaptation.

AUKUS:

Members: Australia, United Kingdom, and United States.

A security partnership crafted for deeper defense integration and technological sharing.

Pillar I centers on helping Australia acquire its first fleet of conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarines to project power in the Pacific.

Pillar II centers on joint development of advanced cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, and hypersonic weapons.

Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI):

Launched by India in 2019 at the East Asia Summit.

It is a voluntary, non treaty arrangement centered on practical cooperation in maritime security, ecology, resource management, capacity building, disaster risk reduction, science and technology, trade and connectivity.

Builds on India's SAGAR vision for inclusive and sustainable maritime growth.

Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF):

Led by: The United States, together with 13 other regional partners (including India, Japan, Australia, and several ASEAN nations).

Focus: Launched in 2022, IPEF is not a conventional free trade agreement. Instead, it centers on four key pillars:

Connected Economy (digital trade standards)

Resilient Economy (supply chain security for critical minerals and semiconductors)

Clean Economy (clean energy transitions)

Fair Economy (anti-corruption and tax compliance)

SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region):

India's flagship vision, launched in 2015, aims to strengthen maritime security, economic development, and cooperative relations among Indian Ocean littorals and beyond.

Focuses on freedom of navigation, anti piracy efforts, disaster management, and blue economy development.

MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions):

Announced in 2025, MAHASAGAR represents the strategic evolution of the SAGAR vision.

Rather than functioning merely as a "net security provider," MAHASAGAR positions India as a preferred security partner and primary responder for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and Search and Rescue (SAR).

This vision serves as a strategic counter to China's expanding influence in the Indian Ocean. It emphasizes sustainable infrastructure development, secure supply chains, and collective defense capabilities to foster long term, non transactional partnerships.

Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF):

Initiated in 2022, boosting economic cooperation among Indo-Pacific partners.

Emphasizes resilient supply chains, clean energy transitions, fair trade, digital economy cooperation, and sustainable growth.

Partners include India, US, Australia, Japan, and 10 other countries.

Act East Policy:

India's diplomatic and economic outreach aimed at engaging ASEAN and East Asian nations.

Aims to deepen connectivity, trade, cultural ties, and regional integration.

Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI):

Members: India, Japan, Australia.

Established to build resilient and diversified supply chains that mitigate the risks of geopolitical shocks and reliance on single country sources, particularly for essential goods and raw materials.

Regional Cooperation Platforms:

India actively engages in regional groupings like the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and others.

These platforms address issues such as maritime security, climate resilience, and economic cooperation.

Project MAUSAM: A cultural and economic initiative overseen by the Indian Ministry of Culture aimed at reconnecting nations across the Indian Ocean world, reviving ancient maritime routes and trade relations.

What are the major challenges facing the Indo-Pacific Region?

Geopolitical Rivalries & Security Concerns:

US-China Strategic Rivalry: The region serves as the primary theater for great power competition. China's assertive foreign policy, rapid military modernization, and infrastructure expansion challenge the established influence of the US and its regional allies.

Assertive Rise of China: The growth of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its territorial assertiveness challenge existing regional balances, fueling tensions among regional and extra regional powers.

Flashpoints: The risk of conflict escalation at flashpoints such as Taiwan, the South China Sea, the Korean Peninsula, and India-Pakistan hostilities remains high.

Rapid Militarization: The region is experiencing rapid militarization. Increased naval deployments, the development of long range missile capabilities, and the formation of new security pacts (like AUKUS) heighten tensions.

Economic & Development Challenges:

Infrastructure Debt Traps: China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) provides much needed infrastructure financing but has frequently resulted in unsustainable debt for smaller nations (such as Sri Lanka and certain Pacific Island countries), undermining their economic sovereignty and stability.

Supply Chain Vulnerability: The heavy concentration of global manufacturing in East and Southeast Asia creates a single point of failure. Geopolitical tensions or natural disasters can, and have, triggered significant global supply chain shocks. Efforts to diversify supply chains remain in their early stages.

Development Gaps: The region exhibits immense economic disparity, ranging from highly developed nations (Japan, Australia) to developing economies (Bangladesh, Cambodia). Closing these gaps demands substantial, sustainable investment and cooperation on trade facilitation.

Lack of Regional Integration: While trade within the broader Indo-Pacific is substantial, intra regional trade within South Asia remains low due to political disputes and inadequate infrastructure. This failure to integrate economically restricts collective growth potential.

Non-Traditional Security Threats:

Maritime Security Challenges: Non state threats such as piracy, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, and maritime drug smuggling persist, demanding coordinated naval and coast guard cooperation across numerous jurisdictions.

Cyber and Information Warfare: The rapid adoption of digital technology, often lacking adequate cybersecurity protocols, leaves the region exposed to state sponsored hacking, data theft, and sophisticated disinformation campaigns designed to undermine democratic processes and national infrastructure.

Freedom of Navigation: Disputes over maritime boundaries, Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), and overlapping claims (notably in the South and East China Seas) threaten the safe passage of critical global trade routes.

Climate Change and Environmental Degradation:

Extreme Weather and Sea Level Rise: The region is highly disaster prone. Low-lying island nations (such as Tuvalu and the Maldives) and coastal areas face existential threats from rising sea levels and intensified cyclones, potentially triggering mass forced migration.

Ecosystem Stress: Fragile marine environments, including coral reefs and mangroves, face severe degradation from pollution and overfishing.

Recent Shift in US Stance Toward the Indo-Pacific: In a deeply symbolic gesture, the USA has taken steps to de-emphasize the broader "Indo-Pacific" narrative in favor of a more direct "Pacific-First" approach, going so far as to rename its military command back from INDOPACOM to PACOM (Pacific Command). This recent shift in US policy poses several challenges, including declining trust among allies, weaker deterrence against China due to reduced focus on Taiwan and the Quad, greater security burdens placed on partners such as Japan and India, trade related tensions, and the risk of a strategic vacuum that could lead to a fragmented and competitive regional order.

What should be the way forward?

Strengthening Multilateralism & Regional Cooperation:

Promote inclusive regional frameworks such as ASEAN led mechanisms, the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), and enhanced cooperation among Quad countries.

Encourage dialogue, conflict resolution, and confidence building measures to reduce unilateral attempts and ease tension hotspots like the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait.

Major regional doctrines must actively synchronize. For instance, the strategic alignment between India's MAHASAGAR initiative and Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) framework streamlines maritime defense and infrastructure investments without creating redundant, overlapping programs.

Upholding a Free, Open, Rules-based Order: Adherence to international law, especially the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), to guarantee freedom of navigation, overflight, and peaceful dispute settlement.

Enhancing Maritime Security & Safety:

Joint exercises, information sharing, and coordinated responses to piracy, terrorism, and natural disasters throughout the Indo-Pacific.

Capacity building for smaller and vulnerable coastal states to strengthen their maritime domain awareness.

Promoting Sustainable Economic Growth & Connectivity:

Develop resilient, interconnected infrastructure across transport, digital, and energy sectors to integrate regional markets inclusively.

Support supply chain diversification and green technologies through initiatives like the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF).

Addressing Environmental Challenges Collectively:

Coordinate climate change mitigation, marine ecosystem conservation, disaster risk reduction, and pollution control efforts.

Share scientific research and best practices for adapting to rising sea levels and preserving ecosystems.

Formalize and strengthen mechanisms for joint military and civilian responses to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations, recognizing that cyclones, tsunamis, and earthquakes often demand seamless regional cooperation.

High-Quality Infrastructure Investment: Ensure that infrastructure projects financed through initiatives like the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) provide transparent, high standard, and sustainable alternatives to debt trap financing. The emphasis should be on building connectivity that benefits the host nation, not solely the donor nation.

Empowering Smaller States: Providing smaller Indo-Pacific and Indian Ocean nations with expanded, dependable options for both economic development and military capacity building.

Securing Key Tech Frameworks: Regional partners must formalize strict technological standards regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI), quantum computing, and semiconductors. Agreements must actively restrict critical technology transfers to volatile or non transparent actors.

Diversifying Away From Over-Reliance on the USA: Given the demonstrated volatility in US commitment, the region's middle powers need to:

Deepen middle power coalitions: Japan-India, Japan-Philippines, Australia-Indonesia, and similar bilateral or plurilateral ties should be strengthened as insurance against US unpredictability.

Expand intra-Asian economic architecture: Leaning further into CPTPP and RCEP as parallel economic anchors reduces dependence on the stalled IPEF trade pillar.

Conclusion

Regardless of shifts in U.S. policy, the Indo-Pacific remains central to global trade, maritime connectivity, economic growth, and strategic stability. The Indo-Pacific is the most important concept in 21st-century geopolitics and strategy. It is a modern term that defines a unified, interconnected, and dynamic super-region that stretches across two oceans, where economic prosperity, security challenges, and strategic competition converge to shape the future global order. However, the major stakeholders in the region need to focus on building resilient, flexible, multi-stakeholder architecture that does not depend on any single power's constancy, while keeping the region's founding "free, open, inclusive" ethos intact rather than sliding into rigid bloc politics.

India- Australia Relations

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- **PSIR:** India and the Major Powers
- **GS2**: Bilateral Relations



India-Australia ties have grown into a close strategic partnership, anchored by shared democratic values and overlapping interests in the Indo-Pacific. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's landmark visit to Melbourne in July 2026 for the Annual Leaders' Summit gave this partnership a major boost. The discussions moved forward on important defence agreements, cooperation on critical minerals, and business linkages, reinforcing security and prosperity across the wider Indo-Pacific region.

How has the India-Australia relationship evolved?

Pre-Independence Period

1944: Diplomatic relations were established.

Cold War Inertia (1947 to 1990s)

Even though diplomatic offices opened in the 1940s, ties remained tepid.

India's non aligned position and close relationship with the Soviet Union were at odds with Australia's role as a firm US ally.

The relationship was often summed up as the "three Cs": Commonwealth, Curry, Cricket.

Relations reached a low point in 1998 when Australia sharply criticized India's Pokhran-II nuclear tests.

Strategic Convergence (2000-2014)

Rising concerns over regional security and maritime stability drew the two nations closer together.

2009: The two countries elevated their partnership to a Strategic Partnership.

Australia removed its ban on uranium exports to India in 2011 to 2012.

Deep Strategic Partnership (2014-2020)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2014 visit to Australia, the first by an Indian PM in 28 years, represented a turning point.

Regular high level visits, defence exercises, and cooperation across the Indo-Pacific grew in frequency.

Bilateral ties broadened across trade, energy, education, and technology.

Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2020 to Present)

Fueled by shared worries over an increasingly assertive China, the two nations elevated ties to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) in 2020.

The signing of the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) in 2022 gave economic ties a significant boost.

Collaboration has grown across critical minerals, clean energy, supply chains, cyber security, maritime security, and emerging technologies.

Annual Summits have become an established fixture.

What is the significance of the India-Australia Relationship?

Strategic & Geopolitical Significance

Indo-Pacific balancing: Australia and India are two of the four Quad members, and together they anchor the eastern and western maritime flanks of the Indo-Pacific. For India, Australia holds critical importance for extending strategic reach into the Pacific; for Australia, India serves as the counterweight it requires in the Indian Ocean.

Maritime security: The India-Australia Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap seeks to deepen bilateral maritime engagement, a significant goal given both countries' Indian Ocean and Pacific coastlines and their shared concern over sea lane security.

Economic Significance

Economic Synergy: Bilateral trade surpassed $48 billion USD in 2024. Both nations have set a target of reaching $100 billion AUD in bilateral trade by 2030. Economically, the two countries complement one another perfectly. Rather than competing, they complete each other:

Australia possesses critical minerals, uranium, and energy resources that India needs for its clean energy transition.

India offers manufacturing scale, an expanding market, and a services and tech sector that Australia wants access to.

Energy Security: Australia serves as a dependable supplier of coal, LNG, uranium, and critical minerals such as lithium and cobalt. Cooperation between the two nations bolsters India's clean energy transition and renewable energy goals.

Global Supply Chains: The COVID-19 pandemic and the geopolitical tensions that followed revealed how fragile global supply chains become when concentrated within a single country. The India-Australia partnership plays a vital role in building supply chain resilience.

Critical Minerals Partnership: Australia holds some of the world's largest reserves of critical minerals essential for green energy, electric vehicles, and high tech manufacturing. Given China's dominance in critical mineral processing, an Australia-India minerals partnership carries direct relevance for India's supply chain diversification and "China+1" strategy.

Security Significance

Defence Cooperation: The relationship has progressed from joint exercises to more advanced military coordination and

intelligence sharing, with agreements covering critical data sharing and cooperation on maritime security and undersea awareness.

Counter-terrorism: This includes intelligence sharing on terrorist threats, along with expanded cooperation against violent extremism, terror financing, and online radicalisation.

Soft Power

Diaspora: More than 120,000 Indian students and a roughly 800,000 strong Indian diaspora in Australia give this relationship a depth of people to people connection that most of India's other Indo-Pacific partnerships lack. This diaspora serves as both an economic bridge (through remittances and business networks) and a political constituency.

What are the areas of cooperation in India-Australia Relations?

Economy & Trade: The relationship is commercially propelled by the Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), which removes tariffs on the vast majority of goods traded between the two countries. Both nations are actively working to elevate this into a full Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).

Defence & Maritime Security:

Joint Military Exercises: Cooperation extends across all three military branches through major war games such as AUSINDEX (Naval), AUSTRAHIND (Army), and India's regular participation in Australia's Exercise Pitch Black (Air Force).

Logistics & Interoperability: A Mutual Logistics Support Arrangement permits their militaries to use each other's bases for refueling and maintenance.

Critical minerals: India and Australia have reinforced their Critical Minerals Partnership to secure dependable supplies of lithium, cobalt, rare earth elements, and other strategic minerals. This includes partnerships among government agencies, companies, and research institutions to secure long term supply, offtake arrangements, and processing and value addition capabilities.

Energy:

Civil Nuclear Energy: A key commercial milestone includes a civil nuclear energy pact that enables a stable supply of Australian uranium for India's domestic nuclear power projects.

Renewable energy: The Australia-India Renewable Energy Partnership covers solar PV, green hydrogen, energy storage, recycling, two way investment, and skills development.

Science, Technology & Cyber:

Australia-India PACTS: The Partnership on Cyber, Critical Technologies and Supply Chains enhances information sharing and collaboration on strategic technologies.

Space: Indian NewSpace companies like Skyroot are launching satellites for Australian customers, with an Australian satellite scheduled to launch on an Indian rocket in 2026.

Education & Skills:

Higher Education: Indian students form the second largest foreign student group in Australia, numbering around 120,000 and making up 17% of all international students there.

Campuses in India: Prominent Australian universities, such as Deakin and Wollongong, run independent branch campuses directly within India.

The MATES Program: The Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early professionals Scheme provides streamlined, temporary pathways for top tier Indian STEM graduates and professionals to live, work, and contribute to industries in Australia facing severe skills shortages.

Multilateral Cooperation: Both countries coordinate with one another through the Quad, G20, East Asia Summit, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), and the United Nations. Australia has generally backed India's bid for permanent UNSC membership.

Diplomatic Framework: This multi sector cooperation is managed through a highly formal structural architecture, including regular Annual Prime Ministerial Summits and the 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogues.

Key Agreements and Outcome Documents Signed During the Annual Leaders' Summit (2026)

Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation (JDDSC): This replaces the 2009 Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation. It broadens cooperation in defence industrial collaboration, maritime security, cyber security, interoperability, counter terrorism, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR), and support for a rules based Indo-Pacific.

Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap (MSCR): This sets up a framework for enhanced maritime cooperation, focusing on maritime domain awareness, information sharing, operational coordination, and capacity building.

India-Australia Joint Statement on Energy Security: This reaffirms cooperation on energy security amid global geopolitical disruptions. It promotes collaboration in LNG,

coal, clean energy, and investment while supporting progress toward the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).

Finalisation of the Administrative Arrangement under the India-Australia Civil Nuclear Agreement: This operationalises the 2014 Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement and enables commercial exports of Australian uranium for India's civilian nuclear energy programme.

Partnership on Cyber, Critical Technologies and Supply Chains (PACTS): This reflects deepened cooperation under the Australia-India Partnership on Cyber, Critical Technologies and Supply Chains, enhancing information sharing on strategic technologies.

What are the challenges in India-Australia Relations?

Geopolitical and Strategic Divergences: While both nations belong to the Quad to balance regional threats, their underlying foreign policy outlooks differ. Australia aligns closely with Western defense coalitions (such as the US and AUKUS), whereas India has historically championed strategic autonomy.

Trade Imbalances: The bilateral economic relationship remains heavily asymmetrical and narrow in scope. Australia's exports to India are overwhelmingly dominated by coal and coke, creating an uncomfortable dependency for a nation working toward global net zero targets. Ongoing negotiations for a more comprehensive Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) continue to wrestle with these thorny issues.

Agricultural Market Access: India continues to shield politically sensitive sectors, particularly dairy, from Australian competition. Given how dependent millions of farmers are on the dairy sector, any major market opening concessions carry substantial domestic political and economic costs. This sensitivity echoes the concerns that shaped India's decision to withdraw from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

Visa & Labour Mobility Friction: Australia's domestic sensitivity regarding skilled and temporary migration has historically posed a friction point in trade talks. India pushes for greater professional mobility provisions, especially for IT services, while Australia faces domestic political pressure to limit visa expansion.

China Factor: Both countries harbor concerns about China's growing influence, but their economic dependence on China varies. Differing approaches to managing relations with China creates policy divergence.

Geographical Distance and Connectivity: The considerable geographical separation raises transportation and logistics costs. Limited direct connectivity constrains trade and people to people exchanges.

What can be done to strengthen India-Australia Relations?

Upgrade ECTA to CECA: The ECTA was primarily centered on goods. A CECA is essential to unlock deeper liberalization in services, investment, and regulatory cooperation, areas that represent significant untapped commercial potential.

Diversify Trade Beyond Raw Materials: India and Australia should move past the current pattern of exchanging coal and gas for refined goods and instead focus on value added manufacturing partnerships. Critical minerals present a key opportunity, with Australia supplying mineral resources and India developing midstream processing and manufacturing capabilities to build more resilient and diversified supply chains.

Expand Defence Cooperation: Build upon the 2026 Joint Declaration by progressing toward more complex, multi domain exercises (not limited to naval drills) and explore co-development and co-production in defense manufacturing under India's "Atmanirbhar Bharat" framework. Use the new Annual Defence Ministers' Dialogue to institutionalize discussions on technology transfer, not merely exercises.

Green Energy Grid Architecture: Collaborate on green hydrogen, renewable energy, energy storage, and low carbon technologies. Australia possesses vast land resources and abundant solar potential, while India offers cost effective engineering expertise and large scale manufacturing capabilities in solar panels and electrolyzers. By combining Australia's resource advantages with India's manufacturing strength, the two countries can construct resilient clean energy supply chains.

Expand Education and Skill Cooperation: Increase academic partnerships, joint research programs, and student exchanges. Facilitate easier mobility for students, professionals, and tourists. Deepen India-Australia ties by expanding mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications.

AI IN JUDICIARY

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- **PSIR**: Principal organs of Union Government and state governments
- **GS2:** Supreme Court



Introduction

The Supreme Court's AI Committee has come out with the Draft Regulations for the Use of AI in Courts, 2026. Through this draft, an attempt is being made to build a governance structure for how AI gets used in the judiciary, one that lays down guiding principles and sets up an institutional mechanism to keep watch over its use. The broader goal behind these regulations is to ensure AI is used responsibly in court processes while making court administration run more efficiently.

What are the salient features of the Draft Regulations for the Use of AI in Courts, 2026?

Released by the Supreme Court of India's AI Committee for public consultation, the Draft Regulations for Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Courts, 2026 amounts to a detailed regulatory blueprint. What makes it significant is that this is the first time India has an official document attempting to govern, standardize, and place limits on how AI gets deployed across the whole judicial system.

Key features include:

Wide Applicability: The regulations cover any use of AI, whether in deployment or integration, across judicial, adjudicatory, or administrative functions, extending to the Supreme Court, High Courts, and every court, tribunal, and statutory commission that performs adjudicatory work anywhere in India.

Five Foundational Principles: Running through the entire document are five core ideas: human primacy, transparency, accountability, data protection, and judicial independence.

Human Primacy as Non-Negotiable Core: AI is only allowed to assist, never to lead. Judging facts, applying law, and delivering justice remain jobs that only human judges can do.

Individual Accountability: Even if a judge uses AI to help reach a decision, the responsibility for that decision stays entirely with that officer. It cannot be passed off onto the machine.

Mandatory Disclosure Regime: Anyone, whether a party or their lawyer, who uses AI while preparing pleadings or submissions has to declare this openly and submit a signed certificate in the required format.

Permissible Uses of AI: The rules allow AI to be used for things like:

- ResearchisHelping draft documents
- Handling translation and transcription
- Managing cases and scheduling
- Assisting with court administration and helping litigants
- Automating routine workflows

Prohibited Uses: On the flip side, AI is barred from:

- Deciding cases, judgments, or sentences
- Determining whether someone gets bail
- Forecasting how a case will turn out or predicting reoffending
- Judging a witness's credibility or building profiles of litigants
- Shaping adjudicatory discretion in any form

Layered Institutional Governance:

Apex Body: A standing, full time body housed at the Supreme Court, headed by a sitting SC judge picked by the CJI. It brings together two High Court Chief Justices, two High Court judges, someone from an institution of national importance, a Joint Secretary from MeitY, and specialists in finance, cybersecurity, technology law, and data privacy.

AI Committees & Secretariats: Each High Court is required to set up its own AI Committee and Secretariat to handle local supervision and manage any incidents.

CoRE-AI: This Centre of Research and Excellence will carry out original research, test and evaluate AI tools and prototypes, and put out white papers.

Strict Data Protection Norms: No sensitive judicial data can leave the system for external use without explicit written permission, and any data used to train or test AI must first be anonymised.

Regulated Private Sector Engagement: Before any private company can get involved, it must clear a thorough check of its technical ability, legal compliance, ethics, data security, and financial health, and secure written approval.

Annual Transparency Reporting: Each High Court, Tribunal, and Commission is expected to publish an annual Transparency Report on its website, detailing which AI systems are in use, what audits found, and any incidents recorded.

Grievance Redressal Mechanism: Anyone who suffers harm because AI was used in a prohibited way can approach the court where that AI system was deployed.

What is the significance of AI in Judiciary?

Enhancing Administrative Efficiency & Reducing Case Backlogs & Delays: By taking over repetitive work like reviewing documents, classifying cases, and scheduling, AI frees up judges' time so they can concentrate on the actual legal reasoning behind a case.

Promoting Accessibility & Inclusivity: Tools such as the Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software (SUVACE) translate legal documents and judgments out of English into Indian regional languages, cutting through language barriers so ordinary people can understand legal material. On a similar note, chatbots and virtual assistants can walk citizens through basic court procedures without them needing to hire a lawyer.

Legal Research & Drafting: Rather than spending hours combing through case law, lawyers and judges can have AI scan massive databases and surface the relevant precedents, statutes, and legal principles in seconds. It can also help draft orders, condense long case files, and flag inconsistencies.

Predictive Analytics: By studying patterns across past judgments, AI can offer a sense of how similar cases might turn out, which helps push toward more consistent application of the law and cuts down on subjective variation. That said, this is meant purely to inform, not to decide the actual outcome.

Transparency & Public Trust: Between digital record keeping and AI powered dashboards, judicial processes become easier to monitor, which in turn strengthens public accountability. Combined with the e-Courts initiative, this makes court proceedings and orders far more visible and easier for people to track.

What are the ways in which AI is being integrated into the Indian judicial system?

e-Courts Project: This is the main channel through which India's judiciary is bringing AI into its systems, with the underlying goal

of running things more efficiently and chipping away at the backlog of pending cases.

SUPACE (Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court Efficiency): Built on machine learning, SUPACE helps process case files, pull out relevant facts, and support judges with research and summarizing material. It combs through huge volumes of case files to locate relevant precedents, statutes, and legal principles, but it doesn't issue judgments itself, it only assists with research.

SUVAS (Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software): SUVAS handles automated translation of judgments from English into regional languages to widen access. So far it has translated more than 36,271 Supreme Court judgments into Hindi, and as of 2026 it can translate both ways between English and 19 Indian languages.

LegRAA: A generative AI tool built specifically for legal research.

TERES: Handles live transcription of what happens in court.

Su-Sahayak: A chatbot rolled out via a Supreme Court circular that lets visitors check case status, cause lists, orders, and judgments.

Adalat.AI: Back in 2025, the Kerala High Court made it mandatory for subordinate courts to use Adalat.AI to record witness statements. It converts speech into text on the spot, doing away with manual stenography and speeding up trials.

What are the challenges in the use of AI in the judiciary?

Biasness & Ethical Concerns: Since AI learns from historical legal data, it can end up repeating the same prejudices found in that data, which risks discriminatory outcomes tied to race, gender, or economic status. If past court or police records show a pattern of disproportionately targeting certain marginalized groups, castes, or economic classes, the AI will pick up and reproduce that same pattern, chipping away at fairness and justice.

Accuracy & Reliability (AI hallucinations): AI systems sometimes get things wrong outright, inventing facts or citing legal cases that don't actually exist, which is a serious risk when it comes to judicial decisions. Relying on databases that are incomplete or unreliable only makes this worse. A recent example: a trial court judge in Vijayawada threw out a case based on four Supreme Court judgments that, it later turned out, never existed at all.

In its 'White Paper on AI & Judiciary' released in November 2025, the Supreme Court flagged 'Fabrication of Cases & Hallucination' as the biggest risk tied to AI use, warning that these tools can invent judgments, citations, quotes, or even entire pieces of legislation that don't exist.

Compromise of Human Judgment & Legal Reasoning: Legal judgment depends on subtle interpretation, understanding context, moral reasoning, and empathy, none of which AI can currently replicate well.

Human Rights & Due Process:

If algorithmic decision making starts to replace or heavily influence human judgment, it puts fundamental rights like the right to a fair trial and appeal at risk. Leaning too heavily on AI risks flattening complex human situations into mere numbers.

More fundamentally, there's a risk that adjudication gets reduced to rigid rule based inferences, losing sight of how human judgement, specific context, and relevant precedent actually work together in real decision making.

Constitutional concerns: Bringing AI into judicial processes opens the door to algorithmic bias, privacy risks, gaps in accountability, and weakened reasoned decision making, all of which touch on Articles 14 and 21 (equality, privacy, and fair trial).

Lack of Regulation: India still doesn't have comprehensive legislation or a clear policy specifically for AI in the judiciary; what exists mostly borrows from older laws never designed with AI in mind. This has left courts adopting AI inconsistently, some proceeding cautiously while others, like the Kerala High Court, have banned AI outright from judicial decision making.

What can be the way forward?

Enact a dedicated statutory framework: Rather than stopping at draft regulations, India needs binding legislation built specifically for judicial AI use, since right now the country has no dedicated AI law, just scattered local policies and guidelines for judges and lawyers.

Capacity Building: Judges, court staff, and lawyers need nationwide training to build real AI literacy, not just how to use these tools but also where their limits lie. Judicial academies and bar associations, working with AI governance experts, are well suited to run such training.

Phased Adoption: AI should be rolled out step by step. Lower risk tasks like transcription and scheduling can be standardized first, while anything that touches case data should go through "Controlled Environment Testing" (sandboxing) before it's actually deployed.

Human Oversight & Judicial Discretion: AI needs to stay in an assistive role, never a substitute for the judge. Judicial officers should be required to review AI generated suggestions and override them whenever context or justice calls for it.

Develop Regulatory & Ethical frameworks: Clear legislation and guidelines are needed to spell out exactly what AI can and cannot do in courts, with a focus on human rights, fairness,

accountability, and explainability. Regular audits and ethical reviews should be mandated to keep these tools unbiased and transparent.

Address Biasness Issue: Training data for these systems needs to be diverse, current, and representative to cut down on bias and error, and models should be continuously monitored, checked, and retrained so they don't end up reinforcing systemic injustice.

Right to be informed: Litigants deserve to know if AI played a role in deciding their case, and lawyers and litigants alike should be told when AI is being used in a courtroom. If someone has concerns about safeguards or oversight, they should have the option to opt out of AI pilots or fully deployed systems.

Empowering Dedicated Oversight Bodies: Standing institutions like the proposed Apex Body at the Supreme Court and the AI Committees at High Courts need to be set up, staffed with a mix of judges, data scientists, and ethicists whose job is to vet any software before it ever touches court data.

Conclusion

Bringing AI into the judiciary matters because it can make the system faster, more accessible, and more transparent, but that shouldn't come at the cost of the nuanced human reasoning that sits at the core of delivering justice.

Women in Judiciary

RELEVANCE

Syllabus:

- **PSIR**: Principal organs of Union Government and state governments
- **GS2:** Supreme Court



Introduction

The recent appointment of Justice V. Mohana as a Supreme Court judge has renewed attention on the issue of women's representation in India's higher judiciary. As only the 12th woman judge in the Supreme Court's 76-year history, her elevation marks progress toward gender diversity, yet women remain significantly underrepresented in judicial leadership positions. The "glass ceiling" remains strong for women judges, especially in promotions to higher courts. Minority and marginalized women face even greater barriers to advancement.

Status of Representation of Women in Judiciary

Supreme Court:

As of June 2026, just 2 women judges (Justice B.V. Nagarathna & Justice V. Mohana) are serving out of a total of 37 judges, amounting to a representation of merely 5.4%.

Throughout its entire history since 1950, only 12 women judges have ever been appointed to the Supreme Court (of these, 6 have been appointed since 2014 and 5 since 2018) — a mere 3.8% out of 287 total appointments.

No woman has ever held the Office of Chief Justice of India.

High Courts:

Across all High Courts combined, women judges make up only 13.1% of the total. However, notable variation exists among High Courts (HCs). 5 HCs have not a single woman judge. Another 7 HCs have fewer than 10% women judges. Sikkim and Telangana HCs boast the highest representation at 33.3%.

District & Subordinate Judiciary:

Women judges make up approximately 35% of judges in the lower courts. Here, the proportion ranges from 19.5% in Gujarat to as high as 70% in Goa.

As of 2025, 7,852 women judges are serving in district and subordinate courts.

17 out of 36 States and UTs had a lower proportion of women in the lower judiciary compared to the national average.

Of the 1.7 million advocates across the country, only 15% are women. A mere 2% of elected representatives in the State Bar Councils are women.

Reasons for Low Representation of Women in Judiciary

Judicial Rules:

Article 233 lays down a condition of 7 years of practice as an advocate as eligibility for appointment as a District Judge. The Judiciary has interpreted this to mean 7 years of continuous practice.

Most States' judicial rules set a minimum age of 35 years for entry as a district judge through direct recruitment.

No one below the age of 55 years can be appointed as a judge in the Supreme Court. Marriage and family obligations within this age bracket reduce women's ability to compete for judicial roles.

'Leaking Pipeline' Syndrome:

The leaking pipeline syndrome is a metaphor frequently used to describe how women vanish as they progress from lower to higher levels.

This phenomenon is observed across numerous careers including the Judiciary (~35% judges in Lower Courts dropping to ~11% in the SC).

Family duties, personal decisions, long working hours and work-life conflict, working conditions, limited access to employment opportunities, barriers to advancement, and insufficient family support cause women to frequently exit mid-career.

This 'voluntary withdrawal' conceals the tacit consent given to patriarchally assigned gender roles.

Opaque Recruitment Process (Collegium System): Unlike lower courts, where entry relies on transparent, merit-based competitive exams (Judicial Services Examinations), appointments to the High Courts and Supreme Court are handled through the Collegium system. Since this process lacks institutionalized, objective selection criteria, it depends heavily on existing professional networks. Historically male-dominated, these networks generate an unconscious bias favoring male candidates, often overlooking highly capable women.

Shorter Tenures and the Seniority Trap: High Court judges retire at 62, while Supreme Court judges retire at 65. Due to their late entry, women often end up with shorter judicial tenures. This keeps them from acquiring the seniority needed to reach the Supreme Court or serve on internal Collegium councils that select future judges, perpetuating the cycle.

Bar Councils and Bar Associations: Women remain significantly underrepresented in Bar Councils and Bar Associations, institutions that can offer a pathway to visibility and leadership. The Bar Council of India, for example, has no women members, and only 9 out of 441 State Bar Council representatives are women.

Hostile Courtroom Culture: Women lawyers commonly report encountering patronizing attitudes, casual sexism, and insufficient mentorship from senior male colleagues. This

ongoing friction makes litigation a draining environment for women trying to sustain multi-decade careers.

Lack of Supportive Infrastructure: The absence of adequate provisions and infrastructure, ranging from toilets to maternity leave, also contributes to high attrition among women lawyers. Across 6,000 courts nationwide, 22% lack separate toilets for women. Consequently, many women law graduates opt to join the corporate sector instead.

Lack of Enabling Provisions: While quotas for women exist in the lower courts of several states, such policies have not yet been extended to the higher judiciary. States like Assam, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Odisha have these enabling provisions in place and boast over 40% women judges.

Impacts of Low representation of Women in Judiciary

Gender Bias in Judgements: The lack of diverse perspectives on the bench often produces a limited understanding of social dynamics and gender-based violence. Historically, this has resulted in problematic judicial reasoning:

Victim-Blaming: Courts have at times granted bail to perpetrators under archaic conditions (such as requiring the attacker to have a rakhi tied by the victim).

Patriarchal Expectations: Judges have issued rulings evaluating whether a woman's post-rape conduct fits the mold of an "ideal" rape victim, rather than focusing on the criminal nature of the act itself.

Such judgements are grounded in notions of a woman's ideal dignity rather than the criminality of the offense.

Narrowing the Scope of Law: Women judges frequently bring lived experiences that expand the boundaries of jurisprudence, introducing new legal concepts around equal opportunity, sexual harassment (e.g., the Vishaka Guidelines in India), and reproductive rights. Low representation means these critical areas of law may develop slowly or remain neglected.

Deficiencies in Legal Reasoning: The legal system's capacity to understand and respond to varied social circumstances and experiences is enhanced by greater judicial diversity. Without adequate women's representation, the justice system will struggle to meet the needs of women and other underserved communities.

Impact on Access to Justice: Women litigants, particularly those from economically weaker sections, often feel more at ease and confident presenting their cases before a female judge. The scarcity of women on the bench can discourage women from pursuing legal recourse in sensitive matters, widening the justice gap.

Undermining of Gender Equality & Causing Trust Deficit: The absence of women representatives in courts raises questions about the courts' legitimacy as true representatives of the societies they serve. A judiciary that fails to reflect nearly half the population lacks legitimacy and falls short of the principle of representative justice.

Lack of Role Models: High-ranking women judges act as powerful role models and sources of inspiration for young girls and women entering the legal profession and other fields. Their visibility dismantles stereotypes about women's capacity for leadership and high office.

Reinforcement of Societal Stereotypes: The scarcity of visible, high-ranking women in the judicial system reinforces the societal stereotype that women are unfit for top leadership or adjudicatory roles. Conversely, a strong presence of women on the bench breaks down these biases and fosters egalitarianism.

How are different countries promoting greater representation of women in the judiciary?

Belgium — Belgium revised its laws governing the Constitutional Court to introduce a strict gender quota. The law requires that at least one-third of judges belong to each gender. Until the court achieved this one-third composition of women judges, every third appointment following two male appointees had to go to a woman.

South Africa — Section 174(2) of the South African Constitution explicitly requires that the judiciary broadly mirror the country's racial and gender makeup. Driven by this constitutional mandate, South Africa's Constitutional Court achieved a female majority (6 out of 11 judges), led by a woman Chief Justice.

The United Kingdom — The UK established an independent Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC). The JAC is legally obligated to actively seek out and encourage applications from underrepresented groups, including women and ethnic minorities. It publishes transparent selection criteria, employs blind grading for initial assessments, and actively monitors gender metrics across all court levels.

Canada — Canada depends on an open, merit-based application process managed through independent advisory committees. This transparent system has successfully driven women's representation to roughly 50% across its federal courts.

France — Imposed a 50% gender parity quota at local and municipal election levels. This has substantially "feminized" the foundation of the French legal framework, naturally leading to a high number of senior female magistrates and judges in courts of first and second instance.

Rwanda — Rwanda introduced constitutional quotas mandating at least 30% women across all decision-making bodies. Paired with targeted legal education funding, this mechanism proved so effective that nearly half of all judges in Rwanda are now women.

What should be the way forward?

Gender-Based Affirmative Action: Implement a policy reserving a certain percentage (e.g., 30% where feasible) of judicial positions, particularly at the District and High Court levels, for women. While Supreme Court appointments are based on seniority and merit, High Court recommendations must actively seek out qualified women candidates.

Mandatory Inclusion in Selection Committees: Ensure all shortlisting and selection bodies, including the Collegium (at the Supreme Court level) and State-level committees, include at least one woman member. This inclusion introduces diversity into the decision-making process itself, challenging inherent biases during candidate evaluation.

Reforms in State Bar Councils and Bar Associations: State Bar Councils and Bar Associations must establish structural support systems. Recent Supreme Court directives requiring 30% seat reservations for women in Bar Council and Association elections must be strictly enforced. Empowering women at the litigation stage ensures they gain visibility, receive mentorship, and are naturally positioned for direct bench elevation.

Broaden the Zone of Consideration: Collegiums can proactively consider capable women advocates practicing in the Supreme Court who hail from different states, ensuring a broader talent pool when suitable state-level candidates are limited.

Lateral Entry from Academia: Encourage and enable the lateral entry of women with strong academic credentials (law professors, legal scholars) into the mid-level judiciary or as judges in specialized tribunals. This widens the entry point beyond traditional litigation tracks.

Addressing Family and Work-Life Balance: The greatest obstacle for women in the legal field is often the absence of institutional support for work-life balance. Judicial academies and bar associations should push for:

Childcare facilities within court complexes.

Flexible timings for female lawyers and judges, particularly during early motherhood.

Adequate maternity leave policies that don't negatively affect seniority or career advancement.

Better Infrastructure: Provide basic, dignified infrastructure in all courts, especially at the lower judiciary level (such as separate, well-maintained washrooms and retiring rooms, along with fully subsidized institutional childcare facilities), to support the comfort and safety of women lawyers and judges.

Eliminating Gender Bias Training: Introduce mandatory, regular gender sensitization and unconscious bias training for all sitting judges, law clerks, and court staff. This is vital for creating a neutral and respectful court environment for female advocates and litigants.

Mentorship and Support Networks: Establish formal mentorship programs where senior women judges and lawyers guide junior female colleagues, helping them navigate systemic challenges and remain in the profession long enough to be considered for elevation.

Conclusion

Closing the gender gap in the judiciary will ensure that the judiciary is not merely independent but also genuinely representative of the society it is entrusted to serve.

Q. Trace the origins of realism to its present utility in the field of international relations.

Realism is indeed considered one of the dominant theories in international relations. It offers an explanation for the state of war, which is seen as a regular condition in the international system. Realism is based on several fundamental assumptions, including state centrism, the anarchical structure of international relations, the security dilemma, and power as the primary driving force.

The history of realism can be traced back to intellectual precursors in both the West and the East. Some notable precursors in the West include Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Thomas Hobbes. Thucydides, an ancient Greek historian, emphasized the role of fear and power in driving conflicts between states. His concept of the "Thucydides trap" suggests that war can arise from the fear associated with a shift in the balance of power.

Machiavelli's work, particularly in "The Prince," revived realism by highlighting the importance of protecting and consolidating political power. He argued that rulers should prioritize their own interests and use any means necessary to maintain their authority. Similarly, Hobbes explored human nature and the pursuit of power, which he believed led to anarchy and a security dilemma in international relations.

In the East, Kautilya (also known as Chanakya), an ancient Indian scholar, viewed international relations as a jungle where the strength of the lion (state) prevails. He emphasized the need for states to constantly seek power. Sun Tzu, the author of "The Art of War," provided strategic insights and various types of warfare, including guerrilla warfare.

The resurgence of realism as a dominant theory in international relations occurred with the works of Hans Morgenthau and other scholars. Morgenthau's book "Politics Among Nations" became a seminal work in realism, outlining key principles such as the primacy of national interest, the pursuit of power, and the role of the balance of power in international relations.

Overall, the precursors of realism laid the foundation for its development as a dominant theory, with subsequent scholars contributing to its revival and further elaboration. Realism continues to be influential in analyzing and understanding international relations, particularly in explaining state behavior and the dynamics of power in the global arena.

Q. Comment on: Because the society is federal, the authority must also be federal (Laski). (2007, 20 marks)

Harold J. Laski, a prominent political theorist and a key figure in the development of pluralist theory, emphasized the importance of aligning the structure of political authority with the nature of society. His statement, "Because the society is federal, the authority must also be federal," reflects his belief that the organization of political power should mirror the social and economic realities of a given society.

- **Federal Society**: Laski's concept of a "federal society" refers to a society that is inherently diverse, with multiple groups, communities, and interests coexisting. These groups may have distinct identities, traditions, and needs, which necessitate a decentralized approach to governance. In a federal society, local autonomy is crucial for accommodating this diversity, allowing different regions or groups to govern themselves in accordance with their unique circumstances.
- **Federal Authority**: Laski argues that in a federal society, political authority should also be decentralized or federal in nature. A federal authority divides power between different levels of government—central, regional, and local—ensuring that governance is more responsive to the specific needs of diverse communities. Federalism, as a system of government, allows for a balance between unity and diversity, where regional governments have significant autonomy, while a central government retains powers necessary for maintaining national cohesion.

Laski's broader political philosophy is rooted in pluralism, which posits that multiple sources of authority and power should coexist in society. He was critical of the centralization of power, arguing that it could lead to authoritarianism and the suppression of minority interests. Federalism, for Laski, is a practical manifestation of pluralism in the political sphere, where authority is dispersed across different levels, preventing any single entity from holding excessive power.

- **Autonomy and Democracy**: Laski believed that federalism is essential for democracy because it ensures that political power is exercised closer to the people. Local governments, being more in tune with the needs and preferences of their constituents, are better equipped to address specific issues, thereby enhancing democratic participation and accountability.

- **Preventing Centralization**: Laski's endorsement of federal authority also stems from his concern about the dangers of centralization. He argued that centralization can lead to a disconnect between the government and the governed, resulting in inefficient governance and potential oppression. Federalism, by contrast, prevents the concentration of power in a single authority, reducing the risk of tyranny and promoting political stability.

Laski's argument is particularly relevant in diverse and multi-ethnic societies, where regional autonomy can help manage social cleavages and prevent conflicts. Federal systems, such as those in the United States, India, and Germany, have been relatively successful in accommodating diversity while maintaining national unity.

However, critics of Laski's perspective might argue that federalism can sometimes lead to inefficiencies, particularly in policy implementation, where regional governments may lack the resources or capacity to address issues effectively. Additionally, too much regional autonomy can lead to centrifugal tendencies, where the unity of the state is undermined by regional separatism or parochialism.

Scholar Digest: Know Your Scholars

Hannah Arendt



Introduction

Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) was a renowned political philosopher whose works continue to shape and challenge our understanding of politics. Through her unique lens, she examined various political phenomena and concepts, offering profound insights that resonate within the field of political science.

The Nature Of Power

Arendt's examination of power is a key aspect of her political thought. She argued that power is not merely coercive force but a collective phenomenon that emerges from the actions and interactions of individuals in a public realm. Her emphasis on power as a relational concept informs discussions on power dynamics, democratic participation, and the role of citizens in political processes.

The Concept Of Authority

Arendt delved into the concept of authority, highlighting its distinction from power. She viewed authority as rooted in legitimacy, consent, and respect rather than coercion. Her analysis sheds light on the sources of authority, the relationship between authority and obedience, and the erosion of authority in modern societies.

Totalitarianism And The Banality Of Evil

Arendt's seminal work on totalitarianism, particularly in "The Origins of Totalitarianism," remains highly influential. She examined the rise of totalitarian regimes, the erosion of individual freedoms, and the manipulation of truth in such systems. Her concept of the "banality of evil" challenged prevailing notions of evil as a result of extraordinary acts, emphasizing instead the ordinary individuals who participate in oppressive systems.

The Public And Private Spheres

Arendt explored the distinction between the public and private realms, highlighting their significance in political life. She argued that genuine political action occurs in the public realm, characterized by plurality, freedom of speech, and public deliberation. In contrast, the private sphere represents the realm of necessity and personal affairs. Her analysis continues to shape discussions on the role of public engagement and the importance of political participation.

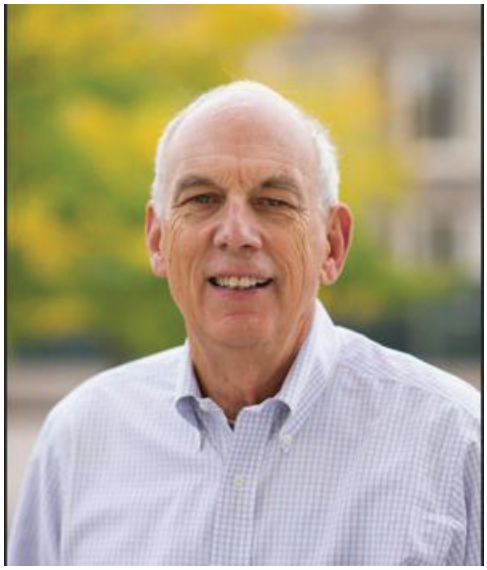
The Crisis Of Modernity And The Human Condition

Arendt critically examined the impact of modernity on the human condition. She analyzed the loss of meaningful public spaces, the rise of bureaucracy, and the challenges of individual identity in mass societies. Her insights into the disintegration of public life and the consequences for human agency and political action offer valuable perspectives for understanding contemporary political challenges.

Conclusion

Hannah Arendt's contributions to political science have been far-reaching and continue to provoke intellectual inquiry and debate. Her writings on power, authority, totalitarianism, the public sphere, and the human condition provide valuable frameworks for analyzing political phenomena and understanding the complex dynamics of our contemporary political landscape. By engaging with Arendt's ideas, political scientists can deepen their understanding of the intricacies of power, authority, and the nature of politics itself.

Robert O. Keohane



Introduction

Robert Owen Keohane, born on October 3, 1941, in Chicago, Illinois, USA, is a prominent American political scientist, educator, and scholar in the field of international relations. He is renowned for his contributions to neoliberal institutionalism, a perspective in international relations that highlights how states employ international organizations to advance their interests through collaborative efforts.

MAJOR WORKS

Keohane rose to prominence following the release of "Power and Interdependence" (1977), a collaborative effort with Harvard's political scholar Joseph S. Nye. This publication significantly contributed to the establishment of international political economy (IPE) as a specialized field within the realm of international relations.

CONCEPT OF INTERDEPENDENCE

Keohane placed a strong emphasis on the concepts of interdependence and collaboration within global politics. He offered a critical perspective on the neorealist approach to international relations, which posits that interactions between nations are primarily marked by suspicion and rivalry. Unlike the neorealist viewpoint, Keohane argued that states don't consistently view each other's successes with alarm; rather, they often seek to foster cooperation for mutual gain. He contested the neorealist notion that international relations are a zero-sum game, asserting that collaboration can lead to shared benefits rather than a one-sided win or loss.

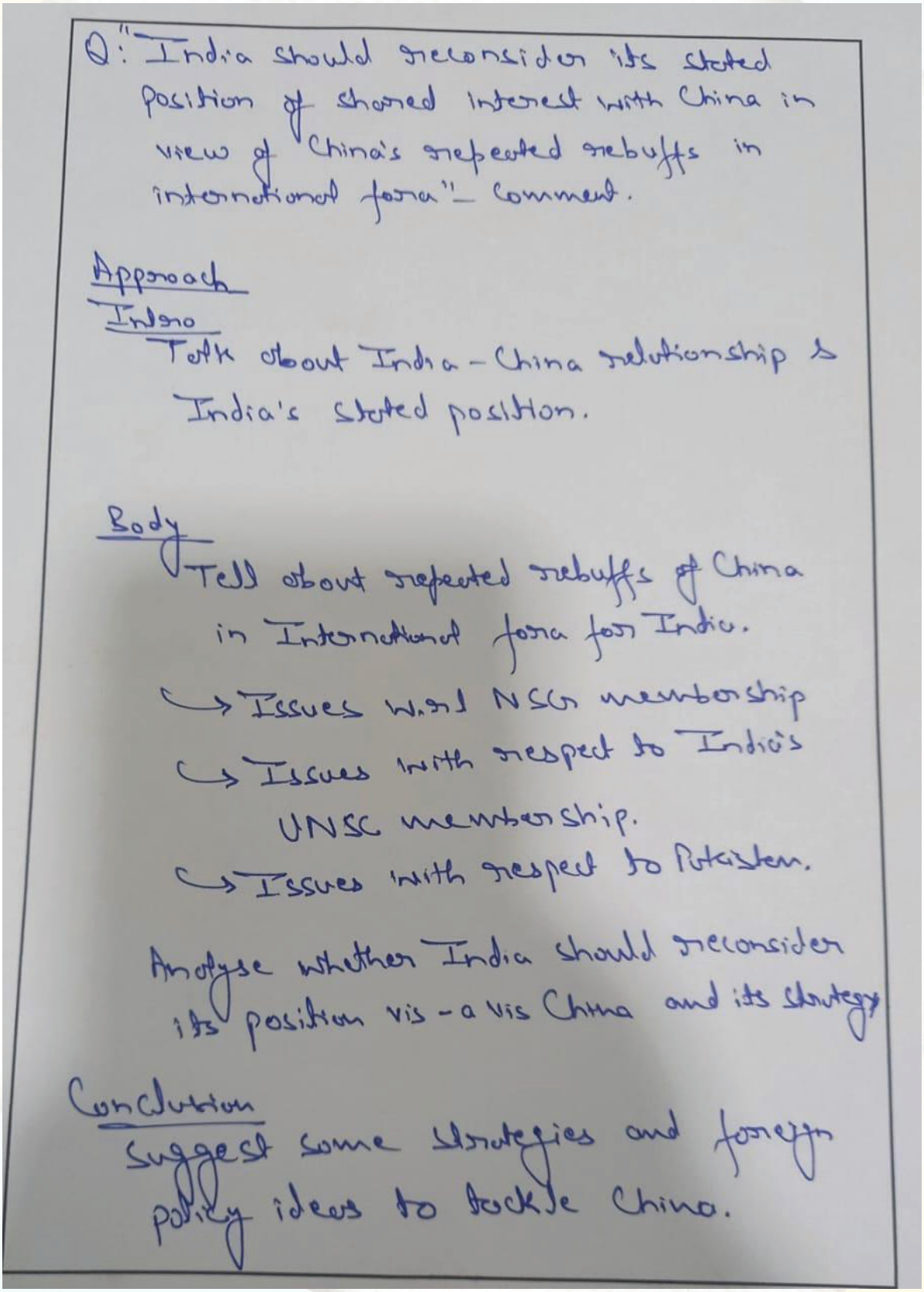
In addition to addressing security concerns, Keohane highlighted that states actively engage in endeavors that are advantageous to all parties involved, such as trade partnerships and environmental conservation efforts. Notably, he broadened the scope of analysis beyond just state actors, recognizing the significance of transnational entities like multinational corporations and international trade unions. By acknowledging these factors, Keohane challenged the conventional focus on nation-states in the realm of international relations, particularly in light of the complex processes of globalization.

In his most renowned work, "After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy" (1984), Keohane embraced the core idea of neorealism that states act as rational egoists. However, he put forth the notion that self-interest can actually pave the way for cooperation. Challenging the neorealist perspective that cooperation between countries necessitates a dominant military power or hegemon to enforce it, Keohane contended that this stance was not entirely supported by historical evidence. He pointed out that international cooperation persisted even after the waning of U.S. hegemony in the 1970s.

Keohane attributed this continuity of international cooperation to the establishment of what he termed "international regimes," exemplified by institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). These international regimes, in Keohane's view, encompass a collection of implicit or explicit norms, institutions, and decision-making mechanisms that enable states to calibrate their expectations and uphold avenues of collaboration. Keohane's argument was that states subscribed to these regimes due to their ability to mitigate the risks and expenses associated with cooperation, while simultaneously safeguarding the benefits achieved through collective negotiation.

Enrich Your Answer

Q. India should reconsider its stated position of shared interest with CHina in view of CHina's repeated rebuffs in international fora. Comment



Q: "India should reconsider its stated position of shared interest with China in view of China's repeated rebuffs in international fora" — Comment.

Approach

Intro

Talk about India – China relationship & India's stated position.

Body

Tell about repeated rebuffs of China in International fora for India.

↳ Issues w.r.t NSG membership

↳ Issues with respect to India's UNSC membership.

↳ Issues with respect to Pakistan.

Analyse whether India should reconsider its position vis-a vis China and its strategy

Conclusion

Suggest some strategies and foreign policy ideas to tackle China.

Q. Compare Ambedkar and Gandhi's views on Social Justice.

Q1) Compare Ambedkar and Gandhi's views on Social Justice.

Intro : Start answer by defining social justice.
Also give general introduction about Gandhi & Ambedkar

Body

(A) Mention the differences between views of Gandhi & Ambedkar

① Ambedkar was critic of Manusmriti (Manuvaad) while Gandhi believed in Varna system.

② Ambedkar held Vedas and Manusmriti responsible for social injustice while Gandhi didn't believed in it.

③ To achieve social justice
↳ Ambedkar emphasised on Affirmative Actions
↳ Gandhi emphasised on social reforms
(raising the conscience of people)

④ Ambedkar preconditioned social justice to Nationalism while Gandhi believed that freedom struggle will result into social justice.

(B) Mention similarities

① Both believed in social justice and eradication of poverty

② Both have vision of egalitarian society.
Ambedkar → a society free of contradictions
Gandhi: → Ramrajya.

Conclusion

Can mention that both Gandhian and Ambedkar's ideas on social justice found place in Indian Constitution

Prelims Practice Questions

1. **Which one of the following statements correctly describes the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution of India?**
   (a) It contains the scheme of the distribution of powers between the Union and the States
   (b) It contains the languages listed in the Constitution
   (c) It contains the provisions regarding the administration of tribal areas
   (d) It allocates seats in the Council of States

2. **Which one of the following Articles of the Constitution of India says that the executive power of every State shall be so exercised as not to impede or prejudice the exercise of the executive power of the Union?**
   (a) Article 257 (b) Article 258
   (c) Article 355 (d) Article 358

3. **Which Article of the Constitution of India says, 'No child below the age of fourteen years shall the employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment'?**
   (a) Article 24 (b) Article 45
   (c) Article 330 (d) Article 368

4. **Consider the following statements:**
   1. **Part IX of the Constitution of India provisions for Panchyats and was inserted by the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1992.**
   2. **Part IX A of the Constitution of India contains provisions for Municipalities and the Article 243 Q envisages two types of Municipalities a Municipal Council and a Municipal Corporation for every State.**

   Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
   (a) Only 1 (b) Only 2
   (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answers

1. **(d)** Fourth schedule allocates seats in the Council of States i.e. Rajya Sabha (Upper House of Parliament).
2. **(a)** rticle 257 in the Constitution states that the executive power of every State shall be so exercised as not to impede or prejudice the exercise of the executive power of the Union, and the executive power of the Union shall extend to the giving of such directions to a State as may appear to the Government of India to be necessary for that purpose. Article 258: Power of the Union to confer powers on the States in certain cases; Article 355: Duty of the Union to protect States against external aggression and internal disturbance; Article 358: Suspension of provisions of Article 19 during emergencies.
3. **(a)** Article 24 of the constitution states that, no child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.
4. **(a)** 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments were passed by Parliament in December, 1992. Through these amendments local self-governance was introduced in rural and urban India. The Acts came into force as the constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 on April 24, 1993 and the constitution (74th Amendment) Act, 1992 on June 1, 1993. These amendments added two new parts to the constitution, namely, 73rd Amendment added part IX titled "The Panchayats" and 74th Amendment added part IXA titled "The Municipalities". The Local bodies-'Panchayats' and 'Municipalities' came under Part IX and IXA of the Constitution after 43 years of India becoming a republic.

UPSC IAS (Mains)

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Contributor:
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psirsupport@studyiq.com



@SHASHANKTYAGI4U

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Faculty PSIR Optional, StudyiqIAS
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