

ANANTAM IAS · OPTIONAL NOTES

Sociology Optional Social Movements in Modern India; Population Dynamics; Challenges of Social Transformation

Paper 2 · Unit 3

The pressure from below (movements), the demographic ground shifting underneath (population), and the bill that directed change has run up (the challenges) treated as one connected argument rather than three lists.

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UPSC SYLLABUS

(v) Social Movements in Modern India: (a) Peasants and farmers movements. (b) Women's movement. (c) Backward classes & Dalit movement. (d) Environmental movements. (e) Ethnicity and Identity movements. (vi) Population Dynamics: (a) Population size, growth, composition and distribution. (b) Components of population growth. (c) Population policy and family planning. (d) Emerging issues: ageing, sex ratios, child and infant mortality, reproductive health. (vii) Challenges of Social Transformation: (a) Crisis of development: displacement, environmental problems and sustainability. (b) Poverty, deprivation and inequalities. (c) Violence against women. (d) Caste conflicts. (e) Ethnic conflicts, communalism, religious revivalism. (f) Illiteracy and disparities in education.

Reading a social movement: concepts and approaches

Before any Indian example, fix the analytical vocabulary. Answers that narrate movements chronologically get average marks; answers that classify, explain the mobilisation and name the theoretical dispute get the rest.

- A social movement needs four things together: collective action, sustained over time, with an ideology, aimed at changing (or resisting change in) the social order. Drop any one and it is a riot, a fashion, an interest group or a party.
- M.S.A. Rao (Social Movements in India) classifies by the depth of intended change: reformist (partial change within the existing structure), transformative (change of major structures such as the caste or land order), revolutionary (change of the whole system). Ghanshyam Shah's Social Movements in India: A Review of Literature is the standard survey and organises by base (peasant, tribal, Dalit, backward class, women, industrial worker).
- T.K. Oommen's work on Bhodan-Gramdan (Charisma, Stability and Change) shows the recurring Indian pattern: charismatic mobilisation produces enthusiasm, and the movement then either routinises into an organisation or evaporates. Use it whenever asked why a movement 'changed course'.
- Western explanations to name and place: relative deprivation (deprivation felt against a reference group, not absolute want); resource mobilisation (McCarthy and Zald: grievances are constant, resources and organisation vary, so explain mobilisation by money, networks and leadership); political process (Tilly, McAdam: political opportunity structure, mobilising structures, framing); new social movements (Touraine, Melucci, Habermas: post-material, identity- and autonomy-oriented, not class-based); framing (Snow and Benford: diagnostic, prognostic and motivational frames).
- Gail Omvedt (Reinventing Revolution: New Social Movements in India, 1993) applies the NSM frame to India: farmers', women's, Dalit, environmental and anti-caste movements are not deviations from a missing class struggle but the actual form Indian radicalism takes. Rajni Kothari's 'non-party political process' (1984) names the same phenomenon from the other side: as parties lost credibility, grassroots and voluntary formations took over the work of representation.
- The important disagreement: are Indian movements post-material identity movements (Omvedt) or class movements dressed in identity (Tom Brass on farmers, some Marxist readings of Dalit politics)? Say which you take. Most Indian movements are honestly both, since caste is a material relation, and the strongest answers say that rather than choosing tidily.
- On media and opportunity structure, asked twice (2019 and 2023): media does not cause movements, it lowers the cost of coordination and supplies the frame. Social media enabled the 2011 anti-corruption mobilisation, the 2012 protests, MeToo India (2018) and the 2020-21 farmers' movement; it also produces flash mobilisations with no organisation behind them, which peak and vanish. Resource mobilisation theory predicts exactly this asymmetry.

KEY TERMS

Relative deprivation — Discontent produced by comparison with a reference group rather than by absolute want; explains why movements often start when conditions are improving.

Political opportunity structure — The features of the political environment (elite divisions, allies, repression capacity) that make collective action more or less likely to succeed.

Non-party political process — Kothari's term for grassroots and voluntary formations taking over representative functions from discredited parties.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

- Do you agree that social movements are caused by opportunity structures that are generated by media? Why? (2019)
- Analyse the sociological interconnections between Social Media and Mass Mobilization in India. (2023)

Peasant and farmers' movements

There are two distinct histories here and the exam punishes merging them. The old peasant movements fought over land, rent and bondage. The new farmers' movements, from the late 1970s, fight over price and subsidy, and are led by the class the Green Revolution created.

- Colonial peasant struggles to know: the Indigo revolt (Bengal, 1859-60), Pabna (1873), the Deccan Riots (1875, against Marwari and Gujarati moneylenders), Moplah (Malabar, 1921), Gandhi's Champaran (1917), Kheda (1918) and Bardoli (1928). The All India Kisan Sabha was founded at Lucknow in 1936, with Swami Sahajanand Saraswati as its first president, which is when peasant grievance became a national organised force.
- The two great late-colonial and transition struggles: Tebhaga (Bengal, 1946-47), where bargadars demanded two-thirds of the crop instead of half, led by the Kisan Sabha, and Telangana (1946-51) against the Nizam and the deshmukhs, the largest armed peasant insurrection in Indian history. Naxalbari (1967) and Srikakulam continued the line and gave Indian Maoism its name.
- A.R. Desai (Peasant Struggles in India, 1979) collected and framed the field from a Marxist position. Kathleen Gough's typology of Indian peasant revolts is directly usable: restorative rebellions, religious movements, social banditry, terrorist vengeance and mass insurrections. D.N. Dhanagare (Peasant Movements in India 1920-1950, 1983) tested the class base of each and found the leadership usually came from richer peasants or outside, not from the poorest.
- The theoretical dispute over who rebels: Eric Wolf and Hamza Alavi propose the middle peasant thesis, that the tactically mobile, land-owning middle peasant, not the fully dependent poor peasant, initiates revolt, because the poor are too dependent on the landlord to move. Ranajit Guha (Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India, 1983) rejects the whole framing: peasant insurgency has its own consciousness, readable through negation, ambiguity, modality, solidarity, transmission and territoriality, and is not a reflex of elite politics. This is the citation for 'subaltern autonomy'.
- The new farmers' movements (from the late 1970s) are structurally different: their base is the surplus-producing, irrigated, market-dependent cultivator of the Green Revolution districts, and their demands are remunerative prices, cheap inputs, loan waivers and lower power tariffs, not land. Shetkari Sanghatana (Sharad Joshi, Maharashtra, with the 'Bharat versus India' frame of an exploited rural India against an urban India), Bharatiya Kisan Union (Mahendra Singh Tikait, western UP), Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (M.D. Nanjundaswamy), Tamil Nadu Agriculturalists' Association (Narayanawamy Naidu).

- The disagreement to reproduce: Gail Omvedt reads them as new social movements, non-party, non-class, anti-state and genuinely rural. Tom Brass reads them as rich peasant ideology dressed as peasant unity, since a movement led by employers of labour that never raises the agricultural wage is a class movement of a specific class. D.N. Dhanagare occupies the middle. Note the internal silence that decides the argument: these movements say nothing about the landless labourer or about caste.
- The 2020-21 mobilisation against the three farm laws (passed in September 2020, repealed by the Farm Laws Repeal Act in November-December 2021) under the Samyukt Kisan Morcha: a year-long occupation of Delhi's borders, funded and provisioned by Punjab and Haryana village networks and the gurdwara-langar infrastructure, sustained by remittances from the diaspora, and led again by the MSP-dependent surplus grower. It is the new farmers' movement at its most effective, and it repeats the old silence on labour and caste.
- So 'are contemporary farmers' movements changing their course' (2020) has a real answer: yes in method (media-savvy, coalitional, occupation rather than rasta roko, some outreach to labour unions and to the anti-CAA repertoire), no in class base or agenda (still price, still the surplus grower). Farmer suicide and indebtedness, documented across Maharashtra, Telangana, Punjab and Karnataka, sits alongside this movement without being its centre, which is itself the sociological finding.

Old peasant movements versus new farmers' movements

	Old (colonial to 1960s)	New (late 1970s onward)
Base	Tenants, sharecroppers, poor peasants	Owner-cultivators with surplus and irrigation
Demand	Land, rent reduction, abolition of bondage	Remunerative price, input subsidy, loan waiver
Enemy	Zamindar, moneylender, colonial state	The state as buyer and price-setter; 'India' versus 'Bharat'
Ideology	Class, socialist, Gandhian	Non-party, sectoral, populist
Leadership	Kisan Sabha, communist and Congress cadres	Charismatic leaders outside party structures
Silence	Caste largely unaddressed	Agricultural labour and caste unaddressed

KEY TERMS

Middle peasant thesis — Wolf and Alavi's claim that the tactically mobile land-owning middle peasant, not the dependent poor peasant, initiates revolt.

Subaltern autonomy — Guha's argument that peasant insurgency has its own consciousness and logic, not derivable from elite politics.

Bharat versus India — Sharad Joshi's frame of an exploited agrarian Bharat against a subsidised urban India, the ideological core of the new farmers' movements.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

- Discuss the main features of farmers' movements in independent India. (2015)
- Bring out the main features of farmers' movements in Modern India. (2013)
- Explain the dynamics of neo-farmers' movement in contemporary India. (2018)
- Are the contemporary farmers' movements in India changing their course? Discuss. (2020)
- Illustrate the contributions of the Tebhaga Movement to the peasant struggle in India. (2019)
- What is your assessment about the recent farmers' movement in India? Elaborate. (2024)
- Indebtedness is one of the serious issues leading to farmers' suicides. Discuss reasons and suggest solutions. (2017)

The women's movement

The Indian women's movement has three phases and one structural argument: it moved from being spoken for, to speaking, to being asked who the 'we' is. Every phase is defined by who holds the microphone.

- Phase one, nineteenth-century social reform: women were the object, men were the subject. Rammohan Roy on sati (banned 1829), Vidyasagar on widow remarriage (1856), Malabari on age of consent (1891), Jyotirao and Savitribai Phule's schools from 1848, Dayanand and Syed Ahmed Khan. The dissenting women's voices matter more: Tarabai Shinde's *Stri Purush Tulana* (1882) and Pandita Ramabai's *The High Caste Hindu Woman* (1887) are the first Indian feminist texts, and both name men, not custom, as the problem.
- Phase two, organisation and nationalism: Women's Indian Association (1917), National Council of Women in India (1925), All India Women's Conference (1927, founded with Margaret Cousins). Mass participation in the national movement (salt satyagraha, picketing, Quit India) gave women political experience and gave the movement legitimacy, but folded the women's question into the national one. Independence delivered franchise and constitutional equality, and then two decades of quiet.
- The hinge is *Towards Equality* (1974), the report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (chaired by Phulrenu Guha, with Vina Mazumdar as member-secretary). It documented a declining sex ratio, falling female work participation and worsening health, and demolished the assumption that development had been improving women's position. It gave the movement its evidence, its cadre and its research infrastructure.
- Phase three, autonomous feminism from the mid-1970s: the anti-price-rise movement (Maharashtra, 1973-74), Nav Nirman (Gujarat, 1974), Shahada, SEWA (1972, Ela Bhatt, organising self-employed women as workers), Chipko's women. Autonomous groups, non-party and non-funded on principle, took issues the parties would not touch.
- The campaign-to-law sequence is the movement's clearest achievement, and it should be given exactly: the Mathura judgment (1979) and the open letter by Upendra Baxi, Lotika Sarkar, Raghunath Kelkar and Vasudha Dhagamwar produced the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1983 and Section 114A of the Evidence Act; the anti-dowry campaign produced Section 498A (1983), Section 304B (1986) and the Dowry Prohibition amendments; Roop Kanwar's death (1987) produced the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987; Bhanwari Devi's gang rape (1992) produced Vishaka (1997) and then the POSH Act, 2013; the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 recognised the household as a site of violence; the Nirbhaya protests (2012) produced the Verma Committee and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013.
- The internal critique is where the marks are. Sharmila Rege (*Writing Caste, Writing Gender*) argues Indian feminism was brahmanical: it universalised the upper-caste woman's experience and treated caste as a separate question, and she proposes a Dalit feminist standpoint. Uma Chakravarti's 'brahmanical patriarchy' shows why the two cannot be separated: caste purity is maintained through control of women's sexuality, so endogamy is the mechanism that joins them. Leela Dube's work on the seed-and-earth metaphor shows how kinship ideology encodes it. Muslim women's organising, Adivasi women's land claims and, more recently, queer and trans critique have each asked the same question of the 'we'.
- The Shah Bano sequence (1985 judgment, 1986 statute reversing it) is the standing case of the movement's hardest dilemma: the conflict between gender justice and minority rights, which cannot be resolved by asserting a uniform civil code without asking who would write it. Say that rather than picking a slogan.
- MeToo India (October 2018) is the current phase: individual naming on social media, largely urban, English-speaking, professional; it produced resignations and one major defamation case, and it exposed the class limit of the medium (there is no anonymous hashtag for the domestic worker or the sanitation worker).

It also revisited the 2017 'LoSHA' list controversy, in which Dalit and non-Dalit feminists divided over naming versus due process, which is the earlier caste critique returning in a new form.

- Why gender equality remains unachieved despite gains (2017): law addresses the event, not the structure, so it can punish a rape and not touch son preference, dowry, patrilocal residence, the wage gap, the unpaid care burden or women's declining labour force participation; and enforcement runs through police, courts and families that share the norm. The 106th Amendment (2023) reserving one-third of Lok Sabha and assembly seats is contingent on a census and delimitation, so representation too remains deferred.

KEY TERMS

Brahmanical patriarchy — Chakravarti's concept: caste purity requires control of women's sexuality through endogamy, so caste and patriarchy are one system, not two.

Dalit feminist standpoint — Regé's argument that Dalit women's location produces a more complete account of Indian society than either brahmanical feminism or male-led Dalit politics.

Autonomous women's movement — The post-1975 groups that refused party affiliation and foreign funding to keep the agenda under women's own control.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

- What are the main features of the second wave of Women's movement in the Indian context? (2014)
- Discuss the impact of post-1970 feminist movement on Indian middle class. (2015)
- Despite gains from the women's movement and state policy of women empowerment, gender equality is far from achieved. Identify two major challenges that prevent this goal from being reached. (2017)
- Elaborate the 'Me Too' Movement and its impact in India. (2018)
- Does 'economic empowerment' automatically bring about 'substantive empowerment' for women? Briefly describe the main issues in women empowerment in India. (2021)
- According to you, which social reform movement has played the most effective role in uplifting the status of women? Explain. (2025)

Backward classes and the Dalit movement

Two movements, related and distinct. The backward class movement is about a share of the modern sector for those in the middle of the ritual order; the Dalit movement is about the annihilation of the order itself. Merging them is the most common error on this unit.

- The anti-caste lineage: Jyotirao Phule's Satyashodhak Samaj (1873) and Gulamgiri (1873), which read caste as Aryan conquest and made the Shudra-Atishudra the historical subject; Narayana Guru's SNDP Yogam (1903) among the Ezhavas in Kerala, and the Vaikom Satyagraha (1924-25) for road access; Periyar E.V. Ramasamy's Self-Respect Movement (1925) and the Dravidian lineage from the Justice Party (1916). Southern non-Brahmin mobilisation started earlier and captured state power decades before the north, which is why Jaffrelot calls the northern version a 'silent revolution' and dates it to the 1990s.
- Ambedkar is the pivot and the chronology must be right: Mahad satyagraha for tank water (1927) and the burning of the Manusmriti; Kalaram temple entry (1930); the Round Table Conferences and the Communal Award; the Poona Pact (1932) trading separate electorates for reserved seats, which Ambedkar always regarded as a defeat; Independent Labour Party (1936); Annihilation of Caste (1936, the undelivered address to the Jat-Pat Todak Mandal); Scheduled Castes Federation (1942); Chairman of the Drafting Committee; conversion to Buddhism at Nagpur on 14 October 1956; the Republican Party of India (1957, after his death).

- Annihilation of Caste is the argument, not just the title: caste is not a division of labour but a division of labourers; it is graded inequality, in which each layer has someone below it to defend the system for; and it is sustained by the sanction of shastra, so inter-dining and inter-marriage are palliatives and only destroying the religious sanction destroys caste. Ambedkar's rejection of sanskritization follows: imitating the higher caste concedes the hierarchy.
- Post-Ambedkar assertion: the Dalit Panthers (Bombay, 1972, Namdeo Dhasal, J.V. Pawar, Raja Dhale), explicitly modelled on the Black Panthers, with a broad definition of Dalit that included all the oppressed, and with Dalit literature (Daya Pawar, Baby Kamble, Sharankumar Limbale) as its weapon. The Panthers split within years, which is the standard case for the routinisation problem.
- The political turn: Kanshi Ram's BAMCEF (1971), DS-4 (1981) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (1984), and Mayawati's four terms in Uttar Pradesh. Sudha Pai's Dalit Assertion and the Unfinished Democratic Revolution documents both the achievement (a Dalit party in power, dignity as a political currency, the statue and the memorial as claims on public space) and the limit (state power did not deliver land, and the party moved to a broad social-engineering coalition).
- The backward class track: the Kalelkar Commission (1953, shelved), the Mandal Commission (Second Backward Classes Commission, 1979, chaired by B.P. Mandal, reporting in 1980, recommending 27 per cent reservation), implemented by V.P. Singh in August 1990, upheld in Indra Sawhney v. Union of India (1992), which fixed the 50 per cent ceiling, excluded the creamy layer and barred reservation in promotions for OBCs. Then the 102nd Amendment (2018, constitutional status for the NCBC), the 103rd (2019, 10 per cent EWS, which breaks both the 50 per cent ceiling and the social-backwardness rationale) and the 105th (2021, restoring states' power to identify SEBCs); the Rohini Commission (from 2017) on sub-categorisation within the OBC list.
- Mandal's sociological effect is the point, not its arithmetic: it converted caste from a stigma into a resource claim, made the census category politically decisive, produced the anti-Mandal upper-caste 'merit' mobilisation, and reorganised north Indian party politics around OBC blocs. It also revealed the split the exam wants: OBCs are frequently the dominant landholding castes in the village and the perpetrators of anti-Dalit violence, so the backward class and Dalit movements are allies at the centre and adversaries in the field.
- Contemporary Dalit assertion is cultural and legal as much as electoral: the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and the 2018 amendment restoring its provisions after the Supreme Court diluted them in Subhash Kashinath Mahajan; Bhim Army; the mobilisations after Rohith Vemula's suicide (2016), the Una flogging (2016) and Bhima Koregaon (2018); Kancha Ilaiah's Why I Am Not a Hindu (1996); the Ambedkar statue, the blue flag and the Constitution itself as identity symbols. Identity formation here is the achievement: 'Dalit' is a chosen name (from Phule and revived by the Panthers) replacing names given by others.
- So 'has Dalit mobilisation strengthened Indian democracy' (2023) has a two-sided answer. It has: it converted subjects into a voting bloc with its own party, made atrocity a national political cost, and made the Constitution a mass text. It has not fully: political representation has outrun economic redistribution, since land, capital and the private sector remain closed, and reservation delivers a Dalit middle class rather than Dalit emancipation, which is Ambedkar's own distinction between political and social democracy returning.

KEY TERMS

Graded inequality — Ambedkar's account of caste as a hierarchy in which every stratum has someone below it, so each has an interest in defending the whole system.

Dalit — 'Broken' or 'crushed', a self-chosen political name (used by Phule, revived by the Dalit Panthers) rejecting Harijan and untouchable as names given by others.

Creamy layer — The advanced section within a backward class, excluded from reservation benefits under Indra Sawhney (1992); applied to OBCs, and the subject of continuing litigation for SCs and STs.

Silent revolution — Jaffrelot's term for the gradual transfer of political power to lower castes in north India through the Mandal moment and the OBC parties.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

- What is the Dalit Movement? Examine the issues highlighted by it. (2013)
- What is identity politics? Discuss the main trends in Dalit movements in India. (2021)
- Bring out the various issues involved in Dalit movements in India. (2022)
- Elaborate various forms of Dalit assertions in contemporary India? What are its implications on the Indian political system? (2018)
- Do you think that the decades of Dalit political mobilizations and movements have helped in strengthening India's democracy? Substantiate your arguments with facts. (2023)
- How Dalit movements in India have facilitated their Identity formation? Analyze. (2025)
- Write short note with a sociological perspective: Satya Sodhak movement of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. (2013)

Environmental movements

Indian environmentalism is not about wilderness or about future generations. It is about who gets the water, the forest and the fish now. That is why Guha and Martinez-Alier call it the environmentalism of the poor, and why every Indian environmental movement is also a livelihood movement.

- The organising frame is Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha (This Fissured Land, 1992; Ecology and Equity, 1995): 'omnivores' (the urban-industrial and rich-farmer coalition that draws resources from the whole country), 'ecosystem people' (those who live off the resources of their own locality) and 'ecological refugees' (those displaced from the second category into the slums of the first). Indian environmental conflict is between these three, not between humans and nature.
- Guha and Juan Martinez-Alier's 'environmentalism of the poor' (Varieties of Environmentalism, 1997) contrasts it with northern environmentalism: the southern version is a distributional conflict over resources fought by people whose survival depends on them, so it uses the language of rights and justice, not of conservation.
- Chipko (from 1973, Mandal village in Chamoli, Uttarakhand) is the case you must handle carefully because it is where the two readings collide. Chandi Prasad Bhatt and the Dasholi Gram Swarajya Mandal organised on labour and forest-produce access; Sunderlal Bahuguna gave it the ecological and Gandhian idiom ('ecology is permanent economy') and the national profile; Gaura Devi led the women of Reni in 1974. Ramachandra Guha (The Unquiet Woods, 1989) reads it as a peasant movement in a long Himalayan tradition of resistance to state forestry, over subsistence rights, only later framed as environmentalism. Vandana Shiva (Staying Alive, 1988) reads it as ecofeminist: women resisted because a masculine, reductionist science severed them from a nature they are closer to.

- Bina Agarwal ('The Gender and Environment Debate: Lessons from India', 1992) settles the disagreement with a third position, and it is the one to take. Her 'feminist environmentalism' accepts that women resist more because they are hit harder, and rejects Shiva's essentialism: the special relationship is not spiritual or biological, it is material, because the gendered division of labour assigns women fuel, fodder and water collection, so deforestation lengthens their working day. Interest, not essence.
- The other movements to know: Appiko (Karnataka, 1983, Panduranga Hegde, the southern Chipko); Silent Valley (Kerala, from the mid-1970s, led by the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad, project shelved in 1983 and declared a national park in 1984, the first Indian instance of a scientific-literary movement stopping a dam); Narmada Bachao Andolan (from 1985, Medha Patkar and Baba Amte, which forced the World Bank's withdrawal after the Morse Commission review in 1992 and lost in the Supreme Court in 2000); the Tehri dam movement (Bahuguna); Koel Karo; Plachimada against Coca-Cola in Kerala; Niyamgiri, where the Dongria Kondh's palli sabhas unanimously rejected bauxite mining after the Supreme Court's 2013 order referred the religious-rights question to them, the strongest case of FRA and PESA actually working; Sterlite at Thoothukudi (2018); Save Aarey in Mumbai.
- Typology to use: forest rights movements (Chipko, Jharkhand), anti-dam and anti-displacement (NBA, Tehri, Koel Karo), anti-pollution and anti-industry (Plachimada, Sterlite, Bhopal's survivors), anti-mining and tribal-rights (Niyamgiri, Bastar), and urban conservation (Aarey, Delhi's ridge). Their common feature is that the losers are local and the gainers are national, so the conflict is over scale.
- Amita Baviskar (In the Belly of the River, 1995) is the necessary complication for the NBA: the Bhilala Adivasis of the Narmada valley were not the ecological noble savages of the movement's own rhetoric, and the movement's urban leadership, media strategy and the villagers' own priorities did not always align. It is the best Indian study of the gap between a movement's frame and its base.
- 'Development versus environment' as a dialectic (2022) needs the institutional map, not just the slogan: the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, EIA notifications and their dilution, the Forest Rights Act, 2006 (which for the first time makes gram sabha consent a legal requirement for forest diversion), the National Green Tribunal (2010), the Brundtland definition of sustainable development (Our Common Future, 1987), and India's net-zero-by-2070 pledge at Glasgow (2021). Ulrich Beck's risk society supplies the theory: the goods of industrial modernity are distributed by class, and so are its bads, which is why the Indian environmental question is a distributive question.
- Chipko's Gandhian tone and its relevance to climate (2023) can be argued honestly: its transferable content is the principle of local control over local resources, the ethic of sufficiency against consumption, the non-violent repertoire, and the insistence that ecology and livelihood are one demand. What does not transfer is scale, since climate is a global commons problem that no village can hug a tree against.

KEY TERMS

Omnivores, ecosystem people, ecological refugees — Gadgil and Guha's three categories, in which Indian environmental conflict is a distributional fight among social groups, not between humanity and nature.

Environmentalism of the poor — Guha and Martinez-Alier's term for movements fought by people whose survival depends on the resource, framed in the language of justice rather than conservation.

Feminist environmentalism — Agarwal's position: women's greater environmental engagement follows from the gendered division of labour, not from an essential closeness to nature.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

- Discuss the 'Chipko movement' as an example of eco-feminism. (2014)
- Discuss the various forms of environmental movements started in India. (2016)
- Evaluate the nature and scope of anthropogenic influence on climate in India and also analyse the environmental movements arising out of it. (2020)
- In the face of rising global climatic concerns, how do you contextualize the relevance of Chipko Movement and its Gandhian tone? Answer analytically. (2023)
- Critically examine the dialectics between 'development and environment'. (2022)
- Has reduction of green cover affected ecological degradation leading to global warming? Elaborate your answer with illustration. (2019)

Ethnicity and identity movements

Ethnicity is not a thing groups have; it is a boundary they maintain. Once you say that, the Indian cases stop looking like ancient hatreds and start looking like what they are: competition for state resources conducted in the idiom that mobilises fastest.

- The three theoretical positions, named precisely. Primordialism (Clifford Geertz, Edward Shils): ethnic attachment is given by birth, blood, language and custom, and carries an ineffable coercive force. Instrumentalism (Paul Brass): elites select and objectify a symbol from the available markers and mobilise it to win state resources. Constructivism (Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, 1969): what matters is the boundary, not the cultural stuff it encloses, and the boundary persists even as the content changes.
- Barth is the most useful for India, because the Indian cases show boundaries hardening while the culture inside them converges: Meiteis and Kukis, or Bodos and Assamese, become more distinct politically while becoming more alike in schooling, dress and market participation. Ethnic distance is a political product, not a cultural residue.
- Sub-ethnicity and its politics (2017): every ethnic category splits under pressure, because the benefits of recognition are finite. Nagas divide into Angami, Ao, Sema, Konyak and the NSCN factions; Gorkhas into hill communities; STs into the more and less advanced tribes contesting a common quota; OBCs into forwards and most-backwards, which is what the Rohini Commission addresses. Recognition creates the incentive to subdivide.
- The northeastern movements and their settlements: Naga (NNC under A.Z. Phizo from the 1950s, then the NSCN factions, the 1997 ceasefire and the 2015 Framework Agreement, still unresolved); Mizo (MNF under Laldenga from 1966, ended by the Mizoram Accord of 1986, the most complete Indian insurgency settlement); Assam Movement (1979-85 under AASU and AAGSP over 'foreigners', ending in the Assam Accord of 1985 and, much later, the updated NRC of 2019); Bodo (ABSU under Upendra Nath Brahma, the BTC in 2003 and the Bodo Accord of 2020). The pattern to name: India accommodates through accords, autonomous councils under the Sixth Schedule, statehood and Article 371 exceptions, which is why so few insurgencies became secessions.
- Statehood movements are the domesticated form: Jharkhand (JMM, Shibu Soren, achieved in 2000), Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand (2000), Telangana (2014, as the twenty-ninth state), Gorkhaland (GNLF under Subhash Ghisingh producing the DGHC in 1988, then GJM under Bimal Gurung producing the GTA in 2011, still unresolved). Vidarbha, Bundelkhand and Harit Pradesh remain pending. The demand is usually about development share, jobs and cultural recognition, and it is made in the union's own vocabulary.

- Nativism is the urban variant: Shiv Sena (1966, Bal Thackeray) against South Indians and then North Indians in Bombay, the anti-Bengali and anti-Bihari agitations in Assam, and the periodic domicile-quota demands. Myron Weiner's *Sons of the Soil* (1978) gives the structure: a locally rooted group lagging in modern-sector credentials faces migrants who hold the jobs, and the demand becomes employment preference. It is competition over a modern resource, wearing ethnic clothes because ethnicity is the available organising boundary.
- 'Rising ethnocentrism is leading to conflict' (2021) should be answered by inverting the causation. Ethnocentrism is not usually the cause; it is the mobilised effect. The causes are competition over jobs, land, quota and political office; the effect is the hardening of a boundary and the production of an enemy. Say which resource, which elite and which boundary, and the answer writes itself.
- The 2014 question about tribal conflict camouflaging a struggle for advantage is exactly this thesis and it is well supported: the Bodo-Muslim and Bodo-Adivasi violence in western Assam is about land and council control; the Kuki-Meitei violence in Manipur from May 2023 turns on ST status, land rights in the hills versus the valley, and control of the state; the Naga-Kuki violence of the 1990s was over territory and taxation. Ethnicity supplies the recruitment mechanism, not the motive.

KEY TERMS

Ethnic boundary — Barth's point that the group is defined by the boundary it maintains, not by the cultural content inside it, so the boundary can persist while everything cultural changes.

Sub-ethnicity — Internal division within a recognised ethnic category, produced by competition for a finite pool of recognition and reservation.

Accommodation — The Indian state's characteristic response of accords, autonomous councils, statehood and Article 371 exceptions rather than suppression alone.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

- Rising 'ethnocentrism' is leading to conflict in our society. Assess this statement with appropriate reasons. (2021)
- Explain the issues relating to ethnicity and sub-ethnicity. (2017)
- 'Tribal conflicts based on ethnic differences often camouflage a struggle for political and economic advantage.' Substantiate with examples. (2014)
- Discuss the sociological aspects of movements for separate States. (2013)

Population dynamics: size, growth, composition, distribution

A warning before the numbers. The 2021 Census was postponed, so any figure after 2011 comes from a sample (SRS, NFHS, PLFS) or a projection, and each has a different definition and reference period. In this unit, an unsourced number is worse than no number. Name the source and the year, every time.

- The Census 2011 baseline, which is fixed history and therefore safe to quote: population 1.21 billion; decadal growth 2001-11 of 17.7 per cent, the sharpest fall in the growth rate since independence; density 382 per square kilometre; urban share 31.16 per cent; sex ratio 943 females per 1,000 males; child sex ratio (0-6) 918, the lowest since 1961; literacy 74.04 per cent (male 82.14, female 65.46).
- The demographic transition model (Warren Thompson, 1929; Frank Notestein, 1945) has four or five stages: high birth and high death rates, then falling deaths with births still high (the explosion), then falling births, then low and low. India entered stage two around 1921, the 'great divide' after which population grew

continuously because mortality fell while fertility did not. India is now in late stage three, approaching stage four.

- The transition is not a national event; it is a set of regional events at different dates, and that is the sociological content. Kerala and Tamil Nadu reached replacement fertility in the late 1980s and 1990s, driven by female literacy, age at marriage, health infrastructure and land reform rather than by contraception targets; Bihar and Uttar Pradesh got there decades later. NFHS-5 (2019-21) put India's total fertility rate at 2.0, below the replacement level of 2.1, against 2.2 in NFHS-4 (2015-16). India crossed the threshold without coercion, which is the argument against the target-driven model.
- Components of growth are three: fertility, mortality and migration. For India as a whole international migration is demographically minor (though economically major through remittances), so growth is fertility minus mortality. Internal migration does not change the national total but redistributes it, which is why the north-to-west-and-south corridor is the real story of Indian population distribution.
- Population momentum is why sub-replacement fertility does not mean a shrinking population. A young age structure means a large number of women entering reproductive age even at low fertility per woman, so India's population will keep growing for decades after fertility falls below replacement. Anyone who writes 'TFR is 2.0 so population will now decline' has misunderstood the mechanism.
- Composition: India's age structure is the youngest among large economies, which produces the demographic dividend, a temporary window in which the dependency ratio falls. It is a window, not a gift. It converts to growth only through education, health and job creation, and India's low female labour force participation and its skills deficit are exactly the reasons the dividend can be missed. And the window is regional: the southern states are ageing while the Hindi belt is still young, which sets up the fiscal and delimitation politics of the next decade.
- Distribution: the population is concentrated in the fertile plains (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal) and thin in the Himalaya, the desert and the northeast. The politically loaded consequence is that the states that controlled fertility fastest stand to lose parliamentary seats and tax share to those that did not, when delimitation is next carried out, which converts demography directly into federalism.
- 'Recent trends in the structure of migration' (2022): rural-to-rural remains largest in volume and is dominated by women's marriage migration, which is why headline migration data looks female and conceals the male circular stream; short-duration circular migration is undercounted because the Census uses place of last residence with duration cut-offs; the corridors run from Bihar, eastern Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal to Delhi, Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala and the Gulf; and the 2020 return exposed how completely this stream is invisible to the state.

Sources for Indian demographic data, and what each is for

Source	What it gives	Caution
Census (last: 2011)	Complete count: size, distribution, sex ratio, literacy, migration by last residence	2021 Census postponed; 2011 is now dated; misses circular migration
Sample Registration System (SRS)	Birth rate, death rate, IMR, MMR (special bulletins)	Sample-based; state estimates less robust
NFHS (last full round: NFHS-5, 2019-21)	TFR, sex ratio at birth, contraception, nutrition, spousal violence	Self-reported; different reference period from the Census
PLFS (annual)	Employment, informality, labour force participation	Definitional changes across rounds; not a population count

KEY TERMS

Demographic transition — Thompson and Notestein's model of movement from high birth and death rates to low ones as mortality falls first and fertility follows.

Population momentum — Continued growth after fertility falls to replacement, because a young age structure keeps sending large cohorts into reproductive age.

Demographic dividend — The temporary window of a low dependency ratio; realised only if education, health and employment absorb the working-age cohort.

The great divide (1921) — The Census year after which Indian population grew continuously, as mortality began falling while fertility stayed high.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

- Discuss recent trends in the structure of migration. (2022)
- Discuss the nature of regional variations in sex ratio in India. Stating reasons thereof. (2023)

Population policy, family planning and emerging issues

India was the first country in the world to adopt a state family planning programme, in 1952, and it took nearly fifty years and one authoritarian catastrophe to learn that the instrument was development, not the target.

- The policy arc: the National Family Planning Programme (1952), first clinic-based, then extension, then camp-based and target-driven from the 1960s. The Emergency (1975-77) turned it into coercive mass sterilisation, with quotas on officials and incentives that became conditions for ration cards, land allotments and housing, overwhelmingly aimed at poor, Dalit and Muslim men. The backlash defeated a government and set the programme back a generation; it was renamed Family Welfare in 1977 and vasectomy has never recovered as an accepted method, which is why the burden of contraception in India is almost entirely female.
- The correction: the Target-Free Approach (1996), then the Reproductive and Child Health programme (1997) after the ICPD at Cairo (1994), which shifted the global frame from population control to reproductive rights and women's autonomy. The National Population Policy 2000 set replacement fertility by 2010 as its goal (missed at the national level, achieved around 2019-21 per NFHS-5), constituted the National Commission on Population, and committed to voluntary and informed choice. NRHM (2005), now NHM, delivered the actual fertility decline through institutional delivery, the ASHA worker and Janani Suraksha Yojana; Mission Parivar Vikas (2016) targeted high-fertility districts, and Antara and Chhaya widened the method mix.
- The verdict on coercion versus development is the examinable one. Kerala and Tamil Nadu reached replacement without coercion, through female literacy, later marriage, child survival and health access; the states that pushed targets hardest did not do better. The lesson, and the reason two-child-norm proposals (disqualification from panchayat office, denial of benefits) are bad policy, is that fertility falls when children survive and women have alternatives, and that penalties fall on the poor and on the very children they claim to protect.
- Sex ratio, the sharpest emerging issue: Census 2011 gave 943 overall and 918 for the 0-6 group, the lowest child sex ratio since 1961. The regional pattern is the finding, because it inverts the usual development story: the worst ratios are in the prosperous, agriculturally advanced northwest (Haryana, Punjab, and the districts of western UP and Gujarat), not in the poorest states. Amartya Sen's 'missing women' (1990) put the global deficit at roughly 100 million and identified South and West Asia and China as the sites.

- Explaining that inversion is what the 2023 and 2021 questions want: patrilineal descent, patrilocal residence and village exogamy in the north make a daughter a transfer to another family; dowry makes her a cost that rises with the family's status; land is inherited by sons; hypergamy raises the cost of marrying a daughter well; and prosperity plus falling fertility plus cheap ultrasound is the lethal combination, because a family that wants two children and a son now has technology to guarantee it. Sen calls this the substitution of pre-natal for post-natal discrimination. The south and northeast, with bilateral or matrilineal kinship, cross-cousin marriage and bride-price, show better ratios at lower income, which proves the mechanism is kinship, not poverty.
- The legal response: the PNDT Act (1994), strengthened as the PCPNDT Act (2003) to cover pre-conception techniques, registration of clinics, a ban on disclosing the sex of the foetus and on advertising. Enforcement is against a willing buyer and a willing seller with no complainant, which is why convictions are rare. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (2015) attacks the demand side. The consequence literature (Ravinder Kaur and others) documents the male marriage squeeze, cross-region 'bride' migration (paro, molki) into Haryana and western UP, and the trafficking that follows.
- Mortality and reproductive health: SRS shows infant mortality falling from about 129 per 1,000 live births in 1971 to the high twenties by 2020, and the SRS special bulletin for 2018-20 put maternal mortality at 97 per 100,000 live births. Two sociological facts survive the improvement: female infant and child mortality exceeds male in parts of India, which is biologically anomalous and therefore evidence of discrimination in feeding and care-seeking; and anaemia among women and adolescent girls remains high across NFHS rounds despite everything else improving. Reproductive health concerns to name: unmet need for contraception, the female-only method mix, the MTP Act, 1971 as amended in 2021 (up to 24 weeks for specified categories, medical boards for substantial foetal abnormality) which is framed around the provider's protection rather than the woman's right, adolescent pregnancy, and cervical and breast cancer screening.
- Ageing: Census 2011 put the 60-plus at about 8.6 per cent (about 104 million); the NSO and UNFPA India Ageing Report 2023 projected the 60-plus share to reach roughly a fifth of the population by 2050. Three sociological features, not one: feminisation (women live longer, marry older men, and so age as widows, often without property); ruralisation (the young migrate, so the old are left in villages with the care-giver gone); and the collapse of the joint-family default without a welfare substitute. Elder care is disproportionately gendered, falling on daughters-in-law who are themselves ageing, which is the 2019 and 2025 question.
- The support architecture, public and private: family and kin as the default; the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 (a legal duty to maintain, with tribunals, and a provision to void a transfer of property where the transferee neglects the parent); the National Policy on Older Persons (1999); NPHCE (2010); the Integrated Programme for Senior Citizens and Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana; old age pension under NSAP; and, privately, old age homes (still stigmatised and mostly urban and middle-class), gated senior living, and religious institutions. The gaps to name: pension coverage is thin because most workers were informal, geriatric care is nearly absent outside metros, elder abuse is under-reported because the abuser is the carer, and there is no respite or training for care-givers at all.

Why the sex ratio is worse where India is richer

Factor	North and northwest	South and northeast
Kinship	Patrilineal, patrilocal, village exogamy	Bilateral or matrilineal; cross-cousin and close-kin marriage
Marriage payment	Dowry, rising with status	Bride-price in many communities; dowry spreading by imitation
Daughter's location after marriage	Distant, socially severed from natal kin	Nearby, continuing exchange with natal kin
Effect of prosperity	Buys sex-selective technology; dowry inflates	Weaker son preference to amplify
Net result (Census 2011 child sex ratio)	Lowest in Haryana, Punjab, western UP, parts of Gujarat	Better ratios at lower income levels

KEY TERMS

Missing women — Sen's estimate of the female deficit produced by discrimination in nutrition, health care and, later, sex selection.

Target-Free Approach — The 1996 shift away from method-wise sterilisation targets to decentralised, need-based family welfare after the Cairo conference.

Feminisation of ageing — The predominance of women among the elderly, who, marrying older men and living longer, age mostly as widows and often without property.

Marriage squeeze — The shortage of brides produced by a skewed sex ratio at birth, generating cross-region bride migration and trafficking.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

- What were the salient features of the India's Population Policy (2000)? How far its goals have been achieved? (2020)
- Underline the socio-cultural factors responsible for India's skewed sex ratio. (2021)
- Why is it necessary to implement PCPNDT Act in India? (2015)
- What are the emerging concerns on women's reproductive health? (2017)
- What are the causes and solutions for the low female sex-ratio in the DEMARU States of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal and Gujarat? (2017)
- Is 'ageing' an emerging issue in Indian society? Discuss the major problems of the old age people in India. (2021)
- What is 'Ageing'? Discuss the major problems of aged people in India. (2023)
- Why has 'active aging' become a global goal? Do you agree that the role of elderly care-giving is disproportionately gendered in developing countries? Why? (2019)
- What are the Private and Public network and support systems operative in Indian society for the aged? Suggest measures to curb down the challenges before care givers of the aged. (2025)
- What are the main causes of female mortality in India? (2013)

Crisis of development: displacement, environment, sustainability

Development in India has been financed partly by the people it displaced, and they were rarely the people it benefited. That transfer, not the dam or the mine, is the sociological object.

- Scale: Walter Fernandes's estimate, the most cited in this literature, puts development-displaced and project-affected persons since 1947 at roughly 60 million, with Adivasis, who are about 8 per cent of the population, at around 40 per cent of the displaced, and Dalits heavily over-represented among the rest. Treat it as his estimate and say so; there is no official cumulative count, which is itself the finding.
- The mechanism of over-representation is legal, not accidental. Adivasi land is often held under customary tenure, common land is unrecorded, and forest dwellers had no title before 2006, so compensation, which is paid on record of right, pays the titleholder and not the user. Land is compensated, livelihood is not, and the commons are compensated to nobody.
- Michael Cernea's Impoverishment Risks and Reconstruction model is the framework to use, and the eight risks should be named: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, increased morbidity and mortality, food insecurity, loss of access to common property, and social disarticulation. The last is the sociological one: resettlement scatters kin, caste, patronage and reciprocity networks, and no compensation package restores them, which is why cash compensation reliably fails.
- The cases to cite: Narmada, above all Sardar Sarovar, where the NBA forced the World Bank's Morse Commission review and the Bank's withdrawal in 1993 but lost in the Supreme Court in 2000 as the height was raised; Hirakud, Bhakra Nangal and Rihand as the first-generation dams whose oustees were still unsettled decades later; Singrauli, where people were displaced repeatedly by successive projects; the Bhilai and Rourkela steel townships; Singur and Nandigram (2006-07), where displacement for industry brought down a state government; Niyamgiri and Bastar for mining; Sardar Sarovar and Polavaram for the interstate variant. Nehru's 'temples of modern India' and his later admission before the oustees at Hirakud, that they might have to suffer in the interest of the country, are the honest bookends of the developmentalist position.
- The law changed after all this, and the change should be assessed rather than praised: the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 allowed acquisition for a 'public purpose' the state alone defined, with no rehabilitation obligation. The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 added a Social Impact Assessment, consent (70 per cent for public-private projects and 80 per cent for private ones), higher compensation multiples, and statutory rehabilitation and resettlement. The Forest Rights Act, 2006 recognised individual and community forest rights and made gram sabha consent necessary for diversion, and Niyamgiri showed it can work. PESA (1996) does the same in Fifth Schedule areas. The counter-current is the steady effort to dilute consent and SIA through exemptions and ordinances, so the sociological question is who has the power to write the exception.
- Sustainability, framed properly: the Brundtland Commission's Our Common Future (1987) defined sustainable development as meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs, and it deliberately joined equity to ecology. Rio (1992) gave common but differentiated responsibility, the SDGs (2015) gave the current frame, and India's Glasgow pledge (2021) commits to net zero by 2070. Ulrich Beck's Risk Society (1986) supplies the theory: modernity now distributes bads as systematically as goods, and while risk is in principle democratic, in practice exposure tracks class, which is why the poorest live next to the smelter.
- 'Is sustainable development possible in India' (2025) should be answered with the real trade-off rather than a slogan. The major issues are air quality in the Indo-Gangetic plain, groundwater depletion in the northwest, river pollution, solid waste, coastal erosion, biodiversity loss and heat stress. The genuine tension is between per-capita equity (India's per-capita emissions are far below the OECD's, so restraint asks the poor to pay for the rich's history) and the fact that the damage lands on Indians first. The measures with a sociological basis are the ones that change incentives for the resource user: community forest rights and community-managed irrigation, decentralised renewables, public transport, groundwater regulation, and paying for ecosystem services, rather than the enforcement-only approach that has failed for forty years.

- The single argument that ties this section to the whole paper: displacement is not a side effect of development but the mode by which the surplus for development was extracted, and the extraction was structured by caste, tribe and title. That is why the 2021 question ('displacement is inherent in the idea of development') should be answered yes with a qualification: inherent in this model of development, not in development as such, and the proof is that the FRA and Niyamgiri show a different model is legally possible.

KEY TERMS

IRR model — Cernea's eight impoverishment risks of displacement (landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalisation, morbidity, food insecurity, loss of commons, social disarticulation) and the reconstruction each requires.

Social disarticulation — The destruction of kin, caste and reciprocity networks by resettlement; the loss that cash cannot compensate.

Project-affected person — Someone who loses livelihood or access to a project's resource without necessarily losing titled land; systematically under-compensated because compensation follows record of right.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

- Citing some case studies, expand the concept of 'Development-induced Displacement'. (2023)
- The problem of displacement is inherent in the idea of development. Analyse the statement critically. (2021)
- Discuss development-induced displacement in the context of tribal uprising in India. Substantiate your answer with any one detailed illustration from India. (2018)
- Discuss some of the striking issues of development induced imbalances that need urgent attention. (2017)
- Write short note with a sociological Perspective: Effect of displacement through development on the rural landless and marginal farmers. (2015)
- Is it possible to have sustainable development in India? Cite major environmental issues and suggest a few measures to achieve the sustainability. (2025)
- Do you think that forced displacement of labourers has caused their deprivation and resultant inequalities during the recent past years? Elaborate. (2025)

Poverty, inequality, violence and conflict

The last sub-unit is a list, and it is examined as a list, so the way to lift an answer is to find the connection. All six items are the same fact seen from different angles: growth has redistributed opportunity upward while leaving the structures that assign life chances (caste, gender, land, education) largely intact, and the resulting friction takes whatever form the local order makes available.

- Poverty, deprivation and inequality are three different concepts, and the 2013 question asked for the linkage. Poverty is a shortfall against a threshold of income or consumption; deprivation is the lack of the substantive freedoms Sen calls capabilities, so a person can be above the line and still be deprived of health, literacy or voice; inequality is relational, a matter of the distance between groups. The linkage is that inequality reproduces deprivation, deprivation traps poverty, and caste and gender make all three heritable. Sen's *Poverty and Famines* (1981) supplies the mechanism: famine occurs through entitlement failure amid adequate food, so deprivation is about command, not about supply.
- The numbers, sourced properly. The Tendulkar committee (2009) put poverty at 21.9 per cent for 2011-12 and Rangarajan (2014) at 29.5 per cent for the same year, from the same survey. The 2017-18 consumption survey was not released, so official headcount ratios went dark until HCES 2022-23. NITI Aayog's National Multidimensional Poverty Index, built on NFHS data and the Alkire-Foster method, reported roughly 24.85

per cent multidimensionally poor in 2015-16 against about 14.96 per cent in 2019-21. On inequality, the World Inequality Lab study by Bharti, Chancel, Piketty and Somanchi (2024) put the top 1 per cent income share at about 22.6 per cent in 2022-23, among the highest recorded for India since 1922. Cite the study and the year or leave the number out.

- Violence against women: NFHS-5 (2019-21) found roughly three in ten ever-married women aged 18 to 49 reporting spousal physical or sexual violence, and a small minority of them seeking help of any kind. NCRB's Crime in India records registered cases, which measure reporting and police behaviour, not incidence, so a rise can mean better registration; say this before quoting NCRB. The forms to cover: domestic and dowry-related, sexual violence in public and at work, custodial and caste-based (where rape is an instrument of caste dominance and the conviction rate is lowest), honour crimes, trafficking, and online abuse.
- The 2024 question on whether legal provisions have curbed violence has a structured answer. Law has done real work: it created the categories (498A in 1983, 304B in 1986, the DV Act in 2005, POSH in 2013, the 2013 amendment after Verma), it named marital cruelty and workplace harassment as offences, and it gave the movement a language. It has not curbed the violence because the law addresses the event and not the structure that produces it: dowry, son preference, patrilocality, the wage gap, the unpaid care burden and women's economic dependence; and because enforcement runs through police, courts, panchayats and families who share the norm. Uma Chakravarti's brahmanical patriarchy explains why honour crimes are structurally rational for the perpetrators: caste is reproduced by endogamy, so an inter-caste love marriage is an attack on the caste, and khap panchayats punish it as such. The Manoj-Babli case (Karnal, 2010) and Shakti Vahini v. Union of India (2018) are the reference points.
- Caste conflict: Andre Beteille (Caste, Class and Power, 1965, Sripuram) gave the long-run mechanism. In the traditional order, inequalities were cumulative: the same people held ritual rank, land and power. Modern change disperses them, so a person may be high in one and low in another, and the resulting incongruence is what produces conflict. Conflict is a symptom of mobility, not of stagnation.
- That is why the 2014 observation is right that many caste conflicts occur between castes close to each other on the hierarchical scale, and it needs the mechanism, not just assent. Adjacent castes compete for the same land, the same quota, the same panchayat seat and the same clientele; they are physically proximate, so an assertion is visible daily; the dominant landowning OBC is the Dalit's employer, landlord and neighbour, not the distant Brahmin; and Dalit assertion (refusing begar, contesting a seat, riding a horse to a wedding, buying land) threatens the group immediately above, whose own status is insecure. Kilvenmani (1968), Belchi (1977), Karamchedu (1985), Tsundur (1991), the Ranvir Sena massacres at Bathani Tola (1996) and Laxmanpur Bathe (1997), Khairlanji (2006) and Una (2016) all fit the pattern. Anand Teltumbde's Khairlanji study and the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 with its 2018 amendment are the standard references.
- Ethnic conflict and communalism: distinguish them by boundary. Ethnic conflict runs on language, tribe or region and is usually about territory and quota (western Assam, Manipur since 2023, Naga-Kuki); communalism runs on religion and is about political community. Bipan Chandra (Communalism in Modern India, 1984) defines it as an ideology, not a fact, in three stages: communal nationalism (a religious community has common secular interests), liberal communalism (those interests differ from another community's) and extreme communalism (they are hostile and incompatible). Gyanendra Pandey (The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India, 1990) shows how colonial knowledge produced the category itself, so that every conflict came to be read as ancient religious antagonism.
- The two explanations of riots to set against each other. Paul Brass (The Production of Hindu-Muslim Violence in Contemporary India, 2003) argues riots are produced, not spontaneous: an 'institutionalised riot system' of specialists, rumour-mongers, converters of incidents and politicians exists in permanent

readiness and is activated when useful, and 'communal' is the label that makes the production invisible. Ashutosh Varshney (Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life, 2002) explains the variation instead, through paired comparison of Indian cities: what separates peaceful cities from violent ones is inter-communal civic engagement, and associational forms (business associations, unions, parties, clubs that cross the boundary) do far more work than everyday neighbourliness because they survive elite provocation. Read together: Brass explains the supply of violence, Varshney explains why the supply fails in some places. Veena Das (Mirrors of Violence, Life and Words) supplies the third register, how violence is absorbed into the everyday and into gendered bodies, drawing on 1947 and 1984.

- Religious revivalism and cultural revivalism: name the mechanism rather than moralising. Urbanisation and migration break community, so sects and cults supply substitute belonging (this is the honest answer to the 'mushrooming of sects' question); the market supplies religiosity as a consumable (televised discourse, mega-pilgrimage, the godman as brand); democratic competition makes religion an efficient mobilisation resource; and diaspora funding and social media scale it. Casanova's deprivatisation is the frame: this is not the failure of modernity but a form of it. Cultural revivalism (2017) is the softer variant, the recovery of performing arts, crafts, languages and festivals, which can be genuine cultural repair and can also be a politics of authenticity that decides who belongs. Both readings should be offered.
- Illiteracy and educational disparity, which closes the loop back to Section C(i): Census 2011 gave 74.04 per cent literacy, with female literacy at 65.46 per cent, Kerala at 93.91 and Bihar at 61.8, and the gaps track caste, tribe, gender, region and rural residence together, not separately. RTE (2009) solved enrolment and not learning: ASER's rural surveys have repeatedly found fewer than half of Class 5 children able to read a Class 2 text, and NEP 2020's NIPUN Bharat mission concedes the point. The disparity is not a residue awaiting expansion; it is produced by the tracked system, by the medium of instruction, by the private coaching market and by the social distance between teacher and first-generation Dalit or Adivasi learner. Education is thus both the challenge and the instrument, which is exactly where this paper began.

Two explanations of communal violence, held together

	Paul Brass (2003)	Ashutosh Varshney (2002)
Question asked	How is violence produced?	Why are some cities peaceful?
Key concept	Institutionalised riot system	Inter-communal civic engagement
Agency	Specialists, converters, politicians in permanent readiness	Associations that cross the communal boundary
Implication	'Spontaneous' is a cover story; look for the producers	Everyday neighbourliness is not enough; associational ties are
Use together	Explains the supply of violence	Explains where the supply fails

KEY TERMS

Cumulative and dispersed inequalities — Beteille's contrast: in the traditional order ritual rank, land and power coincided; modernity separates them, and the incongruence produces conflict.

Institutionalised riot system — Brass's network of specialists, rumour-mongers and politicians kept in readiness, which converts an incident into a riot when it is politically useful.

Inter-communal civic engagement — Varshney's explanation of communal peace: associational, not merely everyday, ties across the religious boundary.

Communalism — Bipan Chandra's ideology, in three stages, that a religious community has common secular interests, distinct from and finally hostile to another's.

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

- Explain the inter-linkages between poverty, deprivation and inequality. (2013)
- Discuss the emerging forms of 'inequalities' and 'acute poverty' as major challenges of social transformation in India. (2016)
- Explain the thematic linkages between 'Patriarchy' and 'Honour killing' in India, citing some recent cases. (2023)
- What are the possible underlying causes of the spurt of increased violence against women in public spaces in the last decade? (2014)
- To what extent have the legal provisions been effective in curbing violence against women in India? Give your argument. (2024)
- 'Many caste conflicts are between castes which are close to each other on the hierarchical scale.' Give a sociological explanation for this phenomenon. (2014)
- Which measures would you suggest for preventing caste conflicts in India? Justify your argument. (2025)
- Discuss the role of social media in communal polarisation. Suggest ways to combat it. (2021)
- What is Cultural Revivalism? Give some examples from performing arts, language dissemination and arts and crafts in recent times. (2017)
- 'Instead of promoting equality in society, the present system of education itself has contributed to increased socio-economic disparities.' Comment. (2022)

Last-mile revision

- Movements: M.S.A. Rao (reformist, transformative, revolutionary), Ghanshyam Shah (the survey), Oommen (charisma routinises or evaporates), Omvedt (NSM in India), Kothari (non-party political process).
- Old peasant movements fought for land; new farmers' movements fight for price. Omvedt reads the latter as NSM, Tom Brass as rich peasant ideology. Their silence on labour and caste decides the argument.
- Guha's Elementary Aspects (1983) is subaltern autonomy; Wolf and Alavi give the middle peasant thesis; Gough gives the typology of revolts; Dhanagare tested the class base.
- Women's movement: object (reform), subject (nationalism), autonomous (post-1974). Towards Equality (1974) is the hinge. Mathura to 1983; Bhanwari Devi to Vishaka (1997) to POSH (2013); Nirbhaya to Verma to 2013.
- Rege's Dalit feminist standpoint and Chakravarti's brahmanical patriarchy are the internal critique: endogamy is what joins caste to patriarchy.
- Ambedkar: caste is a division of labourers, not of labour; graded inequality; the shastric sanction must go, so inter-dining is a palliative. He rejected sanskritization because imitation concedes the hierarchy.
- Mandal (1979 report 1980, implemented 1990, upheld in Indra Sawhney 1992 with the 50 per cent ceiling and creamy layer) turned caste from stigma into resource claim. 103rd Amendment (2019, EWS) breaks both the ceiling and the rationale.
- Chipko: Guha reads it as a peasant subsistence movement, Shiva as ecofeminist, Agarwal's feminist environmentalism settles it on the gendered division of labour, not essence.
- Gadgil and Guha: omnivores, ecosystem people, ecological refugees. Guha and Martinez-Alier: environmentalism of the poor. Baviskar: the movement's frame is not always its base's priority.
- Ethnicity: primordialism (Geertz, Shils), instrumentalism (Brass), constructivism (Barth's boundary). Weiner's sons of the soil explains nativism as competition for modern-sector jobs.
- Census 2011 is the only safe complete count: 1.21 billion, 17.7 per cent decadal growth, sex ratio 943, child sex ratio 918, literacy 74.04 per cent, 31.16 per cent urban. The 2021 Census was postponed.
- NFHS-5 (2019-21): TFR 2.0, below replacement. Population momentum means growth continues anyway.
- Sex ratio is worst where India is richest, because northern kinship (patriliney, patrilocality, exogamy, dowry) plus prosperity plus ultrasound plus low fertility is the lethal combination. Sen: pre-natal replaces post-natal discrimination.
- Family planning: 1952 first in the world; the Emergency's coercion set it back a generation and killed vasectomy; Cairo 1994 to Target-Free (1996) to RCH (1997) to NPP 2000. Kerala proves development beats targets.
- Cernea's eight IRR risks; social disarticulation is the one cash cannot compensate. Fernandes's estimate of about 60 million displaced since 1947, roughly 40 per cent Adivasi, is an estimate, not an official count.
- Beteille: cumulative inequalities become dispersed, and the incongruence produces conflict. That is why adjacent castes fight.
- Brass explains the supply of communal violence (institutionalised riot system); Varshney explains where it fails (associational inter-communal civic engagement). Bipan Chandra defines communalism

as ideology in three stages.

Common errors to avoid

- Narrating movements chronologically without a typology or an explanation. Classify (Rao, Shah), then explain the mobilisation (relative deprivation, resource mobilisation, political opportunity, framing), then name the dispute.
- Merging the old peasant movements with the new farmers' movements. Different class base, different demand, different enemy. A movement for higher output prices led by employers of labour is not a poor peasant movement.
- Calling Chipko an ecofeminist movement without qualification. Shiva says so; Guha reads it as a peasant subsistence struggle; Agarwal rejects Shiva's essentialism and gives the material explanation. Give all three.
- Treating the Dalit and backward class movements as one. They are allies at the centre and adversaries in the village, where the dominant OBC is often the Dalit's employer and the perpetrator of atrocity.
- Quoting a demographic figure without its source or year. The 2021 Census was postponed, so anything after 2011 is SRS, NFHS, PLFS or a projection, each with different definitions.
- Writing that India's TFR is 2.0 so the population will now fall. Population momentum means growth continues for decades because of the age structure.
- Explaining the skewed sex ratio by poverty or illiteracy. The worst ratios are in the richest, most agriculturally advanced districts. The mechanism is kinship and dowry meeting technology, not want.
- Presenting NCRB crime figures as incidence. They measure registration and police behaviour; a rise can be an improvement in reporting.
- Saying displacement 'affects tribals more' without the mechanism. Customary tenure, unrecorded commons and pre-2006 absence of forest title mean compensation pays the titleholder, not the user.
- Answering caste conflict with 'caste rigidity persists'. Beteille's point is the opposite: conflict is the symptom of mobility, because inequalities that were cumulative have become dispersed.
- Treating communal riots as spontaneous outbursts of ancient hatred. That is Pandey's colonial construction and Brass's cover story; name the riot system and then use Varshney to explain the peaceful cases.
- Invoking 'social media causes polarisation' with no mechanism. Specify: lowered coordination cost, algorithmic homophily, rumour at scale, and a producer with an incentive. Media supplies the opportunity structure; it does not supply the motive.