

GS PAPER-2- GOVERNANCE-ISSUES RELATING TO DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF SOCIAL SECTOR/SERVICES RELATING TO HEALTH AND TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**Supreme Court of India's actions against misleading advertisements**

The article discusses the Supreme Court of India's actions against misleading advertisements for Ayurvedic, Siddha, and Unani products. It highlights the Ministry of AYUSH's attempts to evade quality regulations, urging stronger protections against fake medicines in the market.

What Actions Has the Supreme Court of India Taken Against Misleading Advertisements?

1. **Intervention Against Patanjali Ayurved:** The Supreme Court concluded a case against Patanjali Ayurved earlier this year for making unverified medicinal claims. The company was ordered to issue public apologies through media advertisements.
2. **Regulatory Bodies Activated:** Following the Court's intervention, state-level regulatory agencies began taking action against Patanjali Ayurved for its misleading claims.
3. **Enforcement of Rule 170:** The Court is addressing the Ministry of AYUSH's attempts to evade Rule 170 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules of 1945, which penalizes misleading advertisements of Ayurvedic, Siddha, and Unani products.
4. **Call for Stronger Regulations:** The Court emphasized the need for more robust quality control and regulatory oversight to prevent fake medicines from entering the market.

What Challenges Do Drug Manufacturers and Regulators Face?

1. **Balancing Quality and Cost:** Manufacturers must ensure high-quality standards, which raises production costs. At the same time, they need to keep drug prices affordable for patients. This balance is often difficult to achieve, leading to compromises in quality.
2. **Inconsistent Regulation:** There is a lack of uniformity in medicine quality inspections, particularly in the alternative medicines sector, which includes Ayurvedic, Siddha, and Unani products. This inconsistency allows substandard products to enter the market.
3. **Lax Regulatory Oversight:** The Ministry of AYUSH has allowed products to be registered under misleading categories, like licensing milk as "Ayurvedic proprietary medicine." This contributes to the problem of unregulated and potentially harmful products being sold to consumers.
4. **Political Influence:** Regulatory bodies face challenges in maintaining independence from political pressures, which can hinder their ability to enforce quality standards effectively.

GS PAPER-2- APPOINTMENT TO VARIOUS CONSTITUTIONAL POSTS, POWERS, FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF VARIOUS CONSTITUTIONAL BODIES**Issues with State Election Commissions (SECs)**

SECs were created by Articles 243K and 243ZA of the Indian Constitution, added by the 73rd and 74th Amendments in 1993. These articles give SECs the power to manage electoral rolls and oversee elections for panchayats and urban local governments.

Holding regular and fair elections for local governments is essential for grassroots democracy and effective service delivery in both cities and rural areas. Elections must be held before the end of the five-year term for local governments, just as seriously as national elections.

Despite the success of the national Election Commission, the 34 State Election Commissions (SECs) need major improvements to function effectively.

What are the issues with the functioning of State Election Commissions?

- 1) **Disempowerment of State Election Commission** – State governments frequently delay delimitation and elections for panchayat raj institutions. The CAG's report on Karnataka found that these delays are often due to the weakened authority of SECs, which harms local governance and erodes public trust.
- 2) **Findings on Urban Local Governments**– The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) found that 70% of urban local governments across 18 states—1,560 out of 2,240—did not have elected councils at the time of the audit.
- 3) **Survey Findings**- Janaagraha's 2023 survey found that only 11 of the 34 states and Union Territories have given SECs the power to handle ward delimitation. These areas represent just 35% of India's population based on the 2011 Census.

What should be the way forward?

- 1) **Enhancing Transparency and Independence-**

A) SECs should be as independent and transparent as the Election Commission of India, with the same level of authority over local elections. This is also affirmed by the Supreme Court in the 2006 **Kishan Singh Tomar case**.

B) A proposed reform is to establish a three-member SEC appointed by a committee consisting of the Chief Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Chief Justice of the High Court. This change could be implemented through an amendment to the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act.

2) **Fixed Intervals for Delimitation**- To avoid arbitrary delays by state governments, delimitation of ward boundaries and seat reservations should happen every ten years. This will help ensure timely elections and reduce delays caused by state decisions.

3) **Delimitation and Reservation Powers**- SECs should be given the authority to handle ward delimitation and seat reservations for local governments. They should also manage the reservation of key positions like mayors or presidents at regular intervals to prevent delays.

4) **Preventing Malpractices**- SECs should oversee elections for important local roles like mayors and presidents to prevent malpractice, as seen in the 2024 Chandigarh Municipal Corporation mayoral election.

GS PAPER 3 – INDIAN ECONOMY – EMPLOYMENT

Mismatch between India's GDP growth and employment growth

The article discusses India's economic growth and the mismatch between GDP growth and employment growth. It suggests policies to encourage labor-intensive sectors by adjusting the wage-rental ratio and addressing labor market rigidities to improve employment opportunities.

What is the current state of India's economic growth and employment?

1. India's GDP grew by 6.5-7% annually between 2011-12 and 2022-23, but employment only increased by 1.9% per year.
2. Unemployment rose from around 10 million in 2011-12 to over 19 million in 2022-23.
3. Low wages persist, with regular employees earning about ₹1,000 per month and casual laborers ₹4,500.
4. Labor-intensive sectors, like construction and textiles, employ around 240 million people.

What are the structural challenges in India's labor market?

How Can We Make Economic Growth More Labor-Intensive?

1. **Adjust Wage-Rental Ratio:** Lowering this ratio can make labor-intensive sectors like construction and textiles more profitable, encouraging investment. For example, these sectors already employ around 240 million people.
2. **Employment-Linked Incentives:** Implement a robust employment-linked incentive (ELI) scheme, like the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI), to promote job creation in labor-intensive sectors.
3. **Address Labor Market Rigidities:** Simplify labor laws and reduce the compliance burden, which currently hinders employment growth, by drawing on comparative evidence from different states.
4. Adjusting exchange rates to make imports more expensive and exports cheaper, though this could lead to accusations of currency manipulation.

What are the Challenges with Wages and Capital Costs?

1. **Low Wage Levels:** The wages in India are extremely low, with regular employees earning about ₹1,000 monthly, casual laborers earning ₹4,500 monthly, and self-employed individuals making around ₹7,000 monthly in 2022-23. These figures highlight the overall depressed wage scenario across various employment forms.
2. **Controlled Capital Costs:** Capital costs are indirectly controlled by the government's dominant borrowing and lending practices. For instance, the yield on 10-year government securities has remained stable at 7-7.5%, and the real interest cost of capital is around 2%, which is relatively low and sometimes negative, not reflecting the true scarcity of capital.

GS PAPER 3- GOVERNMENT BUDGETING

Women-Led Development and Budget Allocations

This year's Budget emphasizes women-led development with increased funding for women-focused programs. The Gender Budget Statement (GBS) for 2024-25 has reached a record 1% of GDP, exceeding ₹3 lakh crore. Previously averaging around 5% of the total budget, allocations for pro-women schemes have now risen to about 6.8% of total budget.

What are the Reasons for Increased Allocations?

A) **Introduction of Part 'C' in GBS**- This new section reports on schemes where less than 30% of the budget is allocated to women. For ex- the PM Kisan scheme, with ₹15,000 crore allocated (25% of its total), is now included in Part C.

B) **Increase in Part A Allocations**– Part A of the GBS, which includes schemes with 100% women-specific funding, saw a major increase. Previously, Part A accounted for 15-17% of total allocations until BE 2022-23. From BE 2023-24, it increased to nearly 40%, largely due to the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) now being fully included in Part A.

What are the Issues with Reporting in the Gender Budget Statement (GBS)?

1) **Over-Reporting**- Over-reporting is seen in programs like the PM Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), which helps entrepreneurs start non-farm micro businesses. The GBS lists ₹920 crore for PMEGP, showing 40% of its total budget, but does not clarify this allocation.

2) **Under-Reporting**-It affects the visibility of funds dedicated to women’s needs. For ex-

A) The full budget for the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) is now correctly listed in Part A of the GBS, showing that all its funds are for women and girls. Before, only half of the NRLM budget was reported in Part B.

B) The GBS shows more funding for the Ministry of Electronics & IT but misses reporting on pro-women allocations in schemes like PM Vishwakarma, SVANidhi, and Stand-Up India.

What steps can be taken to address these issues?

1) **Improving the Gender Budget Statement**-To reduce inaccuracies, the GBS should include clear explanations for each entry. This will ensure accurate accounting, aid in gender audits, and enhance outcomes for women in government programs.

2) **Effective Reporting and Spending**-Detailed reporting should not only show higher allocations for women’s development but also ensure that funds are spent on well-designed programs that meet women’s needs

GS PAPER 3 – SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY – AWARENESS IN THE FIELDS OF IT, SPACE, COMPUTERS, ROBOTICS, NANOTECHNOLOGY, BIOTECHNOLOGY

BioE3 Policy Initiative

The Cabinet has approved the BioE3 or Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment proposal, aimed at boosting biotechnology manufacturing. Though the budget is not yet specified, the initiative seeks to harness biotechnology for economic growth and environmental benefits.

Since 1986, India’s Department of Biotechnology has been key in advancing vaccines, diagnostics, and biological products, helping establish the country as a global leader in vaccine production.

What are the issues with Biotechnology Sectors?

1) Biotechnology has not had the same transformative impact as IT. While it encompasses high-value areas such as gene-modification, bioplastics, biomaterials, and advanced medical devices, India has not made significant progress in these fields.

2) India has considerable expertise and a skilled workforce, yet only a few biotechnology firms have gained global prominence due to their reliance on imported ingredients and devices for product development.

What are the Strategic Focus Areas of BioE3?

The BioE3 initiative encompasses six strategic verticals:

A) **Bio-Based Chemicals and Enzymes**: Development of sustainable chemicals and enzymes derived from biological sources.

B) **Functional Foods and Smart Proteins**: Creation of foods with enhanced health benefits and proteins with advanced functionalities.

C) **Precision Biotherapeutics**: Innovations in targeted therapies for personalized medicine.

D) **Climate-Resilient Agriculture**: Agricultural practices and technologies designed to withstand climate change.

E) **Carbon Capture**: Technologies aimed at capturing and reducing carbon emissions.

F) **Futuristic Marine and Space Research**: Exploration of biotechnology applications in marine environments and outer space.

What is the significance of BioE3 Policy Initiative?

1) **Transition to Sustainable Industries**– It will ensure transition from fossil-fuel-based industries to ones that use natural and sustainable resources. This is essential for tackling global issues like non-biodegradable waste and carbon emissions.

2) **Implementation and Collaborative Efforts**– The BioE3 policy aims to create bio-foundries and bio-AI hubs to encourage collaboration among biotechnologists. However, the success of this initiative depends on addressing persistent manufacturing challenges.

3) **Domestic Production and Global Competitiveness** -It will increase domestic production, cut import reliance, and improve global competitiveness.

What should be the way forward?

A) A supportive environment for long-term investment in biotechnology should be advanced.

B) The policy needs cooperation between Central and State governments and must receive financial and infrastructure support to succeed.

PRELIM FACTS

1. Bonda Tribe

Mangala Muduli, a **Bonda tribe student**, breaks barriers to study medicine, marking a historic achievement for his community.

About Bonda Tribe:

- **Bondas** – They are one of the **13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** found in Odisha.
 - Other 12 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) found in Odish – They are **Birhor, ChuktiaBhunja, Didayi, Dongria Kondh, Hill Kharia, Juang, Kutia Kandha, Lanjia Soura, Lodha, Mankirdia, Paudi Bhuyan and Soura.**
- **Location:** Malkangiri (Eastern Ghats Region).
 - About **12,000 Bondas live in 33 habitations** under administrative jurisdiction of four gram panchayats in **Malkangiri.**
- **Language:** Austro-Asiatic / Munda.
- **Techno-Economic Stages:** Shifting Cultivators.
- **Religion:** The Bondas are **polytheists**. They worship mostly the **deities of nature.**
- **Socio-Cultural Features:**
 - Bonda men wear a **narrow strip of loin cloth.**
 - Bonda women **do not cover their upper bodies** due to a taboo backed by legends.
 - Bonda women compensate by wearing heavy **necklaces of beads and brass.**
 - Women wear a short strip of loin cloth called **‘Nadi.’**
 - **Social order** is maintained by traditional functionaries: **Naik** (village chief), **Challan** (organiser of village meetings), and **Barik** (village messenger).

2. National Medical Register Portal

The Union Minister for Health, launched the National Medical Register (NMR) Portal, a comprehensive digital database for all registered allopathic (MBBS) doctors in India.

- The National Medical Register (NMR) is mandated under Section 31 of the National Medical Commission (NMC) Act, 2019.
- It requires the Ethics & Medical Registration Board (EMRB) of NMC to maintain an electronic registry of licensed medical practitioners, including their names, addresses, and qualifications.
- The NMR will be linked with doctors' Aadhaar IDs to verify authenticity and facilitate the verification process among State Medical Councils (SMCs).
- Its significance includes strengthening the digital healthcare ecosystem, ensuring transparent access to quality medical professionals, and consolidating public trust in healthcare.

3. She-Box Portal

Context: Government launched the **She-Box portal** to enhance **workplace safety for women.**

Features of She-Box Portal:

- **Centralized Platform:** For registering and monitoring **complaints of sexual harassment** at the workplace.
- **Complaint Tracking:** Allows women to file complaints and **track their status.**
- **Timely Redressal:** Ensures time-bound processing of complaints by **Internal Committees.**
- **Significance:**
 - Addressing workplace-related sexual harassment **efficiently and securely.**
 - Creating a **safer and more inclusive** work environment for women.

- Complaints can be safely registered **without personal information** being publicly accessible.

4. Vadhavan Port

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of **Vadhvan Port project** worth around ₹76,000 crore in **Palghar, Maharashtra**.

About Vadhvan Port Project:

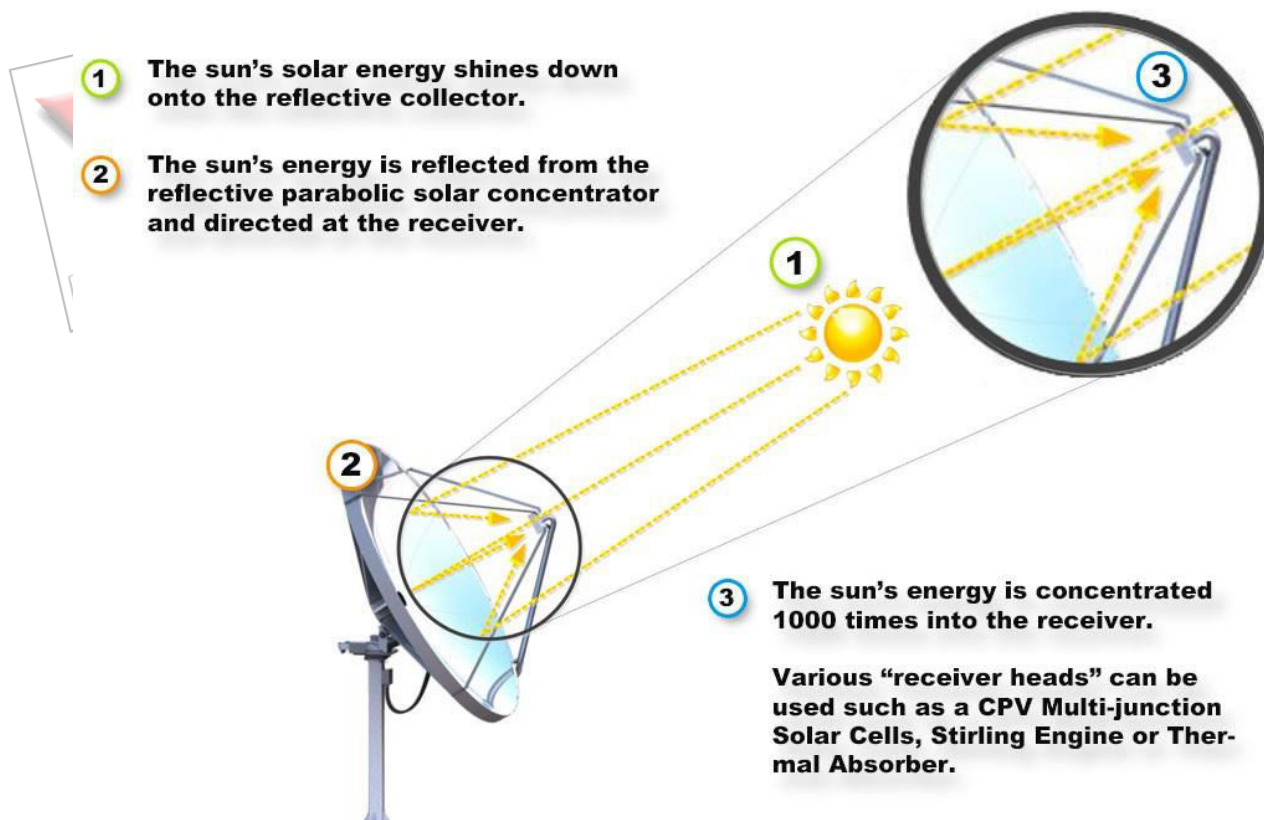
- **Aim:** To be among the **top 10 ports** globally.
- **Capacity:** It will have a handling capacity of **23.2 million Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEUs)**.
- **Design:** A **world-class maritime gateway** to boost India's trade and economic growth.
- **Salient Features:**
 - Capable of catering to **large container vessels** and **ultra-large cargo ships**.
 - Offers deeper drafts and **direct connectivity to international shipping routes** reducing transit times and costs
 - Equipped with **state-of-the-art technology** and **infrastructure**, the port will feature **deep berths**, efficient cargo handling facilities and **modern port management systems**.
 - Incorporates **sustainable development practices**, adhering to stringent **ecological standards**.

5. Solar paraboloid technology

Solar paraboloid technology, a form of concentrating solar power (CSP), is emerging as a promising renewable energy solution.

It uses parabolic mirrors to focus sunlight onto a receiver, generating high temperatures (up to 300°C) for electricity or industrial heat.

This technology offers higher efficiency than traditional photovoltaic systems, potentially lowering electricity costs.



However, challenges such as high upfront costs and technical complexity remain.

6. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Meet

Pakistan invites PM Narendra Modi to attend SCO's Council of Heads of Government meeting in Islamabad in October.

SCO Chairmanship:

- **Chairmanship:** Pakistan holds the **rotating chairmanship of the SCO** Council of Heads of Government (CHG).
- **India's Chairmanship:** India hosted the **SCO Summit last year**, organized in a virtual mode, and attended by **Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif**.
 - However, Pakistan's then **Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari** visited India in May 2023 to attend a meeting of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers in Goa.
 - It was the first Pakistani Foreign Minister to visit India in **almost 12 years**.

About Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- **Establishment:** On June 15, 2001, in Shanghai.
- **Members:** Belarus, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- **Observer Status:** Afghanistan and Mongolia.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. Discuss India's potential role in mediating the Russia-Ukraine conflict. What challenges does India face in adopting the stance of neutrality.

India's role in the **Russia-Ukraine conflict** is viewed as a potential mediator due to its historical ties with both nations. While India has maintained a **neutral stance**, emphasising diplomacy and dialogue, it faces challenges due to its **strategic dependencies**. As of **2023**, India **imports** over **60%** of its defence equipment from Russia, complicating its mediation prospects.

India's Potential Role in Mediating the Russia-Ukraine Conflict:

- **Leveraging Neutrality for Mediation:** India's neutral stance and strong diplomatic relations with both Russia and Ukraine position it as a potential mediator in the conflict, advocating for dialogue and peace.
For instance: India's consistent call for **peaceful resolution** at the **United Nations** highlights its diplomatic influence and ability to foster dialogue between conflicting parties.
- **Historical Precedents in Conflict Mediation:** India has a history of mediating international disputes, such as its role in the **1950 Austria-Soviet Union conflict**, where it helped negotiate a troop withdrawal agreement.
For example: India mediated between **Austria** and the **Soviet Union**, ensuring Austria's neutrality in exchange for the withdrawal of Soviet troops, demonstrating India's diplomatic capabilities.
- **Advocacy for Peace:** India consistently advocates for peace, dialogue, and the respect of territorial sovereignty, aligning with international calls for a diplomatic solution.
For instance: In **2022**, India urged **immediate cessation of hostilities** in **Ukraine**, emphasising territorial integrity, diplomacy, and dialogue at the UN, advocating peaceful conflict resolution aligned with international law.
- **Economic Diplomacy and Humanitarian Aid:** India can enhance its role by providing humanitarian aid and advocating for economic stability in Ukraine, supporting **rebuilding efforts** while maintaining a neutral position.
For example: India sent **26,000 tonnes** of **wheat** to **Ukraine** in **2022** as humanitarian aid, showcasing its commitment to peace and stability.
- **Promoting Multilateral Engagements:** India can leverage platforms like the **United Nations** and **G20** to encourage multilateral discussions for conflict resolution, emphasising global cooperation and dialogue.
For example: India's **G20 presidency** in **2023** emphasised peace and stability, calling for a **collective approach** to address global conflicts, including the Russia-Ukraine crisis.

Challenges India Faces in Adopting a Neutral Stance:

- **Perception of Bias Towards Russia:** India's **historical** and **strategic ties** with Russia, particularly in defence and energy sectors, create a perception of bias, undermining its credibility as a neutral mediator.
For example: India's **abstention from UN votes** condemning Russia's actions has raised concerns about its neutrality and alignment in the conflict.
- **Dependency on Russian Defence Supplies:** India's heavy reliance on Russian defence equipment poses a challenge to maintaining a neutral stance, as it must balance **strategic needs** with **diplomatic efforts**.
For example: Over **60%** of **India's military equipment** is sourced from Russia, making a completely neutral stance diplomatically challenging.
- **Geopolitical Pressures from Western Allies:** India faces pressure from Western allies, especially the United States, to take a **stronger stance** against Russia, complicating its neutral position.
For instance: The **U.S.** and **European Union** have urged India to reduce its reliance on Russian energy imports, aligning more closely with Western policies.
- **Domestic Political Dynamics and Public Opinion:** Internal political pressures and public opinion can influence **India's foreign policy**, making a balanced stance more complex in the context of global expectations.
- **Navigating Regional Security Concerns:** India's security concerns, especially regarding China and Pakistan, necessitate a **cautious approach**, balancing its diplomatic stance without antagonising key strategic partners.
For instance: The **China-Russia partnership** and **Pakistan's shifting alliances** require India to carefully manage its relations without jeopardising its regional security interests.

India's potential as a mediator in the Russia-Ukraine conflict hinges on its ability to navigate complex geopolitical landscapes while maintaining a truly neutral stance. Moving forward, India's focus should be on leveraging its **diplomatic channels**, fostering **multilateral cooperation**, and **balancing strategic interests** to contribute meaningfully to **global peace** efforts. By doing so, India can solidify its role as a responsible global player in **conflict resolution**.

MCQ

- The National Medical Register (NMR) Portal, launched by the Union Minister for Health, is a digital database for which of the following?
 - Registered nurses in India
 - Registered Ayurvedic practitioners in India
 - Registered allopathic (MBBS) doctors in India**
 - Registered medical technicians in India
- What is the primary purpose of Bharat Biotech's Hillchol (BBV131) vaccine?
 - To prevent tuberculosis
 - To treat dengue fever
 - To combat cholera**
 - To prevent malaria
- With reference to the recent ban on fixed-dose combination (FDC) drugs by the Indian government, consider the following statements:
 - FDCs are a combination of two or more drugs in a single dose, always used to enhance therapeutic effects.
 - The ban on 156 FDC drugs was due to concerns over their irrational use and lack of therapeutic benefit.
 - Overuse of FDCs has the potential to contribute to global health issues such as antibiotic resistance.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

 - Only one
 - Only two**
 - All three
 - None
- Consider the following statements regarding Solar Paraboloid Technology:
 - It is a type of photovoltaic technology that directly converts sunlight into electricity.
 - It uses parabolic mirrors to concentrate sunlight onto a specific point to generate high temperatures.
 - This technology is known for its high efficiency compared to traditional photovoltaic systems.

- How many of the above statements is/are correct?
- a) Only one
b) Only two
c) All three
d) None
5. Consider the following statements about perpetual bonds:
1. Perpetual bonds are considered part of the equity capital of a company.
 2. They provide interest payments indefinitely, without a fixed maturity date.
 3. The principal of perpetual bonds is repaid after a set period, usually 30 years.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- a) 1 and 2 only
b) 2 only
c) 1 and 3 only
d) 2 and 3 only
6. With reference to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), consider the following statements:
1. India is one of the founding members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).
 2. English is an official language of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).
 3. SCO covers approximately 80% of Eurasia and 40% of the world population.
- How many of the statements given above are correct?
- a) **Only one**
b) Only two
c) All three
d) None
7. With reference to SHe-Box portal, consider the following statements:
1. It serves as a unified resource to expand employment opportunities for women, aiming to enhance the Female Labor Force Participation Rate (FLFPR).
 2. It is accessible to women working in both government and private sectors.
- Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?
- a) 1 only
b) **2 only**
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. Consider the following statements:
1. A fixed-dose combination (FDC) medicine refers to a pharmaceutical product that contains a single active ingredient formulated in different strengths.
 2. In India, FDCs can only be approved by the central government.
- Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?
- a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
9. Consider the following statements:
1. The Constitution mandates that local government elections must be held before the end of their five-year term.
 2. State Election Commissions (SECs) are at the same level with the Election Commission of India (ECI) in terms of independence and transparency.
- Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?
- a) **1 only**
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
10. Consider the following statements:
1. Lateral entry refers to the appointment of professionals from the private sector, public sector undertakings, and academia to senior and middle management positions in the government.
 2. The concept of lateral entry was recommended by NITI Aayog to enhance governance.
- Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?
- a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2