



# Conquer Mains Challenge - Day 3

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## GS-1:

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**Related Syllabus:** Art and Culture- music.

### **Static part- Indian Music:**

**Two main schools of classical music** - Hindustani and Carnatic-continue to survive through oral tradition being passed on by teachers to disciples. This has led to the existence of **family traditions** called **gharanas and sampradayas**.

#### **What is Hindustani Music?**

- Hindustani Sangeet is usually considered to be **a mixture of traditional Hindu musical concepts and Persian performance practice**.
- Hindustani music is **based on the raga system**. A raga is a melodic scale, consisting of notes from the basic seven nodes known as sa, re, ga, ma pa, dha, and ni.
- **Khyal and Dhrupad** are 2 major types of compositions within the Hindustani genre.
- There are many **musical instruments** that are associated with Hindustani sangeet. The most famous are the tabla, sitar, sarangi, santur, and the sarod.

#### **Types of Hindustani Music and meaning (No need to mug. Just have a brief overview):**

- Dhrupad - Effort from vocal chords and lungs.
- Dhamar - Play of Krishna during holy.
- Khayal - Delicate, romantic and based on imagination.
- Thumri - Romantic religious literature.
- Tappa - Quick turn of phase.
- Bhajan - Religious devotional songs.
- Tarana - Syllables sung together to set a rhythm.
- Sabadas - Sikh religious songs.
- Qawali - Indo-Muslim repertoires of songs in groups.
- Ghazal - Independent couplets on love and devotion.

## What is Carnatic Music?

- Carnatic Sangeet is *found in the South Indian states* of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Purandardas** is considered as the father of Carnatic Music.
- Carnatic music acquired its present form in the 18th century under the "*trinity of Carnatic music; Thyagaraja, Shamashastri, and Muthuswami* composed their famous songs.
- It is also *based upon a system of ragam (rag) and thalam (tal)*.
- **Musical instruments** veena, violin, mridangam, nadaswaram, and the tavil.
- **Kriti** is a dominant element.

## Types of Carnatic Music and meaning(No need to mug. Just have a brief overview):

- RagamTanam-Pallavi - Elaborate rhythmic and melodic variation in unmeasured sense.
- Kriti-Kirthanai - Most popular type which refers to devotional music laced with poetic beauty.
- Varnam - Performed at the beginning of a concert; a completely composed piece.
- Padam - Slower tempoed love songs referring to the human yearning for the adored god head.
- Javalis - Faster tempoed love songs with direct description of human love.
- Tillana - Meaningful phrases are interspersed with variety of meaningless syllables.

Differences	<u>Hindustani</u>	<u>Carnatic</u>
Origins:	North Vedic tradition	South Bhakti tradition
Raga:	6 principal ragas known as bandish and 10 modes or thaats	Scales of 7 notes containing seminotes and 72 modes or melankara
Style:	Gharanas singing style	More vocal style even when played by instrument
Words:	Formal and not clearly articulated	Words important in order to express emotions
Improvisation:	Specific format as to how improvisation takes place	Improvisation is less restricted
Tempo:	Slow with long note values increasing in intensity	Faster tempo that remains more constant with shorter note values
Ornamentation:	Is used to enhance emotion	There is an oscillation between the notes to create spiritual and more intellectual performance
Instruments:	Tabla, Sarangi, Sitar, Santoor and clarinet.	Veena, Mridangam, Mandolin and Jalatarangam.

## Flow of Thoughts:

- Key features of Carnatic Music.
  - Key features of Hindustani Music.
  - Differences and similarities.
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**Related Syllabus:** Social Issues | Salient features of Indian Society.

## **Lynching issue:**

### **Why in News?**

The Supreme court has asked Parliament to consider passing a special law on lynching. This is essential to protect citizens and ensure that the “pluralistic social fabric” of the country holds against mob violence.

As the grim threat of lynching casts a terrifying shadow over large swathes of the country, directions from India’s Supreme Court to all governments to take steps to prevent what it described as “horrendous acts of mobocracy” can only be welcomed.

### **What is mob lynching?**

Mob Lynching means killing of someone by a mob for an alleged offence without following any principles of jurisprudence or due process of law.

A lynching is a majority way of telling a minority population that the law cannot protect it. Lynching served the broad social purpose of maintaining superiority in economic, social, cultural and political sphere.

### **Why there is rise mob lynching cases?**

- With modernity, there is growth of individualism and an erosion of associational life.
- Associations encourage us to appreciate others culture and moderate our aggressive instincts.
- Mob has no face. This impunity leads mob to take extreme steps.
- Weakening of civil society organizations and other organic institutional links.
- A culture of political mobilization that uses violence as a tool of politics.
- Indifferent attitude towards other cultures and religions.
- Indifferent attitude of Police leads people to take law in their own hands (e.g. Tamil Nadu Lynching).
- In 21% of the cases, the police filed cases against the victims/survivors. (India spend report).
- Rise in penetration of Social media and its usage to spread rumors and hatred (Bangalore Exodus of North east people).
- Growing Prevalence of Fake news and Hate News (Dadri Lynching). There are instances of organized hate campaigns as well.
- According to ‘India spend’ 52% of attacks in last 8 years is based on rumors.

- The silence of political class. They are ineffective to create deterrence through strong law.
- Ineffective and delayed justice (Assam Lynching of rape accused).
- High Unemployment rates leave millions of youth unengaged. (ManesarMaruti Plant Incident).

### ***Failure of Policing:***

- There is a recurring pattern in police action too. If present, even as the slaughter of innocents unfolds, they don't act, pleading later that they were outnumbered.
- In most cases, they come in too late to save lives, and very often they register crimes against the victims and drag their feet to charge and arrest the attackers.
- After the lynching, police often tries to record the incident as a crime of cow smuggling, animal cruelty, rash driving and road rage.
- In its investigations, the police never cordon off the site of the lynch attacks: Even hours after the crime, people walk over the ground still splattered with blood or burned flesh.
- This is not a shoddy investigation. It is deliberate (and criminal) destruction of evidence which could have been used against the killers.
- The police in almost every case, instead, registers crimes against the victims.

### ***Lack of clarity in legal aspects:***

Lynching is ***not officially a crime in India***. But if state administrations choose to clamp down, the ***Indian Penal Code*** already punishes all the criminalities perpetrated by lynch mobs.

***Section 223(a) of the Code of Criminal Procedure*** also enables a group of people involved in the same offence to be tried together.

### ***Misuse of social media platforms:***

A debate has been framed around the growing use of technology by the "ignorant" masses and the responsibilities of a technology platform.

### ***Impact of mob lynching:***

#### ***On State:***

- It is against the values upheld in constitution of India.
- Every individual have certain fundamental rightsany violence would be curtailment of this right.
- No regard to law and order in society.
- This may lead to growth of feeling of sub-nationalism.
- Radical and extremists organisations such as ISIS etc could take leverage of atmosphere created by such incidents.

### **On Society:**

- This impact solidarity of society and idea of Unity in diversity.
- This create an atmosphere of majority v/s minority.
- It could aggravate caste, class and communal hatred.
- This may increase the extent of domestic conflict and subsequent militarization.
- Such acts shows loss of tolerance in the society and people are being swayed by emotions, prejudices etc.

### **On Economy:**

- This impacts both foreign and domestic investment thereby adversely affecting sovereign ratings. Many International agencies warned India against mob lynching incidents.
- It directly hampers internal migration which in turn affects economy.
- Large resources deployed to tackle such menaces induces extra burden on state-exchequer.
- These incidents would led to selective distribution of investment which may impact regional balance.

### **Why anti-lynching law is necessary?**

- It fills a void in our criminal jurisprudence.
- At present there is no law that criminalises mob killings. The Indian Penal Code has provisions for unlawful assembly, rioting, and murder but nothing that takes cognisance of a group of people coming together to kill (a lynch mob).
- Under Section 223 (a) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), to prosecute together two or more people accused of the same offence committed in the course of the "same transaction".
- But the provision falls far short of an adequate legal framework for prosecuting lynch mobs.

### **Steps taken so far:**

- Government Launched "*Ekbharatshreshtabharat*" for sustained and structured cultural connect between citizens of different regions.
- Civil society Launched '*NOT IN MY NAME*' *campaign*: to protest against the cow vigilantism.
- Civil society also lunched *National Campaign Against Mob Lynching (NCAML)*. It also known as 'Masuka', short for ManavSurakshaKanoon (law to protect humans).
- *A draft of the proposed legislation* is currently up on the Internet, awaiting suggestions from the public.

### **What needs to be done?**

- Government should *criminalizes the act of mob violence*.
- *Awarding of penalties on public servants* for failing to investigate properly due to malafide intentions or wilful neglect of their duties.

- **Establishment of Special Courts** for the trial of mob violence.
- **Empowering local law enforcement officials** to take pre-emptive action.
- There needs to be **continued responsiveness on part of the local administration** in dealing with anxiety and suspicion in local communities.
- Create a **mechanism to insulate investigations of communal violence from political interference**.
- **Community Sensitisation and awareness** through multi-media campaigns. Counter-information campaign to check fear-mongering and fake news.
- **Strengthen civil society Organisation**. This helps to nurture solidarity. Re-orient values and traditional principles towards enhancing compassion, empathy and fraternity among people.
- **Find productive engagement avenues** for large unemployed or under-employed youths. A targeted region specific approach is need of the hour as reasons for such acts vary widely across space.
- **Police reforms** are vital along with sensitization drive to make transformational changes in their behavioural and attitudinal approach towards tackling of crime.

### **Way ahead:**

If there is any new law we need to prevent the spread like an epidemic of this new scourge of targeted hate crime, of lynch mobs, it requires only one law, and this is the creation of a crime of dereliction of duty and communal partisanship by public officials. The challenge, ultimately, is not of law, but of our collective morality and our collective humanity.

### **Add- ONs for Mains- Can also be used in Ethics answers:**

- Moral responsibility is an individual decision and moral accountability is a culture.
- Mahatma Gandhi called off the Non-Cooperation Movement against the British because some of his supporters turned violent in Chauri Chaura.
- Martin Luther King Jr. repeatedly called for compassion and hope despite facing vicious racist insults.
- More recently, Nelson Mandela adopted the approach of reconciliation to bring about justice, despite being a brutalised victim of apartheid.
- A culture of accountability can be created if the society and the state are guided by a moral compass.

### **Flow of Thoughts:**

- What is Mob Lynching?
- Why there is rise in lynching cases?
- Who is to be blamed?
- Impacts- on state, society and economy.
- What needs to be done? - immediate and long term measures.



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## **GS-2:**

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**Related syllabus:** Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

Comparison of the Indian constitutional scheme with that of other countries

Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

### **Lateral entry into Civil Service:**

**Why in News?** Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has invited applications for 10 senior level positions in the Departments of Economic Affairs, Revenue, Commerce and Highways among others.

**Aim:** to bring in expertise from the private sector individuals and infuse talent into the country's bureaucracy.

**Who is eligible?** Individuals working at comparable levels in Private Sector Companies, Consultancy Organisations, International/Multinational Organisations with a minimum of 15 years' experience".

Individuals working in central public sector undertakings, autonomous bodies, statutory organisations, research bodies and universities.

Minimum age of 40 years and minimum qualification of graduation from a recognised university or institute while higher qualification will be an added advantage.

**What does this mean?** This paves the way for lateral entry into civil service.

### **What is Lateral Entry into Civil Services?**

Traditionally to get into Civil Services like IAS, IPS etc. a candidate has to clear the three stages of UPSC Civil Services Exam- Preliminary, Main Exam, and Interview. One-third of the vacancies in Indian Civil Services is also filled by promotion of eligible candidates working in different State

Services.

Lateral entry into civil services - means bypassing these two options. Now the proposal is for selecting private individuals for appointment in the ranks of deputy secretary, director and joint secretary.

### ***Do we need lateral entry?***

#### ***Yes, and Why?***

**Shortage in numbers:** There is an overall 20% shortfall of IAS cadre officers alone in 24 state cadres. The Baswan Committee (2016) has shown how large states such as Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have a deficit of 75 to over 100 officers and their unwillingness to sponsor officers to go to the Centre on deputation is understandable.

**Expertise and target oriented:** Outside talent from the private sector is more likely to be target-oriented, which will improve the performance of the government. Also, more competition will encourage career civil servants to develop expertise in areas of their choice.

**Improved governance:** Lateral entry infuses fresh energy and thinking into an insular, complacent and often archaic bureaucracy. It enables the entry of right-minded professionals and the adoption of best practices for improving governance.

#### ***No, and Why?***

**Disturbs the delicate balance:** It creates disconnect between policymaking and implementation and will also result in inequitable sharing of the benefits and burdens of government service, with permanent civil servants left to bear the burden of "humble" implementation and lateral entrants getting access to "glamorous" policymaking positions, without having roughed it out in remote and rural India in the rough and tumble of Indian democracy.

**Deters the available talent:** The best talent can be attracted only if there is reasonable assurance of reaching top level managerial positions. This is true for government service as much as the private sector. Any dilution of the potential horizon for growth would discourage competent and motivated people. Coupled with unattractive salary scales and non-entitlement to defined pension since 2004, this would become a potent trinity to deter talented persons from aspiring to civil service careers.

**Discontent among the government personnel:** Large-scale lateral induction would, in fact, amount to a vote of no-confidence in the government personnel management system, rather than in the highly dedicated, motivated and talented officers who have chosen to join the civil services.

**Difficulty in assessing performance:** The difficulty in measuring performance in government is another obstacle to be reckoned with. It is not easy to assess the performance of a secretary to the government, given the sheer complexity and amorphous nature of the job. The induction of lateral entrants would not by itself suffice for better performance orientation and enhanced accountability. It would be as difficult to measure the performance of lateral entrants as it would of career civil servants.



### **Concerns associated with the idea:**

- India has **a high corrupt system**, particularly in states. So to allow private people for short term of 2-3 years where they can leave without responsibility, there cannot be any disciplinary control over them or the actions taken.
- The **fairness of the selection process**- the process of recruitment should not be corrupt. But the way systems work in India, unfortunately, the initial wave of enthusiasm degenerates into nepotism.
- It will be difficult for the country to **bring in private players for two-three years and then entangling in legal matters** over the decisions taken by them.

### **Procedure and practices in other countries:**

#### **In UK:**

- There are short term lateral entrants allowed to come and work for government and leave.
- There is a culture of trust but beyond it there is a regulatory mechanism and apparatus put in place to ensure there is no misuse of role assumed when in government.
- So, with adequate safeguards, lateral entry can be made possible in India.

#### **In US:**

- It has revolving door system. Here, the lawmakers and the lobbyists switch jobs from time to time.
- In this system, more the top position, more is the influence in the government and its policies.
- The lucrative positions after government stints are arms dealer, media lobbying, pesticides and chemicals etc.

### **Alternatives:**

- Instead of considering lateral entry into civil service, the government could opt for more rigorous performance appraisal and improved personnel management.
- It could **hire outside talent to head certain pre-identified mission-mode projects and public-sector entities** where private-sector expertise could be invaluable — like in the case of Nandan Nilekani and Aadhaar.
- Leadership positions in large infrastructure projects could be filled through **open competition between civil servants and market talent**. The recruitment and service rules for such posts have to be clearly defined and made incentive-compatible, and the processes managed transparently.
- A **credible statutory agency** like the Union Public Service Commission or an autonomous agency like the Bank Board Bureau, established to hire heads of public-sector banks, should be entrusted with the responsibility of recruitment.

### **Way ahead:**

All this, coupled with competition among both serving bureaucrats and market participants, would help avoid many of the aforementioned pitfalls associated with general lateral entry. Further, this would be in line with the lateral entry strategy adopted by more developed parliamentary democracies like the UK. Such an approach would have to be complemented with liberalised norms that allow civil servants to work outside government — with multilateral agencies, nonprofits and corporations — for short periods. By enabling exposure to market practices and fresh ideas, this, as much as infusing outside talent into government, is likely to help achieve the objectives of lateral entry itself.

### ***Add- ONs for Mains:***

The idea of lateral induction is not new. It was recommended by the 2nd Administrative Reform Commission.

### ***Flow of thoughts:***

- What is Lateral entry? Why is it in News?
  - Why do we need it? Pros and Cons, challenges.
  - Comparison with other countries.
  - Do we have any alternative?
  - Overall Civil Service reforms needed.
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***Related Syllabus:*** Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary Ministries and Departments of the Government; pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their role in the Polity.

### ***Diminishing role of Parliament:***

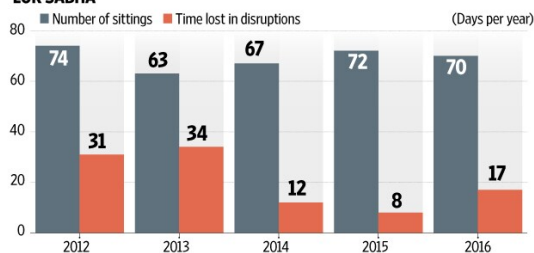
#### ***Why in News?***

The significance of the parliament has diminished in stature and significance. Indeed, it is now more a symbol than the substance of a vibrant democracy that has taken deep roots among our people.

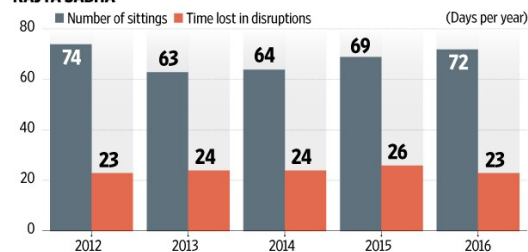
The following chart ("Parliament in India") sets out the number of sittings and the time lost in disruptions, in days per year, for the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha during the period from 2012-2016.

## PARLIAMENT IN INDIA

### LOK SABHA



### RAJYA SABHA



Source : Lok Sabha secretariat and Rajya Sabha secretariat

### What's the issue?

Disruptions have become an endemic feature of the functioning of the Indian Parliament.

This has led to widespread public outcry that has focused on two elements— **first, the waste of taxpayers' money on a perpetually disrupted and consequently, non-functioning Parliament; second, the legislative paralysis that has stultified governance.**

The government and the Opposition generally blame each other for the stalemate, each pointing to the adamant attitude of the other.

### Issues at stake:

- How the Speaker handles the disrupters?
- How much is the cost to the exchequer in terms of losses?
- Why the government is unable to manage the floor and coordinate properly with Opposition members?

### How can we say that the significance of Parliament has diminished over the years?

- **The process of legislation has become slow and lagged.** Laws are often passed in rush with little scrutiny and no follow-up rules. In some cases, it takes sessions together for a bill to become law.
- Parliament, which was meant to **invoke accountability, has almost forgotten its role.** Now, the only means are questions asked by MPs, many of which are pedantic, unclear or on behest. Besides, these questions are often answered with less or hidden facts by the government.

- **Discourse and debate on issues of national importance** were an attribute and highlight of Parliament during the first two decades of the republic, until around 1970. But this has eroded and diminished with the passage of time.
- **Number of days when the parliament meets and discusses the relevant issues have also gone down.** Even when the Parliament sits and meets, there is more noise than debate, more shouting than listening, and more statements than engagement or debate.
- **The criminalization of politics is another concern.** Reports show that 34% of the MPs in the 2014 Lok Sabha faced criminal charges, as compared with 30% in 2009 and 24% in 2004. Across parties, candidates facing criminal charges were more than twice as likely to win as compared to those with a clean record.

### ***Underlying causes for disruption:***

**Lack of avenues for the Opposition** to either force the government to convene a parliamentary session or set the agenda of Parliament (the government decides the bills it wants to introduce; the schedule of a day in the Lok Sabha is thereafter decided by the Business Advisory Committee whose members represent all major political parties).

**Increase in the number of political parties and the challenge of coalition politics** since the 1980s has diversified demands and competing interests. During the years of one-party majority governments, house management was comparatively easy and primarily the task of the minister for parliamentary affairs.

**Time allocation for debates on legislation and speeches** on other issues is decided as per party strength. The increase in the number of parties has adversely impacted the time allotted to each party to represent its interests, aggravated by the decrease in the number of annual sittings of Parliament.

**Institutional constraints on the performance of MPs:** The allocation of time for MPs to speak is proportional to the strength of their political party in the house and its leadership decides who gets to speak and for how long. The speaker of the Lok Sabha or the chairman of the Rajya Sabha have little discretion in the matter.

**The only other opportunities for MPs are during question hour or zero hour.** Answers to unstarred questions are simply laid on the table of the house. Starred questions are too many. Only a few come up for discussion. And these are just not taken up if the concerned MP is not present at the time. In zero hour, the speaker or the chairman have the discretion to invite an MP to speak, but time is too little and speeches are often drowned out in pandemonium.

### ***Who gains out of it?***

There is a view that **causing disruptions has become a business as usual for any party in the Opposition since it gives them the excuse to play to the galleries.**

Opposition gains because it can **grand stand on issues to grab voter attention**, not let crucial bills get passed and force the government to take action (or not) on certain issues.

### ***How can speaker and chairman ensure discipline?***

To curb such disruptions and deter MPs from indulging in conduct that causes such disruptions, ***the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha have also been vested with certain disciplinary powers*** under the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha Rules respectively.

- These powers allow the Speaker and the Chairman to either ***impose minor penalties*** such as naming of MPs within official records, or ***major penalties*** that require the members engaging in disorderly conduct to immediately withdraw from the precinct of the House for the remainder of the day's sitting.
- The members, who persistently abuse parliamentary rules, disregard the authority of the Speaker or the Chairman, and wilfully obstruct the business thereof, are also ***liable for suspension*** from the service of the House for the remainder of the session.
- In addition to these, ***Rule 374A of the Lok Sabha Rules*** also allows the Speaker ***to automatically suspend certain members of the Lok Sabha***, who instigate grave disorder by coming into the well of the House, abuse the Lok Sabha Rules persistently, or wilfully obstruct the business of the House by shouting slogans.

### ***How can we ensure effective and efficient functioning of the parliament?***

The government should utilize the already available tool effectively. That is:

- ***There is a weekly meeting of the all-party Business Advisory Committee*** to decide the agenda for the following week, and this committee also meets every day to fix next day's plan.
- The decision is made through consensus. This means that every party has a veto on any topic suggested for inclusion in the list of business.
- Even if the process is modified to a majority decision, the government can block any topic as it has the highest number of MPs.

### Increase in threshold:

- Any motion or discussion has to be taken up if a certain number of MPs gives a written notice. The no-confidence motion requires just 50 MPs (slightly less than 10% of the strength of the House) to be admitted.
- The threshold can be increased, and suitable thresholds fixed for discussions without a vote and voting motions. For example, there could be a new rule for discussion if a certain percentage of the strength of the House (say 20%) asks for it, and a voting motion if a certain percentage of MPs (say 30%) gives a written notice.

### Guarantee some time for the opposition:

The British Parliament allocates 20 days a year when the agenda is decided by the opposition. It also requires Parliament to meet more frequently. In the 1950s, the Indian Parliament met for 120-140 days every year; now the number ranges between 60 and 70 days.

### Round- the- year meeting:

- Have Parliament meet round-the-year, Monday to Friday, instead of the three sessions for which it meets, as is the current practice.
- Episodic meetings are bound to create episodes, so to speak. Parliamentarians want to appropriate time to raise issues they think are important.
- These are not necessarily the priorities of the government, which might be keener on creating a legislative framework for executing its policies in the limited time it has than, say, discussing a railway accident.

### Individual- MP level capacity building:

All of these measures would have to be coupled with other capacity building activities such as providing office space to all MPs, access to institutional research support and quality training programmes in order to both deepen and broaden our democratic polity.

### ***Sanctity of Parliament (what our representatives need to understand?):***

If India wishes to hold on to her democratic credentials, parliamentarians must recognise that ***the task of representing the opinions, interests and needs of citizens is their paramount responsibility.***

Nehru, in a famous speech he made in the Lok Sabha on March 28, 1957, had said that *historians will not pay much attention to the time expended on speeches, or the number of questions asked and answered in Parliament. They will be interested in the deeper things that go into the making of a nation. There is no higher responsibility than to be a member of this sovereign body responsible for the fate of vast numbers of human beings. "Whether we are worthy of it or not is another matter."*

### ***Way ahead:***

Little attention has been paid to what the underlying causes for disruptions are. There is a lot of chest beating about the inability of the ruling party to do proper floor management or build consensus across parties on important issues.

In India, ***the executive has the upper hand in deciding the timing of a Parliamentary session and the agenda of a session.*** The legislature, by abdicating its responsibilities of oversight and representation, actually plays into the hand of the executive. Therefore, it's time for the executive to fully realize its role and ensure smooth functioning of the Parliament.

It should also be kept in mind that with the increase in representation of other political parties—the 16th Lok Sabha represents 37 parties, a jump from the first Lok Sabha where there were 27 parties—and fall in the number of treasury members, ***house management became a shared responsibility.***



### ***Flow of Thoughts:***

- What are the underlying causes for Parliament Disruptions?
  - Who gains out of it?
  - The sanctity of parliament and the role of parliamentarians.
  - Issues at stake.
  - What needs to be done?
  - Role of presiding officers and the executive.
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### **GS-3:**

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***Related Syllabus:*** Irrigation and conservation related topic.

### **Interlinking of Rivers:**

#### ***Why in News?***

The water resources and river development ministry has lined up Rs 45,000-crore worth of development projects to interlink four rivers in the first phase of this initiative. This was necessary as a deepening water crisis threatens to worsen the living conditions of hundreds of thousands of people across the country.

#### ***The World's water crisis:***

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Earth, with its diverse and abundant life forms, including over six billion humans, is facing a serious water crisis. ***All the signs suggest that it is getting worse and will continue to do so, unless corrective action is taken.*** This crisis is one of water governance, essentially caused by the ways in which we mismanage water.

#### ***What's the concern?***

The real tragedy of the crisis is the effect it has on the everyday lives of poor people, who are blighted by the burden of water-related disease, living in degraded and often dangerous environments, struggling to get an education for their children and to earn a living, and to get enough to eat.

### **Unique scenario in India:**

While millions suffer from droughts and floods, waters in the country's many rivers flow unutilised, and are discharged into the sea every year.

In the wake of this crisis, few experts have asked the government to expedite the **Indian River Linking (IRL) project** that was proposed three decades ago. They say this is **an engineered panacea that will reduce persistent floods in some parts and water shortages in other parts besides facilitating the generation of hydroelectricity for an increasingly power hungry country.**

### **The interlinking project:**

The interlinking project aims to link India's rivers by a network of reservoirs and canals that will allow for their water capacities to be shared and redistributed.

Since the 1980s, the interlinking project has been managed by India's National Water Development Agency (NWDA) under the Ministry of Water Resources. It has been split into three parts:

1. A northern Himalayan rivers interlink component.
2. A southern peninsular component.
3. An intra-State rivers linking component.

### **Challenging task:**

**The sheer scale and scope of the project:** 30 river linkages and more than 3,000 storage structures spread across a 15,000km canal network that will transfer 174 trillion litres of water every year, and will cost a total of Rs5.6 trillion.

This puts the river-linking project on a par with some of the most daring feats of engineering attempted in the history of mankind. It is a reimagining of the entire aquatic ecosystem of a country as large and diverse as India.

### **Benefits of Interlinking:**

**Redistribution:** India receives most of its rain during monsoon season from June to September, most of it falls in northern and eastern part of India, the amount of rainfall in southern and western part are comparatively low. It will be these places which will have shortage of water. Interlinking of rivers will help these areas to have water throughout the year.

**Get rid of seasonal dependence:** The main occupation of rural India is agriculture and if monsoon fails in a year, then agricultural activities come to a standstill and this will aggravate rural poverty. Interlinking of rivers will be a practical solution for this problem, because the water can be stored or water can be transferred from water surplus area to deficit.

**Avoid calamities:** The Ganga Basin, Brahmaputra basin sees floods almost every year. In order to avoid this, the water from these areas has to be diverted to other areas where there is scarcity of water. This can be achieved by linking the rivers. There is a two way advantage with this - floods will be controlled and scarcity of water will be reduced.

Interlinking of rivers will also have **commercial importance on a longer run**. This can be used as inland waterways and which helps in faster movement of goods from one place to other. Interlinking creates a **new occupation for people living in and around** these canals and it can be the main areas of fishing in India.

#### ***The other side of the Coin- Challenges and negative implications:***

- Interlinking of rivers is **a very expensive proposal**. It has huge adverse environmental impacts on land, forests, biodiversity, rivers and the livelihood of millions of people.
- It will not only **add to climate change impact** (destruction of forests means destruction of carbon sinks, and reservoirs in tropical climate are known sources of methane and carbon dioxide), but will also reduce our capacity to adapt to climate change.
- **Usually rivers change their course and direction in about 100 years** and if this happens after interlinking, then the project will not be feasible for a longer run.
- Due to interlinking of rivers, there will be **decrease in the amount of fresh water** entering seas and this will cause a serious threat to the marine life system and will be a major ecological disaster.
- Due to the creation of Canals and Reservoirs, huge amount of area which is occupied by the people will be submerged leading to **displacement of people** and government will have to spend more to rehabilitate these people.

#### ***How would river- linking reduce stress on groundwater?***

**Most of India's water benefits, including irrigation, come from groundwater.** In fact, in the past two-and-a-half decades, the net national irrigated area from big dams has decreased by about 1.5 million hectares from a peak of 17.79 million ha in 1991-92, according to government data.

But in the same period, **India's total irrigated area has gone up—primarily due to groundwater**. Groundwater is our water lifeline and whether we like it or not, whether we want it or not, groundwater is going to remain our water lifeline for decades to come. This will definitely increase the rate of groundwater depletion.

Thus, interlinking may reduce the burden on groundwater by reallocating the excess water available across the rivers.

#### ***But, what about the feasibility of the Project?***

**A north to south inter-linking of rivers is physically not possible.** The barrier imposed by the Vindhya mountains makes it expensive to lift water along the north and south axis. It is also unnecessary.

River inter-linking is **an expensive business** from building the link canals to the monitoring and maintenance infrastructure. Implementation of the project not only needs a huge financial capital but also political support, both are scarce commodities as of now.

Another important issue is **building consensus among states and Land acquisition**. Once the project is implemented it would lead to large scale displacement of people and animals. Hence

appropriate rehabilitation measures should be taken by the Government.

### **Conclusion:**

Improved water resource management requires decisions based on economic efficiency, social equity, and ecological sustainability. Ultimately the value of water does not depend solely on its quantity but on at least four other factors – quality, location, reliability of access, and time of availability.

The long-term solution to water scarcity lies in making the IRL project work by building a network of dams and canals across the length and breadth of the country. However, interlinking has to take place after a detailed study so that does not cause any problem to the environment or aquatic life. A careful scientific assessment of the project and its impact on the environment, is necessary in case of a project of this magnitude especially with regard to Biodiversity.

### **Add- On's for Mains:**

To comply with the Supreme Court's 2012 order, the Union Cabinet constituted a 'special committee for inter-linking of rivers' in 2016.

In February 2012, the Supreme Court gave a green signal for interlinking of rivers. As per the Court's order, the formation of such a committee is necessary to take firm steps to fix a timeline for completion of feasibility reports and to ensure completion of projects on time, so that the benefits accrued from the projects are reaped within reasonable time and cost.

### **Flow of Thoughts:**

- Why is interlinking of rivers necessary?
  - What are the challenges involved?
  - What can be the practical solutions to the above mentioned issues? How effectively can this project can be implemented?
  - Impact of Interlinking of rivers on all the stakeholders?
  - What is your take on this project? Yes/No. Justify.
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