UPSC CSE 2025 MAINS GS-01 PAPER ANALYSIS

INDIAN SOCIETY

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Overall Observations

- **Total no. Of questions = 06 (75marks)**
- **Highly complex and applied questions (very few direct questions)**
- **Need highly practical and application-based understanding, multidisciplinary understanding to address the questions effectively**
- **No single source can answer them (so a very practical mix of accumulated Knowledge across subjects in needed) as asserted in the classroom various times.**
- **Newspaper, contemporary events, happenings in the society around you – is critical to understand and answer these questions**

Q 20 – Does tribal Development in India centre around two axes, those of displacement and of rehabilitation? Give your Opinion (Answer in 250 words)

Analysis

The question dives into the complex relationship between **tribal development**, **displacement**, and **rehabilitation**. It requires a nuanced understanding of **socio-economic** and **environmental** challenges in India, highlighting the interconnection between **policy**, **cultural** identity, and **sustainable development**.

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Approach:

Begin with a **brief introduction** highlighting **the importance** of **tribal development** in India and the impact of **displacement** caused by development projects.

In the **main body**, explore the **two axes** of **displacement** and **rehabilitation**, discussing the challenges and examples. Then, introduce **empowerment** initiatives as a positive approach, demonstrating that tribal development extends beyond these two axes.

Conclude with a **forward-looking strategy** that emphasizes **inclusive growth**, **sustainable livelihoods**, and **policy implementation** to create holistic tribal development.

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- In the **2011 Census**, population of **Scheduled Tribes** and their geographical spread.
- **Xaxa Committee (2014)** in its report highlighted that **tribal development** has often been more about the challenges of **displacement** and inadequate **rehabilitation**, rather than genuine **empowerment**.
- This is particularly true in the context of large-scale **development projects**, **mining**, and **environmental conservation policies**.

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Axis of Displacement

- **Development Projects: (**significantly impacted tribal communities)
  - Narmada Dam project (Displaced over 200,000 people)
  - Polavaram Dam Project
  - Kalinganagar Industrial Complex
  - Coal mining in Chhattisgarh and Odisha,
  - Niyamgiri Hills Bauxite Mining (Vedanta group - Dongria Kondh tribe)
- **Environmental Policies**: In **protected areas** like **Sariska** and **Simlipal**, many tribals have faced **eviction** under the guise of **conservation**.
- **Loss of Culture and Identity**: Displacement often results in **alienation** from **forests**, the erosion of traditional **livelihoods**, and the breakdown of **community networks**, which further deepens their vulnerability.

Axis of Rehabilitation

Parallel to the displacement issue, the **axis of rehabilitation** reflects state attempts, though with **mixed results**:

- **Schemes like the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013**, the **Forest Rights Act (2006)**, and the **PESA Act (1996)** aim to safeguard **tribal rights**.
- However, the **implementation** of these schemes has been **patchy**. Often, **rehabilitation packages** provide **monetary compensation** but fail to restore **cultural ties** or provide **sustainable livelihood opportunities**.

Beyond Displacement and Rehabilitation: Empowerment

Limiting tribal development to just the axes of **displacement** and **rehabilitation** would be a **narrow view**. There are several **positive initiatives** that focus on **empowerment**:

- **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)** provide quality **education** for tribal children.
- The **Van Dhan Yojana** fosters **entrepreneurship** through the promotion of **minor forest produce**.
- The **Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP)** targets **area-based development**, ensuring that the unique needs of tribal regions are addressed.

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Q-19 – Achieving sustainable growth with emphasis on environmental protection could come into conflict with poor people's needs in a country like India – Comment (250 words)

Analysis

The question explores the **tension** between **environmental protection** and the **livelihood needs** of the poor in India, reflecting the **social**, **economic**, and **developmental** challenges inherent in the country's growth model. The issue demands a careful balance of **policy**, **sustainability**, and **equity**, particularly in the context of **marginalized communities**.

For example : Delhi government imposes a temporary **construction ban** to combat **air pollution (GRAP) - Daily wage labourers** saw their income vanish overnight

Environmental Protection against the Immediate Needs of the Poor

- **Livelihood Disruption:** relocation of tribals from sanctuaries like **Kanha** and **Simlipal**
- **Fuel and Energy Needs**: **firewood**, **dung cakes**, and **kerosene** for cooking and heating
- **Housing and Urban Needs**: for **"clean and green"** urban spaces - **slum demolitions** in cities, displacing lakhs of people
- **Industrial Employment vs. Pollution Control**: **closure of tanneries** in **Kanpur** as part of the **Ganga cleaning project**

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The Poors as Victims of Environmental Degradation

- **Air Pollution**: The health impacts of **air pollution** disproportionately affect children and the elderly in **low-income groups**.
- **Climate Change**: Events like floods in **Assam** or **heatwaves** in **Rajasthan** hit the poor hardest, as they lack the necessary **coping mechanisms** and resources to recover.
- **Resource Decline**: The depletion of **natural resources** like **soil fertility** and **groundwater** worsens the plight of small farmers, deepening **agrarian distress**.

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Path towards Inclusive and Sustainable Development

- **Ujjwala Yojana** has significantly reduced indoor **pollution** while meeting **energy needs** for poor households.
- **MGNREGA** and **CAMPA** funds can be leveraged for **ecological restoration** projects, creating **tribal** and **rural employment** opportunities at the same time.
- The expansion of **renewable energy** sources, such as **solar micro-grids** in **rural Jharkhand**, ensures both **sustainability** and **energy access** for marginalized communities.
- The **Forest Rights Act (2006)** empowers **tribals** by recognizing their rights while simultaneously working to **conserve forests**.

Q18- How do you account for the growing fast food industries given that there are increased health concerns in modern society ? Illustrate your answer with the Indian Experience. (250 words)

Analysis

The question addresses the growth of the **fast food industry** in India amid **health concerns**, requiring an exploration of the **economic**, **social**, and **health dimensions** of this trend. It presents an applied nature that integrates business growth with public health policies, highlighting the challenges of balancing **consumer demand** and **health risks**.

The **fast food industry** in India is experiencing rapid growth, with its market size reaching **USD 18.6 billion** in 2024 and projected to hit **USD 35.5 billion** by 2033.

Key Drivers of Growth

- **Urbanization and Changing Lifestyles**: As nearly **600 million Indians** are expected to live in cities by 2036, rise of chains such as **Domino's**, **McDonald's**, and home-grown brands like **Haldiram's** etc.
- **Digital Food Delivery**: Platforms like **Zomato** and **Swiggy** have revolutionized the accessibility of fast food.
- **Influence of the Youth Market**: **Gen Z** and **millennials (Gen Y)** make up the largest share of consumers
- **Localization of Menus**: International fast food chains have tailored their offerings to **local tastes**. For example, **McDonald's** introduced the **McAloo Tikki Burger** and **Paneer Pizza**, blending global fast food formats with Indian preferences.

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Increased Health Concerns

- A recent survey by the **Indian Journal of Community Medicine** : more than **40% of urban youth** regularly consume fast food.
- The rising incidence of **childhood obesity** and **Type 2 diabetes** has led to concerns from both authorities and activists, branding fast food as a **public health menace**.

Government Schemes and Interventions

- The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** : mandated the display of **nutritional values** on packaged fast foods to increase consumer awareness.
- In 2021, the **FSSAI** launched the **'Eat Right India'** campaign and introduced stricter guidelines for **high fat, salt, and sugar (HFSS)** foods, including **front-of-pack labelling**.
- School canteens have been discouraged from selling **junk food** through guidelines from the **FSSAI** and **CBSE**.
- Initiatives like the **Fit India Movement** and **Poshan Abhiyaan** promote **healthy dietary habits** and increase awareness among youth.

Need for Balance of Business Growth and Health

- In response to growing health concerns, some fast food chains have introduced **healthier menu options**. For example, **Subway** offers whole wheat bread, while **McDonald's** and **Domino's** have worked to reduce **trans fats**.

- Brands such as **Haldiram's** and **Bikanervala** have expanded their offerings to include **baked snacks** and **sugar-free sweets**, while urban salad chains like **FreshMenu** and **EatFit** are gaining popularity

Q-8 – **How does Smart city in India, address the issue of urban poverty and distributive justice? (150 words)**

Analysis

The question explores the **Smart Cities Mission** as a policy response to **urban poverty** and **distributive justice**. It presents an applied challenge, requiring an analysis of the mission's capacity to address systemic issues within India's urbanization, including **governance**, **infrastructure**, and **social equity**.

- **Urban poverty** : inadequate **housing**, lack of essential **services**, high **unemployment**, insufficient access to **healthcare** and **education**.
- **Distributive justice** demands that the most vulnerable urban populations must equally benefit from urban development and infrastructure improvements.

The **Smart Cities Mission**, launched in 2015, aims to transform 100 cities into efficient, **technology-driven urban centres**. To address above mentioned urban poverty.

- **Affordable Housing and Slum Redevelopment**: under **PMAY-U** , aim to provide **safe**, **dignified shelter** .
- **Basic Services Access**: Focuses on improving **water supply**, **sanitation**, and **waste management**. E.g. **IoT water meters** in Pune.
- **Digital Inclusion and Skill Development**: Cities like **Bhubaneswar** have set up **skill centers** for underserved youth, linking them with **digital** and formal sector jobs.
- **Affordable and Accessible Public Transport**: Cities like **Surat** have enhanced **transport networks** that reduce commuting costs for the working poor.

Key Challenges in Addressing Urban Poverty and Distributive Justice

- **Limited Spatial Coverage**: More than 80% of Smart City funding focuses on **Area-Based Development**, covering only 3-5% of city areas. This often excludes large **slum settlements** and **peri-urban** neighborhoods, which are home to a significant portion of the urban poor.
- **Top-down Governance**: The reliance on **Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs)** for governance often limits direct accountability to local residents or elected bodies. This can marginalize the urban poor by excluding them from decision-making processes.
- **Digital Divide**: **Internet penetration** in smaller cities is about **45%**, and many poor residents lack access to **smartphones**, making it difficult for them to benefit from **smart services** and **digital inclusion** initiatives.
- **Displacement and Gentrification Risks**: Urban renewal projects have the potential to push poor populations to the **urban fringes** without sufficient social support, exacerbating existing **inequality**.
- **Capacity Constraints**: Many **Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** lack the trained staff needed to ensure **inclusive planning** and the effective implementation of **social infrastructure** projects.

Q-9 The ethos of civil service in India stands for the combination of professionalism with nationalistic consciousness. Elucidate (150 words)

Analysis

The question probes into the **ethos** of **civil service** in India, focusing on the **balance** between **professionalism** and **nationalistic consciousness**. It requires an understanding of how civil servants integrate **ethical governance** with a commitment to **nation-building** and **public welfare**, reflecting India's democratic and constitutional values.

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The **ethos of civil service** in India represents a unique fusion of **professionalism** and **nationalistic consciousness**. Civil servants are expected to not only carry out their duties with **expertise** and **integrity**, but also to serve the nation with unwavering **loyalty**, a deep commitment to the **Constitution**, and a focus on **public welfare**.

Professionalism in Civil Service

- **Integrity** and **impartiality**: Civil servants are required to be **honest**, **unbiased**, and serve the public without any **political** or **personal favouritism**.
- **Accountability** and **transparency**: They are responsible for implementing government policies effectively, with an openness to public scrutiny and feedback.
- **Competence** and **expertise**: A deep knowledge of their field, along with effective decision-making and adherence to rules, ensures that governance remains efficient and effective.
- **Ethical conduct**: The civil service code emphasizes **discipline**, **propriety**, and the need to avoid **corruption**, ensuring that civil servants uphold the highest ethical standards.

Nationalistic Consciousness

- **Allegiance to the Constitution**: Civil servants are custodians of **constitutional values**, working to uphold **democracy**, **secularism**, **social justice**, and **fundamental rights**.
- **Devotion to national interest**: They rise above **political affiliations**, dedicating themselves to **nation-building** and **inclusive development**.
- **Empathy** and **dedication**: Serving the marginalized and vulnerable communities aligns with their patriotic duty to ensure social upliftment.

For example, during the **COVID-19 crisis**, civil servants demonstrated their nationalistic spirit by delivering crucial relief and healthcare services, driven by a sense of **national responsibility**.

Convergence of Professionalism and Nationalism

The ethos of civil service brings together skill and spirit, where civil servants not only execute policies with **professionalism** but are also motivated by a deep commitment to the **nation's welfare**. **Welfare schemes** like the **Swachh Bharat Mission** and **PM Jan Dhan Yojana** showcase this synthesis, where the effectiveness of policy delivery aligns with national **development goals**.

Q-10 Do you think that Globalisation results in only an aggressive consumer culture? Justify your answer. (150 words)

Analysis

The question analyzes the dynamics of **globalization** and its impact on **consumerism**, with a particular focus on its **cultural**, **economic**, and **environmental implications**. The issue presents a multifaceted challenge, requiring an understanding of how **global brands** and **consumer behavior** intersect with **sustainability** and **local empowerment** in today's globalized world.

The global consumer market is expected to reach **USD 80 trillion** by 2025, driven by emerging markets and the growing **consumer spending power**.

Causes and Consequences of Aggressive Consumerism

- The **forces of globalization**, **digital connectivity**, and **aggressive advertising** have ramped up competition to capture consumer attention.
- The result is an aggressive **consumer culture** that promotes the fast consumption of **fast fashion**, **electronic gadgets**, and **processed foods**, often at the **expense** of **environmental** and **social sustainability**.
- For example, the **fast food market** in India is booming even as **obesity** and **health concerns** rise. The rise of **retail therapy** and social media-driven consumption has led to challenges such as **overconsumption**, **environmental degradation**, and **cultural homogenization**.

The other diverse Impacts of Globalization

- **Cultural Exchange** and **Hybridization**: Consumers are now embracing global products that have been adapted to local preferences (e.g., the **McAloo Tikki Burger** in India), which enriches their consumption experience and promotes diversity rather than cultural uniformity.
- The **Rise of Conscious Consumerism**: Studies show that about **70%** of consumers globally are willing to pay more for **sustainable** and **ethically sourced products**. In India, the growing demand for **organic foods** and **eco-friendly** products highlights a rising awareness of the environmental footprint of consumption.
- **Local Economic Empowerment**: **Global trade** provides opportunities for local entrepreneurs to innovate and compete, preserving local cultures and identities. For instance, in countries like **China** and **Japan**, consumers increasingly prefer **domestic brands** over foreign ones, illustrating a trend of local empowerment amidst globalization.

- Further, governments are promoting responsible consumption through initiatives such as India's **'Eat Right' campaign**, which encourages healthier food choices, and various international agreements that aim to establish **sustainable supply chains**.
- Tools like **consumer education**, **advertising regulations** (particularly towards children), and **corporate social responsibility** (CSR) have emerged as strategies to counterbalance the negative impacts of aggressive consumerism.

Therefore, **globalization** results in much more than just an aggressive consumer culture; it offers pathways for responsible and diverse consumer expression.

THANKS FOR WATCHING

Try it for Today…