

Will the MSP increase for kharif crops reduce India's agrarian distress?

The much-awaited announcement on minimum support prices (MSPs) for kharif crops has increased the MSP for paddy by ₹200 from ₹1,550 to ₹1,750, a 13% increase. The MSP increase for other crops varies between 3.7% for *moong* to 45% for *nigerseed*. But it is paddy where it will matter the most. For most other crops, MSP announcements have little value unless the government also proactively enters the market and procures the produce. This has not been the case so far, with procurement limited to paddy and wheat. Procurement of pulses increased after the collapse of pulse prices in the domestic market last year and the ensuing farmers' protest in several states. But it has proven insufficient to stop the collapse of pulse prices. The result has been the sharpest decline in pulse acreage despite record procurement.

The decision to hike the MSP for kharif crops is welcome relief for the farming community reeling under severe distress due to the collapse of agricultural commodity prices and a general collapse of demand in the economy, much more in the rural economy. This is now confirmed from several sources, including a decline in real wages in agriculture (a sustained decline for the last four years), the decline in commodity prices and a general sense of joblessness among the youth. Some of this is also captured in the GDP deflator, which shows a sharp fall from more than 5% in 2016-17 to only around 1% for 2017-18.

The demand of farmers, based on the Swaminathan committee recommendations, was MSP at 1.5 times of the C2 cost (total cost including imputed cost). But what has been announced is 1.5 times the A2+FL cost (paid out cost plus family labour cost). The MSP announced barely covers 1.5 times the A2+FL cost and will give a return of only 12% over C2 as against the demand of 50% over C2 cost. But the announced MSP is also significantly lower than the average wholesale price of paddy

at ₹1,950 per quintal in April 2018, which is lower than ₹1,980 per quintal in April of last year.

Despite these concerns, the announcement of MSP increase is not just timely but also a much-needed respite at the time of rural distress. If properly followed through by adequate procurement, it can certainly raise agricultural commodity prices and also inject much-needed demand if this also materializes in higher income for a large majority of farmers. But it would also require the government to loosen its purse strings beyond what was promised in the budget this year.

While the government may have been disingenuous in interpreting the demand and its promise, the real question is whether it will pull the rural areas and agriculture out of the deep distress that they have fallen in for the last four years. More importantly, will it raise the general level of demand in the rural economy which eventually raise wages of casual workers?

Since the announced MSPs are still 20-25% lower than prevailing wholesale prices for many crops, their impact on farmers' income is uncertain. With rise in input costs such as diesel and electricity, it may not contribute to any real increase in returns in the short run. While it will take time for these to translate into real gains for farmers and rural workers, these will definitely contribute to some upward pressure on inflation and wages even though their extent is not clear. But it is unlikely to be the remedy of all the ills that plague the rural sector or the agricultural sector. It certainly does not substitute for the decline in real investment at more than 3% per annum in agriculture during this government's tenure. Nor does it compensate for the decline in credit availability for farmers beset with rising farm loans. It does not compensate for the cartelization and corruption in the local markets which contribute to price fluctuations. It also does not compensate for the export-import policy ad hocism which has contributed to price uncertainty.

The problems of the agrarian sector are not just a result of weather fluctuations and international price movements—a large part of it has been government's own failure to acknowledge the distress and its flawed approach to resolving some of these. The solution most often has been to deal with the symptoms and that too when pressed against the wall.

The flurry of loan waivers is one such example. So is the case of MSP. Neither of them will resolve the long-standing issues of neglect and apathy towards the agricultural sector by successive governments. And it is likely that both MSP and loan waivers, other than bringing temporary relief to the farming community, will continue to be relevant instruments every year before the election.

Source: xaam.in

Statehood for Delhi A Legitimate Demand

The Supreme Court's interpretation of Article 239-AA of the Constitution in *Government of NCT of Delhi v Union of India* has reaffirmed the centrality of representative democracy and federalism to India's constitutional government. However, it has only restored an unhappy status quo as far as Delhi is concerned. The fault lies in Article 239-AA itself, an incomplete and unworkable division of powers and responsibilities that gives Delhi a lot of government, but little governance.

The *Valmiki Ramayana* tells the tale of Trishanku, a king who wished to ascend heaven in his mortal form, but finds himself thwarted at every turn. Eventually, he approaches the rishi Viswamitra who, having a grudge of his own with the gods, accedes to his request and, using the power of his penance alone, begins to raise Trishanku to the heavens. Alarmed by this, Indra uses his powers to stall Trishanku's ascent, getting into a cosmic tug of war with Viswamitra. In some versions of the tale, the tug of war results in a stalemate with the hapless Trishanku suspended upside down between heaven and earth, begging everyone concerned to end his misery.

The story of Trishanku almost perfectly describes the state of affairs in

Delhi's governance. Delhi is not a state in the constitutional sense, nor is it purely a union territory. It has an elected legislature, a chief minister, and a council of ministers, but is also governed by the Union Parliament and executive, which enjoy concurrent powers over all matters in the state and concurrent lists as far as Delhi is concerned. The lieutenant governor, consequently, is much more powerful than the governor of any other state under the Constitution, but cannot also function purely like the administrator of a union territory.

This is just the constitutional arrangement under Article 239-AA as introduced by the 69th amendment to the Constitution. The above description does not even take into account the political conflict between the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Delhi government and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) at the union level. The conflict has taken the dysfunction to new levels, prompting the litigation that has eventually led to the constitution bench judgment in *Government of NCT of Delhi v Union of India* (2018). Resting the interpretation of Article 239-AA on the basic features of parliamentary democracy and federalism, the Supreme Court's judgment tries to put an end to some of the needless conflict between the government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi and the lieutenant governor. However, I argue that all it does is restore an unhappy status quo. This is not to say that the Supreme Court was wrong in having done so; far from it. I argue only that the Court's judgment has laid bare the unworkability of Article 239-AA as it stands and the need to grant full statehood to Delhi.

Constitution Bench

The seeds of the present dysfunction in Delhi's governance were probably laid when AAP won an unprecedented 67 out of the 70 seats in the Delhi Assembly in 2015. This was preceded by the first single-party majority government at the union level in 30 years, led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which, incidentally, won all the seven Lok Sabha seats on offer from Delhi. Though both wins could, in some ways, be traced to the public disaffection over the United Progressive Alliance's track record on corruption and misgovernance, the political platforms of AAP and the BJP were quite different. For the purposes of this article, it is, perhaps, sufficient to say that, as far as the BJP was concerned, AAP presented a direct challenge to its claimed monopoly on the "clean governance" platform and, to AAP, the BJP was essentially indistinguishable from the Congress insofar as its being beholden to corporate interests was concerned.

Having taken such extreme positions against each other, and having benefited from crushing mandates, perhaps, both parties felt that compromise with each other would only harm their respective political futures. The Delhi government accused the Union Government, acting through the lieutenant governor, of obstruction, and the latter accused the former of "anarchy." A whole range of issues, from service matters to questions of investigation of corruption cases, came before a division bench of the Delhi High Court, raising common questions as to the powers of the lieutenant governor and the Delhi government under Article 239-AA.

The judgment of the division bench of the Delhi High Court possibly made matters worse (*Government of NCT of Delhi v Union of India* 2016). In interpreting Article 239-AA as it did, giving the lieutenant governor the power to interfere in every decision of the Delhi government, the Delhi High Court effectively declared the lieutenant governor the monarch of Delhi, giving the office the kind of powers last enjoyed by the rulers of princely states during colonial rule (Kumar 2016). The chief minister and the council of ministers were thus reduced to being advisers and not an elected executive that is accountable to the legislative assembly. The lieutenant governor could disregard the "aid and advice" of the council of ministers and effectively act on their own, as the Delhi High Court interpreted the term "on any matter" in clause (4) of Article 239-AA to mean "on every matter."

When the case was taken up in appeal, a two-judge bench of the Supreme Court referred it to a constitution bench to address the constitutional issues.

What the Supreme Court Has Said

While the three concurring opinions do not say so explicitly, they all reject the Delhi High Court's interpretation of Article 239-AA, and rightly so. Merely because the interpretation afforded by the Delhi High Court is a plausible one ("on any matter" can mean "on every matter"), the Supreme Court does not find it necessarily tenable in the context of Article 239-AA. It rejects this interpretation of the lieutenant governor's power, on the grounds that it would go against the basic structure of the Constitution; specifically the basic features of representative democracy and federalism. In so doing, the Supreme Court has grounded its interpretation of Article 239-AA on fairly unimpeachable foundations.

The Supreme Court notes that Delhi's legislative assembly was not some illusory effort to give Delhi's residents an illusion of representative government. Rather, reaching back into the history of Article 239-AA, they find that the idea was always to give the residents of Delhi a meaningful form of representative government. A lot of reliance is placed on the Balakrishnan Committee's report which led to the introduction of Article 239-AA, to note specifically, the nature of the relationship between the lieutenant governor and the government of Delhi. Emphasis is placed on the meaning of "aid and advice" in the constitutional sense (as opposed to the purely grammatical meaning of the term) and import of the use of this phrase in Article 239-AA.

The second footing on which this interpretation proceeds is the federal character of the Constitution. While accepting that Delhi is not a state for the purposes of the Constitution, the Supreme Court notes that the powers of the legislative assembly are not delegated by Parliament, but are, in fact, plenary in nature, just like any other state legislative assembly. Even though the Delhi legislative assembly has no exclusive field of legislative power like other states, the fact that the source of such legislative power is the Constitution itself, and therefore on par with Parliament, has been noted by the Court.

Consequently, the Court has read the lieutenant governor's power to differ with the Delhi government "on any matter" to mean a matter of exception and not a matter of course. The lieutenant governor cannot simply differ with the elected government and seek to have their way on areas of the Delhi government's competence. Rather, in exceptional circumstances, the lieutenant governor, after consultation with the council of ministers to resolve any differences, can refer such a matter to the President in accordance with the proviso to clause (4) of Article 239-AA.

But, what are the exceptional circumstances that might warrant such reference? Here, there is a difference in the phraseology used by the judges. Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra uses the terms "the standards of constitutional trust and morality, the principle of collaborative federalism and constitutional balance, the concept of constitutional governance and objectivity and thenurtured and cultivated idea of respect for a representative government;" Justice D Y Chandrachud uses the more prosaic "substantial issues of finance and policy which impact upon the status of the national capital or implicate vitalinterests of the Union;" and Justice Bhushan uses the even more terse phrasing of "when it becomes necessary to safeguard the interest of the Union Territory."¹ The terminology used, except in the case of Justice D Y Chandrachud, does not provide much guidance to us, but will have to be explained by the subsequent benches that decide the specific petitions in this case.

Unsatisfactory Status Quo

As unexceptionable as the Supreme Court's reasoning is in this matter, all it does is to revert the situation to an unhappy status quo. The fact that the Supreme Court has not been able to articulate a clearly set out standard for review of the lieutenant governor's actions in differing with the elected government is not the fault of the Court; the fault lies in Article 239-AA.

Delhi's sui generis status in the Constitution leaves it also in a curiously Trishanku-like state. In the 30 years since the Balakrishnan Committee report, Delhi's population has nearly tripled. It is home to nearly two crore residents and has one of the highest per capita incomes in the country. It suffers from intractable problems relating to pollution, land use, and all the other issues that modern megacities face. Yet, the Delhi government does not control its own police and cannot regulate land use.

Addressing Delhi's issues involves a complicated dance between the union, state, and municipal governments, where no one is sure who is leading and not everyone is reading from the same sheet. Whereas, in the context of other states, the hierarchy between these authorities is much more clearly laid out and responsibilities divided neatly, in Delhi it is a mess of concurrent jurisdiction and arbitrary exclusions that make coordination virtually impossible and conflict the norm.

In this context, the demand for full statehood for Delhi is a legitimate one. With the constraint that the state government cannot be allowed to

interfere in the functioning of the union government for partisan purposes, there is no reason why the Delhi government should not be allowed to control its own police force and make regulations for land use. With the geographic exclusion of the areas currently under the jurisdiction of the New Delhi Municipal Council and the Delhi Cantonment Board (which can continue to be directly under the union government) from the future state government, even the concerns expressed in the Balakrishnan Committee report can be addressed.

Trishanku's tale, though, does not have an entirely unhappy ending. To avoid further conflict with Viswamitra and as a compromise, Indra agreed to the creation of a separate heaven where Trishanku would live as a ruler and enjoy as a god for all time to come, but without questioning Indra's rule over heaven. Perhaps there is a Trishanku heaven for the residents of Delhi that will give them full statehood in all but name.

Source: xaam.in

A House of Cards: Need for Reform in Civil Services

In his celebrated satirical dance drama "Tasher Desh" (The Land of Cards), Rabindranath Tagore portrayed a sterile society governed strictly by listless conventions and lifeless rules, imposed with an arthritic rigidity. In such a society, there is no place for inquiry or exploration, and nobody is allowed to question the propriety of these rules or ask for the reasons behind conventions. This society demands unquestioning obedience to rules, and views even the slightest prospect for change with great apprehension. It is a closed society caught up in a time warp that wants to continue in this way for ever. The metaphor of the cards encapsulates the sterility of this society, in which no one has any occasion to think, inquire, or debate. It is a stale, comatose society that kills all endeavours, and sacrifices growth for the sake of status quo, where rules roost supreme and human beings exist merely for the purpose of satisfying the rules.

The plethora of archaic rules dating from the colonial times and reflective of a colonial mindset that still govern our lives is reminiscent of such a society. One such gem is the Central Civil Services (CCS) (Conduct) Rules, 1964, which apply to all public servants in the country. These require them to maintain absolute integrity, devotion to duty, and political neutrality, which are essential requirements of any public servant in any country, but

being guided by a surveillance mentality, their writ often assumes ludicrous proportions. They prohibit government servants to take part in the editing or management of any newspaper or periodical, to accept any gift, not even by their family members, except from near relatives or friends on certain occasions. And, if the value of such gift exceeds specified limits that are linked to the position of the public servant in the government hierarchy, they have to report it to the government. They cannot speculate in stock, share, or any other investment except "occasional investments made through stock brokers." There are many other prohibitions as well.

The actions proscribed in these rules are much older than the rules themselves. Specific actions were forbidden from time to time through notifications issued under the Fundamental Rules and the Civil Service Regulations, like barring government servants from accepting gifts (1876), buying and selling property (1881), making commercial investments (1885), promoting companies (1885), and accepting commercial employment after retirement (1920).¹ In 1947, with the enactment of the Prevention of Corruption Act, a new set of offences was added. In the 1930s, a compendium of instructions containing "do's and don'ts" was issued and collectively called Conduct Rules, which was issued as distinct rules in 1955. In 1964, the following recommendations of the Committee on Prevention of Corruption (Santhanam Committee), these rules were considerably enlarged.

These have subsequently been updated to include additional norms of behaviour such as prohibiting demanding and accepting dowry, prohibiting sexual harassment of women employees, and, recently, prohibition to employ child labour as domestic help, reflecting the changing expectation of society from public servants. But, the spirit behind these rules, surveillance, command, and control, and the mistrust inherent in them have not changed in their 50 years of existence, though the country has moved far ahead with the times.

These rules are likely being observed more in breach than compliance, but the most interesting and outrageous of them is Rule 9 that prohibits any public servant to publish "in his own name or anonymously or pseudonymously or in the name of any other person" any "statement of fact or opinion which has the effect of an adverse criticism of any current or recent policy or action of the Central Government or a State Government." This is an anachronism completely out of tune with the modern times. These rules were framed when the government's philosophy was dominated by an overwhelming command-and-control attitude that brooked no criticism and demanded uniform and unquestioning obedience from all its employees. This command and control structure has since been dismantled, but the surveillance and disciplining attitude still remains intact. A set of rules framed 50 years ago cannot be applied mindlessly to situations that are now vastly different.

Rule 9 of the CCS (Conduct) Rule is, in fact, an assault upon the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression guaranteed in the Constitution to every citizen, which also includes government servants. As the former justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court, Alladi Kuppaswami, has

rightly observed,

*Democracy is based on fair criticism; and freedom of speech and expression is highly protected by the Indian Constitution. A blanket prohibition of criticism of the policies of the government is invalid and void, and it makes no difference if the person criticising happens to be a government servant or the employee of a public institution.*²

Various Supreme Court judgments also unequivocally corroborate this view.

Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution guarantees the fundamental right to “freedom of speech and expression” to “all citizens” of India, subject to “reasonable restrictions” which are enumerated in sub-clause (2). Freedom to criticise is inherent in the freedom of expression, subject to the above restrictions. In *Kameswar Prasad v State of Bihar* (AIR 1962 SC 1166), the Supreme Court held that “as Article 19 applies to all citizens, government servants in common with all other citizens enjoy the protection of all fundamental rights”³ and that by becoming a government servant, one certainly does not surrender one’s fundamental rights.

*We find ourselves unable to accept the argument that the Constitution excludes government servants as a class from the protection of the several rights guaranteed by the several Articles in Part III (Fundamental Rights), the Court had observed.*⁴

The Supreme Court has repeatedly emphasised through various judgments that fundamental rights are basic to the structure of the Constitution, which is unalterable. In *Romesh Thappar v State of Madras* (1950 SCR 404), the Supreme Court also observed, “There can be no doubt that freedom of speech and expression includes freedom of propagation of ideas and that freedom is ensured by the freedom of circulation.”⁵ In *Kedaranath v State of Bihar* (AIR 1962SC 955), while holding that Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code does not infringe on Article 19(1)(a) and is valid, the Supreme Court observed: “criticism of public measures or comment on government action, however strongly worded, would be within reasonable limits and would be consistent with the fundamental rights of freedom of speech and expression.”⁶ It had further stated categorically that a

citizen has a right to say or write whatever he likes about the government, or its measures, by way of criticism or comment, so long as he does not incite people to violence against the government established by law or with the intention of creating public disorder.

The “reasonable restrictions” upon the fundamental right to freedom of speech as enumerated in Article 19(2) of the Constitution include restrictions imposed

in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.

However, under Article 33, Parliament is empowered to modify, restrict or even abrogate any of the fundamental rights in their application to the armed forces, police, intelligence agencies, etc, which again corroborates that Parliament has no power to impose such restrictions on any other citizen. Further, under Article 13(2), the state shall not make any law that takes away or abridges fundamental rights and any law that contravenes this clause shall be void. Hence, if the restrictions imposed by a rule are not reasonable, then such rule contravenes Article 19(1)(a).

What Is 'Public Order'?

Among the reasonable restrictions, the one most often resorted to by the government in disciplining civil servants is "public order." In this context, the question as to what constitutes public order and whether a rule prohibiting a government servant from criticising the policies of government can be considered a reasonable restriction in the interest of public order within the meaning of Article 19(2) assumes importance. In *Superintendent of Central Prison v Ram Manohar Lohia* (1960, 2 SCR 821), it was held that "public order is synonymous with public safety and tranquillity. It is the absence of disorder involving breaches of local significance." Earlier, in the *Kameswar Prasad v State of Bihar* case, the Court had observed that there must be a proximate and reasonable nexus between the nature of the speech prohibited and public disorder, and that the connection has to be intimate, real and rational. This is supported by the judgment in *Rex v Basudev* (1949 FCR 657): "the connection contemplated between the restriction and public order must be real and proximate, not far-fetched or problematical."⁷

Courts in India have increasingly been supportive of the protection of citizen's fundamental rights and in particular of the right to freedom of speech and expression. In the recent judgment striking down Section 66A of the Information Technology act, 2008, the Supreme Court was unsparing in its criticism of the act and in particular of the possibility of its misuse by the powers that be:

We hold that the section is unconstitutional also on the ground that it takes within its sweep protected speech and speech that is innocent in nature and is liable therefore to be used in such a way as to have a chilling effect on free speech and would, therefore, have to be struck down on the ground of overbreadth.

The judgment strongly emphasised that liberty of thought and expression was something that would not be compromised under any situation in a democracy, and hence the section was declared unconstitutional as "being violative of

article 19(1)(a) and not saved by Article 19(2)” which kicks in only when the views expressed reach the level of incitement causing public disorder. The Supreme Court further observed that

*Section 66A is cast so widely that virtually any opinion on any subject would be covered by it, as any serious opinion dissenting with the mores of the day would be caught within its net. Such is the reach of the section and if it is to withstand the test of constitutionality, the chilling effect on free speech would be total.*⁸

Given the coverage of definition, this argument can be applied mutatis mutandis to Rule 9 of the CCS Conduct Rules also.

Governments have always felt jittery and threatened at the slightest signs of dissent, for obvious reasons. Even Nehru, a democrat at heart, unhesitatingly went with the first amendment to our Constitution in 1951, amending Article 19(2), imposing “reasonable restrictions” as discussed earlier. This was ironically in response to the Supreme Court judgment in the *Romesh Thapar v State of Madras* case, overturning the ban on the Marxist journal *Crossroads*, in recognition of the unfettered freedom of expression of citizens in a democracy as enshrined in the original Constitution drafted by the Constituent Assembly. Even in September 2014, the Supreme Court had delivered a landmark judgment which went virtually unnoticed amidst the din of J Jayalalithaa’s arrest and subsequent Supreme Court judgment granting her bail in the disproportionate assets case.

The case, *Vijay Shankar Pandey and Others v Union of India and Another*, involved a civil service officer of the UP cadre when he, along with Julio Rebeiro and others, had filed a writ petition on behalf of the non-governmental organisation (NGO), India Rejuvenation Initiative (IRI), on the need to flush the black money stashed by Indians abroad. The Akhilesh Yadav government reacted by filing a charge sheet against him on five counts, including one for not taking government’s permission for joining the NGO and “deposing in an inquiry where the Central and State Governments were likely to be criticised” and hence rendering his conduct violative of the applicable Conduct Rules. The court held that joining in averments made in a writ petition before a court was tantamount to participating in a judicial process that required no permission whatsoever. It reiterated that an individual’s fundamental rights did not get diminished by being a member of the civil service. Holding that “the purpose behind the proceedings appeared calculated to harass the appellant since he had dared to point out certain aspects of mal-administration,” the Court was unscathing in its remarks against attempts to restrict the citizens’ rights:

*The Constitution declares that India is a sovereign democratic Republic. The requirement of such democratic republic is that every action of the State is to be informed with reason. State is not a hierarchy of regressively genuflecting coterie of bureaucracy.*⁹

Criticism is inherent in the right to freedom of speech and expression. Rule 9 makes an underlying assumption that any criticism of the government is synonymous with indiscipline and insubordination. The reasoning that if every employee begins to criticise the government, it would lead to widespread chaos and disorder is too fallacious. Criticism does not mean that disobedience and criticising the government is not tantamount to disobeying the orders of the government. Democracy is based on fair criticism and that is the reason why the right to freedom of speech and expression has been made a fundamental right protected by the Constitution. Under Article 13(2), Rule 9 of the CCS (Conduct) Rules is therefore ultra vires to this fundamental right and is, hence, automatically void.

The CCS (Conduct) Rules, 1964 have been severely criticised by commentators, demanding their replacement by a broad set of "code of ethics" like in other countries. In the United Kingdom, as per the Civil Service Values (2006) and a legally enforceable code of conduct, civil servants are expected to observe integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality. In the United States (US), government employees follow a code of ethics that was devised in 1958. The Ethics in Government Act, 1978 established the US office of government ethics to foster high ethical standards for employees to strengthen the public's confidence that the government's business is conducted with impartiality and integrity and without conflict of interest. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Council and the European Union both prescribe a broad set of principles governing ethical conduct of employees in public institutions.¹⁰ In contrast, the CCS (Conduct) Rules, 1964 do not lay down a code of ethics for Indian public servants, but merely prescribe a series of do's and don'ts.

Way back, in 1957, the Department of Administrative Reforms of the Government of India had prepared a code of ethics for public services, prescribing standards of integrity and conduct which were never issued. In 2006, the Department of Personnel had drafted a Public Service Bill emphasising political neutrality, objectivity, impartiality, integrity, honesty, etc, for all public servants, but like the code of ethics, this too was soon forgotten. The second Administrative Reforms Commission in its Fourth Report (2007), while recommending a code of ethics for public servants, also emphasised a set of "civil service values" "like integrity, impartiality, commitment to public service, open accountability, devotion to duty and exemplary behaviour," the transgression of which should attract disciplinary action.¹¹

Nearly 70 years after independence, civil servants in this country no longer want to be treated as unruly kids ignorant of their roles and responsibilities. The house of cards in which they have been made to live for so long needs to be dismantled once and for all. The dated CCS (Conduct) Rules, 1964, must be consigned to the dustbin of history and replaced by a new code of ethics based on self-regulation, accountability and transparency.;

Anudeep Durishetty AIR 1 Mains GS Strategy, Sources and PDF Notes

I've written this post assuming someone who had already read the foundational books for GS Prelims. If you haven't read them as yet, you should first read my [post on GS Prelims](#). At the end of this article, I embedded download links to my complete GS notes and answer copies.

As you start reading the books I mention here for GS mains, please keep the following points in mind:

1. Along with these books, get a printout of the syllabus and read it carefully. Your final aim must be: for each topic mentioned in the syllabus, you should have enough content to write a 250-word answer.
2. Go through the past five years' question papers to understand the breadth and depth of questions UPSC usually asks. It'll give you a good perspective of what's important and what's not.
3. Use the internet extensively, especially for topics like Science and Tech. Your target must be to gain knowledge, be it through books or through the internet.
4. For all subjects, you have to superimpose current affairs over it, especially for GS-2 and GS-3. For both these papers, current affairs form the nucleus. You will inevitably do a lot of reading on the internet, so use [Evernote](#) to organise and highlight content

like [this](#).

5. Give adequate time for revision. Without it, you will not be able to recollect whatever you may have read. So please dedicate enough time to it, whether you are giving a mock test or the actual exam.
6. Many aspirants commit one fundamental mistake: they read and revise, over and over, but never practise. Remember that the examiner checking your copy will have no idea about the number of books you've read or the number of hours you've slogged. Your answers are all that he has to judge you. So it makes sense to learn it, practise it and perfect it.
7. Mains exam demands not only our memory and intelligence but also endurance. If you lack prior practice, writing relentlessly for 6 hours a day and do this for 5 days will cause both mental and physical fatigue. The only way to overcome it is to practice enough before the final exam.
8. General Studies demands only a peripheral understanding of an expansive set of topics. So it's important that you try to gain minimum sufficient knowledge over a diverse set of subjects rather than obsessively focussing on one topic. For instance, it doesn't make sense to read World History for three months at the expense of all other subjects. Always maintain that fine balance between all the topics and don't get imprisoned in one.
9. In GS, there will be very few questions where you will have absolutely no clue. Even if you only have a vague idea, write those generic points. For instance, in last year's GS-1 paper, for the question on Malay peninsula, I knew no specific fact except a vague idea that Singapore had a partition story similar to India. So I just wrote a generic answer comprising of problems such as ethnic strife, insurgency, and economic collapse. The examiner checking my copy might have given 2-3 marks for it, which I am sure any aspirant would gladly take.

10. You must develop the skill to speed read a committee or an organisation's report on your computer (reading online saves you a lot of time) and highlight important lines as you read along. In the second reading, this highlighted portion is what you need to revise. It should look something like [this](#).
11. In GS papers, map of India is your most effective tool for illustration. For example, I drew India maps and labelled relevant parts for questions on river linkage (GS-3), North-East insurgency (GS-3), Inland navigation (GS-1), India's 18th-century fragmented polity (GS-1) etc. Practise it enough so that you are able to draw and label it under 60 seconds.
12. If you are taking a test series, please give those tests with all the seriousness of the final UPSC exam. In the mock test, if you take 10-15 additional minutes to finish the paper, you are cheating no one except yourself. Observe strict time limits.
13. You will never feel content with your Mains preparation and there is always a nagging tendency to just keep reading and procrastinate writing answers or skip an upcoming test. You have to overcome this reluctance through conscious effort. Suppose before a mock test if you were unable to finish the syllabus, you can postpone your test by a day or two, but don't skip it altogether.
14. Perfectionism is your enemy. If you keep referring to countless sources to make that "perfect notes", if you keep postponing your mock tests in order to write "perfect tests", this mentality will bring you to ruin. Getting a good score in Mains is about attempting all questions to which some answers are excellent, some good and many above average. So instead of waiting for that elusive perfection, start imperfect and then keep improving.
15. When you are buying coaching material, always ask yourself: "what new is this material adding to my preparation?" If you can't answer that question

convincingly, then the material probably isn't really useful.

16. Just because I am AIR-1, it does not mean that my notes are the best or that this book list is the last word. If you have been studying some other material, that's fine, too. To succeed in this exam, the source of material is not important. What's important is you to understand the concepts, memorise the facts well and have a firm grip over the entire syllabus.

The list of books for GS Mains:

GS 1

Indian Art and Culture

1. An Introduction to Indian Art – Class XI NCERT
2. Chapters related to culture in Ancient and Medieval India NCERTs
3. Centre for Cultural Resource and Training (CCRT) material
4. Heritage Crafts: Living Craft Traditions of India -NCERT
 - For someone who is starting just now, this topic can overwhelm them. So I suggest beginners read this section after they get acquainted with other GS topics.
 - In Art and Culture, questions asked by UPSC in recent years are more analytical– which requires both the factual content and good analysis to answer the why and how. You can answer such questions well only when you understand the historical background in which such art was produced. This is why it's important that you read NCERT XI Ancient India for it gives you that historical context.
 - For instance, don't just memorise features of say, Sangam literature or Chola architecture, but understand the social, political, religious and economic context in which such grand art was produced. They will form the

analysis part and will help you write great answers.

- Make good use of the internet to watch both visual and performing arts to understand how they actually look in real life. You will be able to recollect such visuals more easily. They will help you write a decent answer for questions which you only have a vague idea about.
- Wherever relevant, draw diagrams to illustrate your answers. For instance, you can draw a rough sketch to show the features of a Stupa, Dravida, and Nagara style architecture, Paleolithic art, Folk arts such as Warli, Harappan pottery etc. You don't need to be a Michelangelo for this, but you must ensure that the fundamentals are correct. For example, in Warli art, human bodies are represented by triangles, heads by circles and hands by simple lines. Just get these basics right. Link to download diagrams is given at the end of the article.
- Art and Culture requires a ton of memorisation and there's really no shortcut to mastering it except through multiple revisions.

Modern Indian History

1. A Brief History of Modern India- Spectrum Publications
 2. India's Struggle for Independence – Bipan Chandra (Read selectively for topics not covered in the Spectrum book)
- Questions on Indian history are something that every serious aspirant will answer well, so you really cannot afford to let go of these questions. If you had done your prelims preparation for this topic well, that is good enough. You just need to practise answer writing.

India's Post Independence History

1. India Since Independence by Bipan Chandra
2. For certain topics, I made notes from this book. Download link is given at the end.

World History

- I prepared entirely for this topic from this outstanding book: [Download](#)
- Since revising this big book before the exam was difficult, I prepared concise notes from it. I also practised maps to demonstrate major world historical events.
- Link to download my notes and maps is given at the end of the article.

Geography

- The study plan is the same as for prelims, which I've explained [here](#).

Indian [Society](#)

- This is a generic, nebulous topic with no style or structure. Questions are sometimes vague, philosophical and the challenge we face is not so much in lack of content as in presenting it concisely in 200 odd words. To understand the basics, read NCERT Sociology Std XI and XII. Make concise notes on each topic that includes: a crisp definition, latest statistics, govt schemes, criticism of these schemes; causes of issues such as communalism and regionalism, historical and current examples, their impact on our society, and your suggestions as the way ahead. (you can get these suggestions from the internet or ARC 2 or some committee report). In case if you find good coaching material for these topics, that'll do as well.
- For this topic, a generic answer with proper structure and subheadings that cover multiple dimensions is good enough to fetch you marks. You can find my notes at the end of the article.

Polity, Governance and Social Justice

Static Portion:

1. [Laxmikanth](#)
2. Polity Notes (this will provide analytical content. Download link is given at the end of the article)
3. ARC 2 (One of the best reports ever written for the government. It's been more than ten years since the reports were published, but the content is still priceless. Read complete reports, memorise only recommendations)

Current Affairs:

1. The Hindu
 2. [The Big Picture on RSTV](#)
 3. Civildaily current affairs material
 4. I also referred to Insights/ForumIAS current affairs material for topics not covered well by Civildaily
 5. PRS India for latest legislation
 6. [All India Radio – Spotlight](#) (used to listen during my commute to the office)
- Open your answers with Constitutional articles. Question on Governor? Art 153 must be there in the first line. Question on Civil Services? Art 312 is where you begin. If there's a technical term like 'Parliamentary Sovereignty', 'Political democracy' or 'Social Audit' – define them in your introduction telling the examiner what you understand by those terms.
 - Supreme Court judgements are very important. Make a list of important judgements (both historical and current) and quote them to substantiate your answer. For example, when you are answering a question on Free speech, quoting SC judgement in *Shreya Singhal vs Union of India* case will add tremendous value to your answers.
 - For a debatable topic, always write both sides of the

issue even if not explicitly asked in the question.

Example: A question might ask: *Do you agree that Civil Services is in need of drastic reforms?* For this, explain under a subheading why drastic reforms are needed. And in the next paragraph, counter by saying why drastic reforms are harmful. In the end, you can add the view of ARC 2/Hota/Surendranath committee to convey your view and end on a balanced note.

- For miscellaneous topics like the comparison of Constitutions, RPA Act, SHG, e-Governance etc refer to any good coaching material to have 200-word worth content. Source latest examples and issues from newspapers and quote them in your answers.
- Prepare thoroughly on Govt policies and bills. PRS India is an excellent resource for all the latest legislation in the offing and The Hindu for policy criticism. But the [newspaper](#) is patently leftist and they publish articles incessantly and nauseatingly ranting on policies they don't like (Eg: Aadhar). But as someone aspiring to be a civil servant, you need to be more dispassionate. This is why you must actively pursue articles with a contrarian and balanced opinions like [this](#) and [this](#).
- Cram latest statistics pertaining to health, employment, women, education, poverty etc. Also apart from committees, you may quote authentic reports from reputed organisations such as Lancet, Transparency International, UNICEF, FAO etc to substantiate your point. I made notes on important statistics that can be used for all papers of GS and essay. Download link is given at the end of the article.
- Conclusion: Wherever possible, end with a committee/ commission recommendation or observation. For instance, a question on Centre-State relations should invariably end with Punchhi Commission, a question on death penalty with Law Commission and a question on Indian Constitution with NCRWC. Referring to Sustainable

Development Goals, Preamble, DPSP is also another good way to end your answers.

International Relations

- Any good book that adequately covers the historical aspect of India's bilateral relations.
- Current affairs: The Hindu, India's World on RSTV, Civildaily or Insights or ForumIAS depending upon the topic.
- Questions on IR will be almost, always be about the current happenings in the world. But before you run after the Hindu or some other latest magazine for this section, it's important that you understand the historical background of India's relationship with other countries. This is indispensable because every bilateral issue that you see in the [news](#) can be traced back to history. Once you understand this historical context, this topic becomes uncomplicated.
- For example, let's take India China relations. Don't merely focus on Doklam crisis and troop positioning, but understand the larger context of our border dispute with China, the agreements we had signed starting with the Simla Accord of 1914. For India-Sri Lanka, don't just concentrate that India voted for or against Sri Lanka at the UN, but understand how India always championed peace between the Tamils and the Sinhalese, the 1987 accord, its fallout, Sri Lankan civil war and what India did during these times. When you have that bigger picture in mind, each part of the puzzle becomes easier to fit in.
- For miscellaneous topics like diaspora and international institutions, refer to any good coaching material.
- Draw map wherever relevant. Example: for India-Iran relations, you can draw a rough map to show how the Chabahar port helps us to bypass Pakistan and reach Afghanistan. Act East policy can be demonstrated with arrows pointing from India and showing our specific

- relationship with Vietnam, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Australia and ASEAN, MGC, BIMSTEC etc.,
- Each bilateral relationship or a global grouping is multi-faceted. To make your answers comprehensive, always write a multidimensional perspective that includes: the strategic dimension, defence co-operation, technology, education, culture, diaspora, trade and investment, co-operation in global fora etc.

GS 3

Economy

Static part:

1. Standard resources I already mentioned in my [prelims post](#)
2. Budget (any coaching material compilation)
3. Economic Survey (gist)
4. Niti 3-year Action Plan report (a good resource for policy recommendations that come in handy while you write conclusion)

Current Affairs:

1. The Hindu
2. Civildaily
3. I referred to Insights/ForumIAS current affairs material for topics not covered well by Civildaily

Indian Agriculture, Land reforms, PDS, Food Processing, LPG, Infrastructure

1. Mrunal.org
2. Vision IAS
3. The Hindu and Civildaily for current affairs

- You need to remember that for GS-3, questions revolve around current affairs and there is no dearth of

material. It may sound counter-intuitive, but the trick is to restrict yourself to material that's good enough for you to write a 250-word answer for all topics. It's very important that you don't get sunk under the heap of current affairs and coaching material.

- So for each topic mentioned in the syllabus, make concise notes from the resources mentioned above. I also found Niti Aayog's 3-year Action Plan report really helpful for this paper. And just as I had mentioned for GS-2, statistics and committee reports are very important.

Security

- Vajiram and Vision IAS material
- The Hindu and Civildaily for current affairs
- Prepare crisp and clear definitions of technical terms such as cybersecurity, terrorism, organised crime, money laundering, left-wing extremism etc.
- For questions on border security, draw India map to illustrate.

Disaster Management

- Fundamental reading: [CBSE book](#)
- Prepare concise notes on [NDMA](#) (structure, functions, rules etc), international agreements such as Sendai Framework, latest current affairs from newspapers, internet and coaching material.
- Draw diagrams to illustrate concepts like river embankment, land zoning, watershed management etc.

Environment and Ecology

- Shankar IAS book
- The Hindu and Civildaily for current affairs
- My handwritten notes (Download link given at the end)

Science & Tech

1. The Hindu
2. Vision IAS Mains 365
3. YouTube

- This topic terrifies many aspirants, and for good reason. There's no single book or resource to help one navigate this section and it all feels like one big haze. But there's good news: the questions asked in S&T are mostly from current affairs and you are expected to have only a general understanding of the topics.
- During my preparation, I used to note down in my book whatever scientific term or technology that's frequently talked about in news. For instance, these days we repeatedly encounter terms such as *Artificial General Intelligence*, *Blockchain*, *Machine Learning*, *Cryptocurrency*, *CRISPR-CAS9* in news and on the internet.
- Note down all such scientific concepts that are in news and then scour the internet (especially Youtube) to understand them. There are many explainer videos on Youtube that explain the concept so well that even a school student can understand it. For instance, take this [excellent video](#) on blockchain technology. Once you see it, it's impossible for you to miss a question on blockchain and its practical applications.
- Apart from the above, you need to learn fundamental terms and technologies used in Space (PSLV, GSLV, Cryo Engine etc), Nanotech, Nuclear Research (Fast breeder reactor, Uranium enrichment, Nuclear fission and fusion etc.), Defence (Cruise missile, Ballistic missile, Stealth Bomber etc), Biotech (Gene editing, Stem Cells, GM food etc), Communication (LIDAR, RADAR, LiFi, 5G etc). Any comprehensive material of a coaching institute will be sufficient for this (I referred to Vajiram printed notes).
- Whatever S&T topic you are learning, always focus on the concept, why is it in news, practical applications, potential threats, benefits far into the future etc.

Just do this and you will easily handle this topic in the final exam.

GS 4

- 2nd ARC reports: Ethics in Governance, Promoting E-gov, RTI, Citizen-centric Administration, Personnel Administration. Read all ARC reports completely, memorise only recommendations.
- For moral thinkers, Google them to read about their major contributions and for misc topics such as corporate governance, I referred to Vajiram printed material. I also prepared some notes for certain topics (download link at the end of the article)
- I went through the syllabus and tried to define each term in clear words and simple sentences. I found this exercise very useful because these definitions inevitably formed the introduction to most of my answers. For all of ethics paper, the essence can be distilled as just this: a clear and simple definition of the term and a real-life example to illustrate the concept. You can draw flowcharts and schematics wherever apt.
- It's important to understand that each question is an opportunity to display your ethics. This will be best demonstrated by the actions you did or some other personalised/ real-life examples you quote. Reflect on your childhood, school life, college time, professional career etc and glean examples that are simple, unpretentious and at the same time bring out your ethical values clearly. For some questions, you can also quote historical examples from the lives of great leaders.
- For case studies, my aim was not so much in writing ingenious, extraordinary solutions, but to write something that's realistic and practicable and finish the paper no matter what.

- I always started with Q1 and not with case studies because I could not see how one mark in Section B (case studies) is superior to one mark in Section A. I gave equal importance and dedicated equal time to both the sections.
- Rest of the GS papers have 20 questions each, Ethics has only 14. But don't let that number 14 fool you. I've always found GS-4 to be the lengthiest paper of all. Every question in Section A has many subparts that drain an inordinate amount of your time. In fact, if we go by the absolute numbers, we write more words in GS-4 than in other papers. So to manage your time well: Abide by the rule that you must complete at least 80 marks worth of questions in each hour, irrespective of whether you start with Section A or Section B.
- Just before GS-4, you would have had written three stressful GS papers that would put your body condition under severe mental and physical strain. But it's important to stay mentally tough during this crucial period and push your endurance limits so as to survive another 3 hours of relentless writing. Remember that it's all in the mind— it can be your biggest enemy or your greatest strength.

My Notes

GS 1

- [World History Textbook](#)
- [World History Notes](#)
- [World History Maps](#)
- [Art and Culture Diagrams](#)
- [India Since Independence](#)
- [Geography – Resource Distribution](#)
- [Indian Society](#)

GS 2

- [Polity](#)
- [Constitutional Articles you need to memorise](#)

GS 3

- [Environment](#)

GS 4

- [Ethics](#)

Misc

- [Important Statistics for GS](#)
- [ARC 2 Notes](#)

Essay

- [Notes](#)
- [Quote collection](#)
- [List of important topics](#)

My GS Answer Copies

GS 2

- [Answer Booklet 1](#)
- [Answer Booklet 2](#) (accurately represents my writing style in the final exam)

GS 3

- [Answer Booklet 1](#)
- [Answer Booklet 2](#) (accurately represents my writing style in the final exam)

GS 4

- [Answer Booklet 1](#)

Essay

- [Essay Copy](#)

GS may look insurmountable at first, but remember that it's always the small steps towards the summit that count. Through effective planning and adequate practice, anyone can conquer it.

My best wishes.

Until next time,
Anudeep.

Via [How to conquer GS in UPSC Mains, Explained](#) . Re-posted in full instead of Linking. Wanted here in full for a benchmark. Our links are auto updated and not provided in original post.

Source: xaam.in

UPSC Prelims Result 2018 is out

This time UPSC has sent personal mail regarding the result.
[Download](#)

To subscribe the Prelims 2019 Test series [Click here](#)

Test series contains 200+ modular and Full Mocks|Instant Result|All India Ranking|2 years of current affairs bimonthly test|Vision magazine based tests of 2 years|NCERT tests|Standard Reference Books based Tests|

Source: xaam.in

Fifteen point ACTION PLAN FOR COMBATING AIR POLLUTION by NITI Aayog

[Download](#)

Source: xaam.in

UPSC Prelims Result 2018 likely between July 20-22 at upsc.gov.in

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is likely to release Civil Services Prelims Exam Results 2018 anytime next week, between July 20 to 22, on upsc.gov.in said sources. Earlier, reports suggested that the UPSC could announce the Civil Services Prelims Exam Results 2018 results on Friday. However the results were postponed for a later date.

[Join Our Prelims Test Series](#)

[UPSC CSE Prelims 2019 Foundation + Full Length Test Series \(English+ Hindi medium\)<< Click Here](#)

You get 200+ Tests

40 NCERT based Tests with revision tests and full mock covering Class VI-XII(all subjects)

20 Standard Reference Books based Tests(Ex- laxmikant,Ramesh Singh ,Spectrum,Shankar environment)

22 Current Affairs tests based on Vision IAS current affairs magazine,(since they are considered exhaustive)

24 Bimonthly current affairs tests covering The Hindu,Indian Express etc) of 2018-19 and 24 test of 2017-18(As UPSC asks current affairs question even beyond 2years)

5 Tests on economic Survey and India Year Book

10 full Mock Tests

100 Previous year based tests

The test series is so designed to strengthen your basics and provide regular practice and revision. Both NCERT based tests and Standard Reference Books based Tests will be over by December. While not leaving behind current affairs as often done by aspirants.The comprehensive coverage of the syllabus will help you in your mains preparation too. Once everything is complete we will start Full Mock (of the whole syllabus) from December.

In this examination, planning matters a lot so that you do not panic at the last moment.

Source: xaam.in

VISION IAS Magazine based Test for April 2018 activated

TEST ACTIVATION ALERT!!

VISION IAS Magazine based Test for April 2018 has been activated. Subscribers can attempt the test. There are tons of monthly magazines available but VISION Current affairs magazine are reliable and proved their worth in both prelims and Mains. As we have posted a detailed analysis([Click here](#)), many questions of current affairs in Prelims 2018 were from our tests based on this magazine.

We were wondering on two years old questions (IRNSS one)in Prelims 2018. But if you will go through April magazine IRNSS was in news and details are given. Those who marked this question wrong should seriously consider to read this monthly

magazine and attempt the tests based on it.

To attempt the test [click here](#)

To subscribe the Prelims 2019 Test series [Click here](#)

Test series contains 200+ modular and Full Mocks|Instant Result|All India Ranking|2 years of current affairs bimonthlytest|Vision magazine based tests of 2 years|NCERT tests|Standard Reference Books based Tests|

Source: xaam.in

SRIRAM's IAS Economy Updated 2018 Notes Download

[Download](#)

[Join Our Prelims Test Series](#)

[UPSC CSE Prelims 2019 Foundation + Full Length Test Series \(English+ Hindi medium\)<< Click Here](#)

You get 200+ Tests

40 NCERT based Tests with revision tests and full mock covering Class VI-XII(all subjects)

20 Standard Reference Books based Tests(Ex- laxmikant,Ramesh Singh ,Spectrum,Shankar environment)

22 Current Affairs tests based on Vision IAS current affairs magazine,(since they are considered exhaustive)

24 Bimonthly current affairs tests covering The Hindu,Indian Express etc) of 2018-19 and 24 test of 2017-18(As UPSC asks current affairs question even beyond 2years)

5 Tests on economic Survey and India Year Book

10 full Mock Tests

100 Previous year based tests

The test series is so designed to strengthen your basics and provide regular practice and revision. Both NCERT based tests and Standard Reference Books based Tests will be over by December. While not leaving behind current affairs as often done by aspirants.The comprehensive coverage of the syllabus will help you in your mains preparation too.

Once everything is complete we will start Full Mock (of the whole syllabus) from December.

In this examination, planning matters a lot so that you do not panic at the last moment.

Source: xaam.in

India and World Geography Special Edition Pratiyogita Darpan

[Download](#)

Source: xaam.in