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G-20: CHANNEL FOR MULTILATERAL WORLD POLITICAL ORDER

WHY IN THE NEWS?

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, speaking at the G20 session in South Africa, highlighted the strain on the global order due to ongoing conflicts. He called for greater plurilateralism and emphasized that global agendas should not be driven by a few interests, urging collective efforts for international law and multilateral cooperation. On the Middle East, Jaishankar welcomed the Gaza ceasefire and hostage release, reaffirming India's strong stance against terrorism and support for a two-state solution. He also stressed the importance of maintaining peace in Lebanon and finding a Syrian-led solution to the ongoing conflict, noting that stability in the region is crucial for global peace.

WHAT IS THE G-20 GROUP?

The **G20 Group** (Group of Twenty) is an international forum of major economies that brings together 19 countries and the European Union and African Union to discuss and coordinate policies on global economic

issues. The G20 was established in 1999 to promote international financial stability and foster dialogue on economic cooperation. It includes both developed and developing countries, representing about 85% of global GDP and 75% of global trade.

Key Members: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the UK, the US, the European Union, and the African Union.

EVOLUTIONS OF G-20 GROUP:

1. Formation:
1999: The G20 was created as a forum for finance ministers and central bank governors to discuss the global economy after the Asian financial crisis.

2008: The G20 was elevated to a summit of heads of state and government in response to the global financial crisis.

2009: The G20 was designated the "premier forum for international economic cooperation."

2. Expansion of Focus:
The G20's agenda expanded to include trade, climate change, sustainable development, health, energy, environment, and anti-corruption.

It has emphasized inclusive growth, women empowerment, and representation.

3. Annual Summits:
Since 2010, the G20 has held annual summits with the host country rotating each year. The presidency brings together the G20 agenda.

4. Membership:
The G20 includes the world's major economies, the European Union and the African Union.

INDIA AND G-20 GROUP

1. India's Joining the G20:
India became a member of the G20 in 1999 when the group was formed as a forum for finance ministers and central bank governors to discuss the global economy, especially after the Asian financial crisis.

2. India's Leadership Role in the G20:
India has been an active participant and contributor to the G20 discussions, especially on issues like inclusive growth, sustainable development, climate change, and reform of international institutions. As a major emerging economy, India advocates for the interests of developing nations, pushing for reforms in global financial governance and ensuring that the voices of Global South countries are heard.

3. India's Presidency in 2023:
India is hosting the G20 Presidency in 2023, marking its first time as the host country. The theme for India's G20 Presidency in 2023 is "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (The World is One Family), inspired by India's ancient philosophy that underscores the interconnectedness of all people and nations. **During its presidency, India aims to focus on addressing global challenges, such as:** Climate Change, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Global Health, Inclusive Growth, Energy Security, Digital Transformation and Technological Innovation.

G-20 GROUP A PLATFORM FOR PLURILATERALISM
The G-20 has become a platform for plurilateralism, where specific groups of countries within the forum cooperate on targeted global issues. Unlike multilateralism, which involves broad agreements among most nations, plurilateralism allows for quicker, more focused action on issues like climate change, trade, and global health.

1. Focused Action: G-20 tackles urgent issues efficiently, like digital economy and sustainable development, with smaller groups of countries.

2. Flexibility: Plurilateral agreements within the G-20 bypass the gridlock of larger organizations, addressing challenges quickly.

3. Strategic Alliances: Initiatives like AUKUS and the Minerals Security Partnership reflect targeted collaboration within the group.

4. Geopolitical Cooperation: The G-20 helps resolve issues where countries with shared interests can form alliances (e.g., climate action, trade reform).

5. Overcoming Deadlocks: Plurilateralism within the G-20 enables progress when larger multilateral bodies like the UN or WTO stall.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES HINDERING G-20 GROUPING?

1. Differing Priorities: Developed and developing nations within the G-20 often have conflicting economic priorities, making consensus difficult.

2. Lack of Enforcement Power: The G-20 has no authority to enforce summit decisions, leading to concerns about unfulfilled commitments.

3. Climate Change Disagreement: Differing national views on emissions reduction and financial responsibility make it hard to reach a climate action consensus.

4. Inequality Concerns: The economic gap between rich and poor countries within the G-20 poses challenges to addressing issues like poverty and sustainable development.

5. Trade Disputes: Protectionism and trade wars among member states can undermine global economic cooperation.

6. Debt Crisis: High debt levels in some developing countries limit their ability to engage effectively in discussions.

7. Lack of Inclusivity: Some argue the G-20 does not fully represent the interests of smaller and developing economies.

RECOMMENDATION TO STRENGTHEN G-20 GROUP

1. Enhanced Cooperation Amid Geopolitical Rivalries: Foster dialogue and trust-building initiatives between major powers like the US and China to resolve differences and promote collaboration on global issues.

2. Clear Accountability Mechanisms: Introduce mechanisms for monitoring and holding member states accountable for fulfilling commitments, ensuring that summit agreements are acted upon effectively.

3. Addressing Economic Inequality: Focus on policies that narrow the gap between rich and poor countries, including tailored solutions for poverty reduction, debt relief, and sustainable development.

4. Promoting Trade Cooperation: Strengthen international trade agreements and tackle protectionism by creating frameworks that encourage open markets and fair competition.

5. Debt Relief Initiatives: Enhance support for developing countries with high debt burdens through debt restructuring programs or low-interest financing options to facilitate better participation in global discussions.

6. Strengthening Multilateralism: Build stronger cooperation with international organizations such as the United Nations, World Bank, and IMF to align G-20 priorities with broader global goals, ensuring a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to challenges.

7. Developing Actionable Solutions: Shift focus from broad, aspirational goals to more concrete and actionable policies that can address immediate global issues like health crises, economic recovery, and sustainable energy transitions.

8. Climate Change Consensus: Establish a more unified approach to climate action, with clear emission reduction targets and shared financial responsibility to drive collective global progress.

CONCLUSION

The G-20 group plays a pivotal role in shaping global economic policies and addressing pressing issues like climate change, trade, and development. While it has made significant strides in fostering cooperation, challenges such as geopolitical rivalries, differing priorities, and the lack of enforcement power hinder its full potential. India, with its leadership role in 2023, has emphasized inclusivity and plurilateralism, reflecting the evolving dynamics of the global order. By addressing key concerns like economic inequality, trade disputes, and climate change, the G-20 can further strengthen its capacity to promote a more equitable and sustainable global future.

PRELIMS QUESTIONS:

Q. With reference to the G-20 Group, consider the following statements:

1. The G-20 was established in 1999 as a forum for finance ministers and central bank governors to discuss global economic issues.
2. The G-20 includes only developed countries and excludes emerging economies.
3. The G-20 presidency rotates annually among its member countries.

How many of the above-given statements are correct?

A. Only one
B. Only two
C. All three
D. None
Answer: B

MAINS QUESTIONS:

Q. Discuss the evolution of the G-20 Group and its significance in global economic governance. What are the key challenges faced by the G-20, and how can the group be strengthened to address emerging global issues (250 words, 15 marks)

Ritik singh

PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

WHY IN THE NEWS?

India's parliamentary democracy has been in focus due to disruptions in proceedings, governance debates, and demands for reforms. Reports from the Sarkaria and Punchhi Commissions highlight systemic issues. Recently, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla emphasized India's democratic success, citing 75 years of resolving challenges through dialogue. He also stressed the role of educators and technological advancements like simultaneous interpretation in 22 languages and digitization of parliamentary debates.
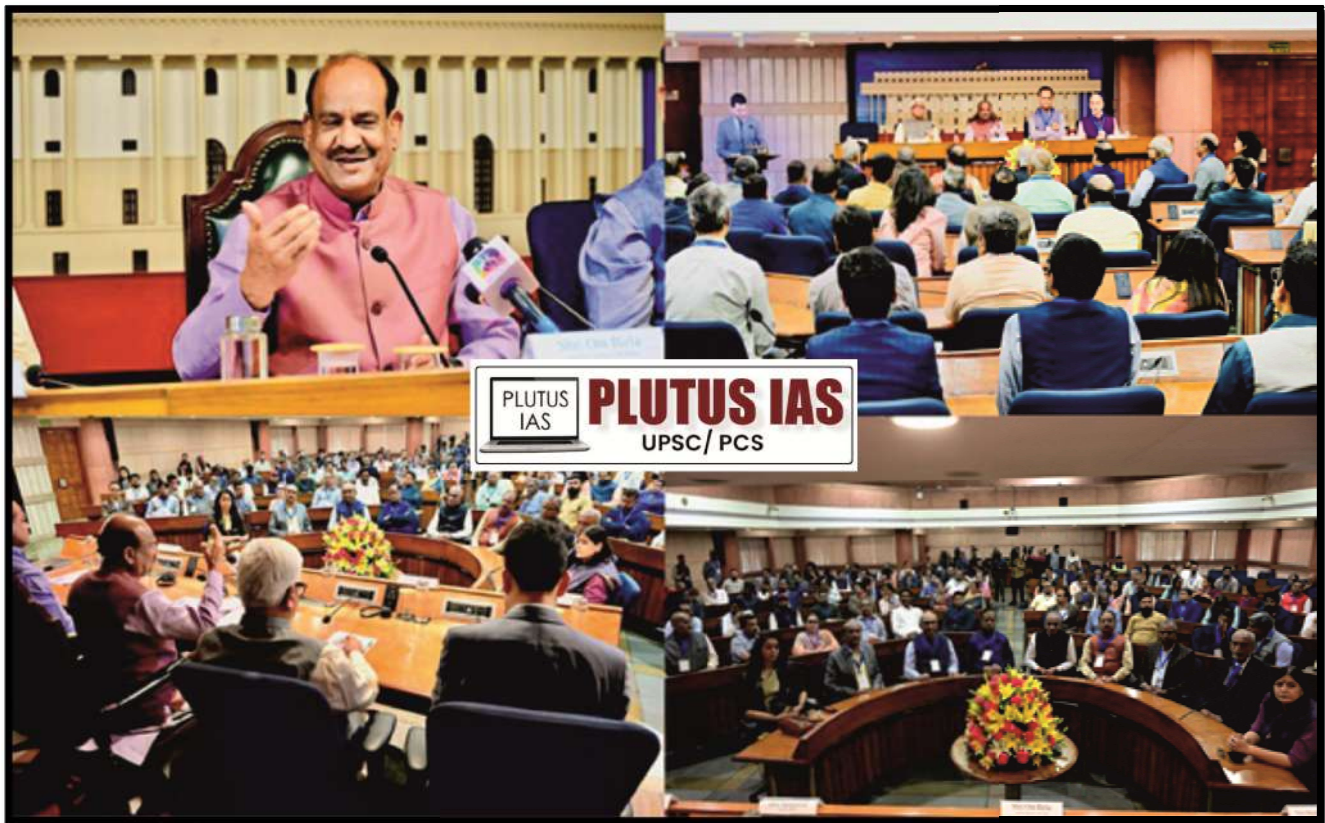
WHAT IS PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY?

Parliamentary democracy is a system of governance where the executive derives its legitimacy from and is accountable to the legislature. The head of the government, typically a Prime Minister, is chosen from the majority party in the legislature and is responsible for policy implementation. Unlike a presidential system, where the head of state is directly elected by the people and remains independent of the legislature, a parliamentary democracy integrates the executive and legislative branches, ensuring a system of collective responsibility.

KEY FEATURES OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY:

1. Collective Responsibility (Article 75, 164) – The Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to the legislature, ensuring accountability.

2. Bicameral Legislature (Article 79-122) – India has a two-house system, consisting of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

3. Prime Minister as Head of Government (Article 74, 75) – The Prime Minister leads the government, while the President remains the nominal head.

4. Fusion of Powers – The executive is derived from the legislature, unlike the presidential system where powers are strictly separated.

5. Party System and Whip (Tenth Schedule, Anti-Defection Law) – Political parties play a significant role, and the whip system enforces party discipline.

6. Dissolution of the Lower House (Article 83(2), 85(2)(b)) – The Lok Sabha can be dissolved before its tenure ends on the Prime Minister's recommendation to the President.

7. Judicial Review (Article 32, 136, 226) – Unlike the UK, India's judiciary has the power of review to ensure constitutional compliance.

8. Parliamentary Privileges (Article 105, 194) – Provides special privileges to ensure the smooth functioning of Parliament and State Legislatures.

FEATURES OF INDIA'S PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

1. Elected Head of State (President) – Unlike the UK, where the monarch is hereditary, India's President is elected.

2. Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha – Similar to the UK's House of Commons and House of Lords.

3. Judicial Review – Unlike the UK, where parliamentary sovereignty is absolute, India follows the doctrine of judicial review, allowing courts to strike down unconstitutional laws.

4. Federal Structure with a Strong Centre – Unlike the UK's unitary system, India has a quasi-federal structure with a powerful central government.

5. Collective Responsibility – The Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha, ensuring accountability.

6. Separation of Powers with Overlap – While the executive and legislature are interconnected, an independent judiciary ensures checks and balances.

7. Anti-Defection Law – Prevents political instability by disallowing members from switching parties without consequences.

8. Representation of States and Union Territories – Rajya Sabha provides states and UTs a platform for legislative participation.

9. Prime Minister as the Leader of the Executive – The Prime Minister is the head of government, deriving authority from the majority in the Lok Sabha.

10. Role of the Speaker – The Speaker of the Lok Sabha plays a crucial role in maintaining legislative discipline and impartiality.

11. Parliamentary Committees – These enhance legislative oversight, policy evaluation, and governance efficiency.

INDIA VS UK: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Feature	India	UK
Head of State	Elected President	Constitutional Monarch
Head of Government	Prime Minister (elected)	Prime Minister (elected)
Legislative System	Bicameral (Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha)	Bicameral (House of Commons & House of Lords)
Dissolution of Lower house	President dissolves on PM's advice	Monarch dissolves on PM's advice
Judicial Review	Yes	No (Parliament is supreme)
Federalism	Quasi-federal	Unitary

WHY DID INDIA ADOPT THE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM?

1.Historical Legacy – India was under British rule for nearly two centuries, and the parliamentary system was a familiar model.

2.Diversity and Pluralism – A parliamentary system allows for better representation of India's diverse population and accommodates coalition politics.

3. Accountability and Responsiveness – Ministers are directly accountable to the legislature, ensuring continuous scrutiny of government actions.

4.Flexibility and Stability – While coalition politics can be unstable, it also allows for a broad-based consensus in governance.

5.Experiences of Other Countries – The presidential system in countries like Pakistan has faced challenges related to dictatorship and instability, reinforcing India's decision.

ISSUES WITH INDIA'S PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM

1. Frequent Disruptions and Inefficiency – Parliamentary sessions often witness disruptions, reducing productivity.

2. Coalition Politics and Political Instability – Weak coalitions lead to policy paralysis and frequent government changes.

3. Excessive Control by the Executive – The dominance of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) reduces parliamentary oversight.

4. Anti-Defection Law Issues – While designed to prevent political defection, it sometimes stifles dissent within parties.

5. Criminalization of Politics – A significant number of lawmakers face criminal charges, undermining governance.

6.Lack of Inner-Party Democracy – Political parties in India often function without transparency and internal democracy.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORM

1. Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC):- Strengthen parliamentary committees for better legislative scrutiny. Improve executive-legislature coordination to enhance governance. Enhance Rajya Sabha's revising role to improve lawmaking.

2. Sarkaria Commission :- Advocate for greater state autonomy within the federal structure. Restrict misuse of Article 356 (President's Rule) to uphold state rights.

3. Punchhi Commission :- Implement fixed tenures for assemblies to avoid frequent elections. Establish clearer guidelines for Governor appointments to ensure impartiality.

4. Law Commission & Supreme Court Judgments :- Reform electoral laws to curb criminalization of politics and ensure fair representation.

(a) Kesavananda Bharati Case (1973) :- Reinforced the Basic Structure Doctrine, safeguarding parliamentary democracy.

(b) Lily Thomas Case (2013):- Disqualified convicted lawmakers from holding office, enhancing political accountability.

(c) Dinesh Trivedi Committee Report :- Recommended transparency in political party funding to reduce corruption.

5. Other Key Recommendations:- Introduce a constructive no-confidence motion to prevent government instability.Strengthen anti-defection laws while allowing genuine dissent within parties.Encourage inner-party democracy to reduce high-command culture.Increase the role of parliamentary research and expert consultation in policy-making.Promote digital innovations like e-Parliament for greater transparency and accessibility.

CASE STUDIES

1. Indira Gandhi's Emergency (1975-77) – Demonstrated the concentration of power within the executive and the risks of a weakened legislature.

2.Vajpayee Government (1999-2004) – Showcased coalition stability within the parliamentary framework.

3. Manmohan Singh's Tenure (2004-2014) – Highlighted the limitations of a parliamentary system where the Prime Minister lacked direct electoral legitimacy.

4.Narendra Modi's Government (2014-Present) – Strengthened the role of the Prime Minister within the parliamentary system but also raised concerns about centralization of power.

CONCLUSION

India's parliamentary democracy has been successful in ensuring political representation, stability, and accountability. However, challenges such as inefficiency, political instability, and executive dominance necessitate reforms. Strengthening parliamentary committees, promoting inner-party democracy, and implementing the recommendations of various commissions can enhance the system's effectiveness. While debates on adopting a presidential system occasionally emerge, the parliamentary system remains best suited to India's diverse and pluralistic society. The way forward lies in refining and strengthening the existing framework rather than replacing it altogether.

PRELIMS QUESTIONS:

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the dissolution of the Lok Sabha:

1. The President can dissolve the Lok Sabha on the advice of the Prime Minister.

2. The Rajya Sabha cannot be dissolved as it is a permanent body.

3. A dissolved Lok Sabha cannot be revived under any circumstances.
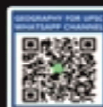
Which of the statements are correct?

a) 1 and 2 only

b) 2 and 3 only

c) 1 and 3 only

d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: A

MAINS QUESTIONS:

Q.Examine the effectiveness of India's parliamentary democracy in ensuring accountability and governance. What challenges does it face, and what reforms can be introduced to enhance its efficiency?

(250 words, 15 marks)

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