

MAINS MATRIX

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The Need to Address Caste-Based Atrocities

1. Core Issue: Persistent Caste-Based Atrocities

Despite constitutional guarantees of equality and protective legislation, caste-based discrimination and violence against SCs, STs, and OBCs persist across India.

Statistical Evidence (NCRB 2023):

Community	Cases Registered	% Change from 2022
Scheduled Castes (SCs)	57,789	+0.4%
Scheduled Tribes (STs)	12,960	+28.8%

Forms of Atrocities:

- Physical assaults in rural areas for violating caste norms.
- Discrimination in urban housing, education, and employment.

2. Root Causes and Persisting Issues

- 1. **Enduring Caste Hierarchies:** Deep-rooted belief in caste superiority perpetuates structural violence.
- 2. **Societal Failure:** Lack of internalization of humanitarian and egalitarian values questions India’s claim as a “civilized” society.
- 3. **Ineffective Safeguards:** Despite the **SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989**, implementation remains uneven and often symbolic.

3. Political Context and Critique

Issue	Description
Symbolic Inclusion	Religious and cultural inclusion of Dalits without meaningful policy support.
Hindutva Narrative	Frames marginalized assertions as divisive or “Hinduphobic.”
Stifling Dissent	Protesters and cultural activists face restrictions and

Issue	Description
	vilification (e.g., Phule film issue).
Policy Inconsistency	Reservations and welfare policies not uniformly enforced.
Lack of Political Will	No comprehensive national campaign against caste prejudice due to fear of alienating dominant castes.

4. Historical Context & Decline of Anti-Caste Movements

Phase	Characteristics
1970s–1990s:	Movements like <i>Dalit Panthers</i> and <i>Bahujan Samaj Party</i> redefined caste identity politics and challenged Brahmanical dominance.
Present:	Movements have fragmented, weakened, and lost their national visibility. Civil society has become less responsive to caste violence.

5. Systemic and Institutional Failures

1. Weak Enforcement:

- Police and judiciary often biased.

- Delayed investigations and procedural lapses.

2. Low Conviction Rate:

- Many cases under the SC/ST Act collapse due to lack of evidence or hostile witnesses.

3. Judicial Backlog:

- Over **60% of Atrocities Act cases** pending in courts (2023 study).

6. Way Forward: A Multi-Pronged Strategy

Dimension	Proposed Actions
Law Enforcement	Ensure timely investigation, fast-track courts, and caste-sensitivity training for police & judiciary.
Political Leadership	Launch a National Campaign for Social Equality using education, media, and community platforms.
Civil Society & Academia	Promote inter-caste dialogue through religious bodies, cultural forums, and universities.
Affirmative Action	Strengthen reservation monitoring systems for education and jobs

Dimension	Proposed Actions
	with transparency and accountability.
Revival of Social Movements	Rebuild anti-caste solidarity, nurture Dalit-Bahujan leadership, and reclaim the social justice discourse.

7. Ethical and Constitutional Perspective

- **Constitutional Mandate:** Articles 15, 17, and 46 emphasize prohibition of discrimination and promotion of SC/ST welfare.
- **Ethical Dimension:** Upholding Ambedkar's ideals of "*liberty, equality, fraternity.*"
- **Moral Argument:** The persistence of caste atrocities undermines India's moral and democratic fabric.

HOW TO USE

Primary Relevance: GS Paper I (Indian Society)

1. Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India:

- **How to use:** Caste is a defining, and often negative, feature of Indian society. The data on atrocities shows the dark side of

this diversity, where hierarchy and discrimination persist.

- **Key Points:**

- Use the **NCRB 2023 data** (57,789 cases against SCs, a **28.8% increase** for STs) to argue that despite modernization, caste identity remains a primary source of conflict and violence.
- Discuss the **urban-rural continuum** of caste— from physical violence in villages to subtler discrimination in urban housing and jobs.

2. Role of Women and Women's Organization:

- **How to use:** Dalit and tribal women face **intersectional discrimination** (caste + gender), making them disproportionately vulnerable to violence and exploitation. This can be a powerful point in answers about women's safety.

3. Social Empowerment:

- **How to use:** The article directly addresses the tools for social empowerment (laws, movements, policies) and their limitations.
- **Key Points:**
 - Discuss the **decline of anti-caste**

movements (Dalit Panthers, BSP) and its impact on the social and political agency of marginalized groups.

- Highlight the need for a **revival of social movements** as a critical component of social empowerment.

Primary Relevance: GS Paper II (Governance, Constitution, Social Justice)

1. Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features:

- **How to use:** This is the core of the answer. The persistence of atrocities highlights the challenge of realizing constitutional promises.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Fundamental Rights:** Cite **Article 15** (prohibition of discrimination), **Article 17** (abolition of untouchability).
 - **Directive Principles:** Cite **Article 46** (promotion of educational and economic interests of SCs/STs).
 - **Preamble:** Link the issue to the ideals of **Justice (social, economic,**

political), Liberty, and Equality.

2. Governance, Transparency & Accountability:

- **How to use:** The institutional failures detailed in the article are a direct critique of governance.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Failure of Law Enforcement:** Police bias, delayed investigations, and low conviction rates show a failure in the implementation of a strong law like the **SC/ST (PoA) Act, 1989**.
 - **Judicial Delays:** The statistic that **over 60% of Atrocities Act cases are pending** is a severe indictment of the justice delivery system.
 - **Lack of Political Will:** The point about "fear of alienating dominant castes" preventing a national campaign is a sharp observation about the political economy of governance.

3. Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections:

- **How to use:** Go beyond listing schemes. Use this analysis to critique their effectiveness.
- **Key Points:**

- Argue that welfare schemes are insufficient without a concurrent attack on the social prejudice that enables atrocities.
- The "**symbolic inclusion**" without "**meaningful policy support**" is a powerful phrase to describe this gap.

Secondary Relevance: GS Paper III (Internal Security) & GS Paper IV (Ethics)

1. GS III: Linkages between Development and Spread of Extremism.

- **How to use:** Social injustice and persistent atrocities against STs in forested and central Indian regions are a primary driver of Left-Wing Extremism (LWE). The **28.8% rise in atrocities against STs** is a significant data point here.

2. GS IV: Ethics and Human Interface:

- **How to use:** The entire issue is rooted in ethics.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Ambedkar's Ideals:** Use his triad of "**Liberty, Equality, Fraternity**" as the ethical compass that is being violated.

- **Moral vs. Civilized Society:** Use the author's argument that the lack of humanitarian values questions India's claim as a "civilized" society.
- **Objectivity vs. Impartiality:** A civil servant must be objective (following the law) but also impartial (free from personal caste biases) to handle such cases effectively.

Estimating India's Potential Growth Rate

1. Core Theme:

The article examines **India's potential GDP growth rate** in the context of recent trends in **Gross Value Added (GVA)**, **Gross Capital Formation (GCF)**, and the **Incremental Capital Output Ratio (ICOR)**.

It evaluates whether India's **projected growth rate of 7.8% for FY 2025–26** aligns with its **potential growth rate**, estimated around **6.5%**.

2. Recent GDP and GVA Trends

Period	Average Real GDP Growth	Notes
2022–23 to 2024–25	9.4%	Post-COVID high, based on quarterly averages
Q1 FY 2025–26	7.8%	Below average of previous years
Annual GDP growth (2022–23 to 2024–25)	7.6%, 9.2%, 6.5%	Year-on-year data
Q1 FY 2025–26 GVA growth	7.6%	Lower than the previous three-year GVA average (9.5%)

Sectoral Insights:

- Growth driven mainly by **manufacturing, transport, and construction**.
- Q1 FY 2025–26 GVA in manufacturing: **7.7%** (previous three-year average: **5.8%**).

3. Concepts Explained

Potential Growth Rate:

- Represents the highest growth rate the economy can sustain **without generating inflationary pressures**.

- Estimated around **6.5%** for India currently.

ICOR (Incremental Capital Output Ratio):

- Measures **efficiency of capital** — how much investment is required for an additional unit of output.
- A **lower ICOR** means **higher productivity of capital**.
- Derived from ratio of **GCF (Gross Capital Formation)** to **real GDP growth**.

4. Empirical Indicators

Indicator	FY 2022–23	FY 2023–24	FY 2024–25	FY 2025–26 (Q1)
Real GCF/GDP Ratio	33.8%	35.3%	33.3%	—
Average GCF Rate	33.6%	34.4%	—	—
ICOR (estimated)	~5.2	—	—	—

Using average GCF of **33.6%** and ICOR of **5.2**, potential GDP growth \approx **6.5%**.

For growth above 6.5%, India needs to **raise GCF** or **reduce ICOR** (i.e., increase efficiency of capital use).

5. Public Sector Investment and ICOR Efficiency

- ICOR reflects **how efficiently capital is used**.
- Public sector investment has been crucial post-COVID for maintaining growth.
- **Centre's capital expenditure growth:**
 - 39.4% (2021–22)
 - 24.4% (2022–23)
 - 28.9% (2023–24)
 - However, fell to **10.8% in 2024–25** (projected).

Implication:

To achieve **>6.5% growth**, India must:

- Raise **GCF ratio by ~2 percentage points** (from 34% → 36%).
- Increase **private sector investment share** (which fell from 37% → 34% of total GCF).
- Improve **capital efficiency** by reducing ICOR through technological innovation and structural reforms.

6. Prospects for Growth

Positive Drivers:

- Technological innovations (AI, Automation).
- Improved capital efficiency.

- Ongoing infrastructure push.

Constraints:

- Declining private investment.
- Slower capital formation due to lower government spending.
- Demographic transition (aging workforce).
- Consumption shift toward services.

Long-Term Outlook:

- Global trade environment uncertain.
- Tariff and supply chain diversification may affect exports.
- India must **enhance productivity, increase private investment, and diversify trade dependencies**.

7. Policy Implications / Way Forward

Priority Area	Recommended Action
Investment	Boost both public and private sector capital formation.
Efficiency	Reduce ICOR through technology adoption and better project management.
Fiscal Strategy	Maintain high but sustainable levels of

Priority Area	Recommended Action
	government capital expenditure.
Structural Reforms	Simplify regulations to attract FDI and domestic private investment.
Trade Policy	Diversify export markets, lower tariffs, and strengthen supply chains.

How to use it

Primary Relevance: GS Paper III (Indian Economy)

1. Indian Economy and issues relating to Planning, Mobilization of Resources, Growth, Development and Employment:

- **How to use:** This is the central application. The entire article provides the framework to answer questions on India's growth story, its drivers, and future challenges.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Understanding Growth Drivers:** Use the data to explain that the high post-COVID growth (9.4% average) was driven by a **surge in public sector capital expenditure (Capex)**. The recent slowdown aligns with the **tapering of this**

Capex growth (from 28.9% to 10.8%).

- **The Concept of Potential Growth:** Define it as the article does: "the highest growth rate sustainable without inflationary pressures." Citing the **estimated 6.5% potential growth** provides a benchmark to evaluate government targets (like 7.8%).
- **The Critical Role of ICOR:** This is a high-value concept.
 - **Definition:** ICOR (Incremental Capital Output Ratio) = Investment (GCF) / GDP Growth.
 - **Interpretation:** A **high ICOR (~5.2) indicates inefficient capital use**—more investment is needed to generate a single unit of growth. A **low ICOR** indicates higher productivity.
 - **Argument:** To achieve growth above 6.5%, India must either **increase the**

GCF/GDP ratio or, more importantly, **reduce the ICOR** by improving efficiency.

2. Investment Models:

- **How to use:** The data perfectly illustrates the shifting balance between public and private investment.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Public Investment as a Catalyst:** Acknowledge its role in post-COVID recovery.
 - **The Need for Private Investment:** Highlight the worrying trend of **private investment falling from 37% to 34% of total GCF**. Argue that for sustainable high growth, a **private investment revival is non-negotiable**. This shows a deeper understanding than just calling for "more investment."

Secondary Relevance: GS Paper I (Society) & GS Paper II (Governance)

1. GS I: Globalization & Indian Society:

- **How to use:** Link economic growth to broader social changes.

- **Key Points:**

- The "consumption shift toward services" and "demographic transition" are social trends with direct economic consequences. This can be used to discuss the evolution of the Indian economy and society.

2. GS II: Government Policies & Interventions:

- **How to use:** The "Way Forward" section is a ready-made list of policy prescriptions.
- **Key Points:**
 - The recommendations—**boosting investment, improving efficiency, structural reforms, and a strategic trade policy**—can be used to answer questions on what the government should do to accelerate growth.

Talking to Taliban — India Must Be Wary of Terror Groups, Even if They Are in Power

Theme: India's cautious engagement with Taliban-led Afghanistan

Author Context: Editorial perspective emphasizing pragmatic engagement tempered with strategic caution

1. Trigger Event / Context

- **Event:** Visit of **Amir Khan Muttaqi**, Acting Foreign Minister of Afghanistan (Taliban government).
- **Significance:** First official visit to India since the Taliban's takeover in **2021**.
- **Facilitation:** Visit enabled through a **UN Security Council waiver** (Muttaqi has been under sanctions since 2001).
- **Key Engagements:** Meetings with **EAM S. Jaishankar** and **NSA Ajit Doval**.

2. India's Strategic Rationale for Engagement

Dimension	Explanation
Security Interests	Neutralize cross-border terror threats from Afghanistan, protect Indian projects, and personnel.
Regional Geopolitics	Exploit rift between Pakistan and Taliban — “enemy's enemy” logic.
Realpolitik	Taliban control almost all of Afghanistan; other regional powers (Russia, China, Iran) already engaging.
Sovereignty Principle	Joint statement emphasized “ mutual

Dimension	Explanation
	respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity ”, indirectly rejecting Pakistan's interference.

3. Key Outcomes and Agreements

- **Diplomatic Upgrade:** India to **upgrade its technical mission** in Kabul to a more formal **embassy**, indicating calibrated recognition.
- **Security Assurances:** Taliban assured India that **Afghan soil will not be used against Indian interests** — a significant shift from 2001–2021.
- **Development Cooperation:** New Indian initiatives in **healthcare (hospitals), humanitarian aid, and trade infrastructure** announced.

4. Controversies and Diplomatic Missteps

Issue	Description
Symbolic Confusion	Attempt to raise the old Afghan Republic flag at embassy caused diplomatic embarrassment.
Gender Exclusion	Absence of women journalists at initial press

Issue	Description
	conference drew criticism; inclusion only after backlash.
Human Rights Silence	India refrained from publicly addressing Taliban's record on women's rights, minority treatment, and political inclusivity , weakening its moral standing.

5. Broader Implications

- **Regional Dynamics:**
 - India's engagement adds a **new layer to South Asian geopolitics**, countering both **Pakistan's monopoly** and **China's influence** in Afghanistan.
 - Enhances India's relevance in **Central Asia** and **Eurasian security discussions**.
- **Security Risks:**
 - Taliban's ties with **terror networks (LeT, JeM, ISKP)** remain a concern.
 - Risk of **terror spillover** and **proxy infiltration** persists.

6. Author's Assessment / Editorial Viewpoint

- **Core Argument:** Engagement is **necessary but dangerous** — India must not equate political necessity with moral endorsement.
- **Warning:**
 - "Talking to Taliban" should not turn into **legitimizing terror-based regimes**.
 - India's **strategic caution** must accompany **humanitarian engagement**.
- **Recommended Stance:** **"Engage, but verify."** Maintain dialogue for security, yet preserve India's **values and credibility**.

How to use it

Primary Relevance: GS Paper II (International Relations)

1. India and its Neighborhood-Relations:

- **How to use:** This is the most direct fit. Afghanistan is a crucial neighbor, and India's policy towards it is a classic case study in navigating a complex, hostile takeover by a non-state actor.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Policy Shift:** Contrast India's previous stance (supporting the democratic Afghan

Republic and being a major development partner) with its current **pragmatic engagement** with the Taliban. This demonstrates an adaptive foreign policy.

- **The "Enemy's Enemy" Logic:** Use the **rift between Pakistan and the Taliban** as a key strategic rationale. Engaging the Taliban helps India break Pakistan's perceived "strategic depth" in Afghanistan and counter its influence.
- **Countering China:** Mention that other regional powers (Russia, China, Iran) are already engaging, making it imperative for India to be at the table to protect its interests and counter China's growing footprint.

2. Effect of Policies and Politics of Developed and Developing Countries on India's interests:

- **How to use:** The Taliban's policies directly impact India's security and economic interests.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Security Imperative:** The primary driver is to secure **assurances that**

Afghan soil will not be used by anti-India terror groups like LeT and JeM.

This is a direct national security concern.

- **Protecting Investments:** India has invested billions in Afghan infrastructure (e.g., Salma Dam, Parliament building). Engagement is necessary to protect these assets and explore future trade opportunities, including access to Central Asia.

Secondary Relevance: GS Paper III (Internal Security) & GS Paper IV (Ethics)

1. GS III: Linkages between Development and Spread of Extremism; Security Challenges:

- **How to use:** The situation in Afghanistan is a direct source of potential internal security threats to India.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Terror Spillover:** The continued presence of terror groups like the **Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP)** and the Taliban's links with Pakistan-based proxies create a risk of

increased radicalization and terror plots in India.

- **Proxy War:** A Taliban-ruled Afghanistan could reignite a Pakistan-sponsored proxy war in Jammu & Kashmir. India's engagement is a defensive measure to mitigate this risk.

2. GS IV: Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude in Governance:

- **How to use:** This case presents a classic **dilemma between national interest and ethical foreign policy.**
- **Key Points:**
 - **Dilemma:** Should India engage with a regime that systematically violates **women's rights, minority rights (e.g., Hazaras), and democratic principles?**
 - **Realpolitik vs. Moral Standing:** The article criticizes India's **silence on human rights** during the visit, which weakens its moral standing. An answer can debate this: Is pragmatic engagement for security necessary, or does it amount to compromising core values?

- **A Balanced Approach:** The author's recommended stance of "**Engage, but verify**" is a pragmatic ethical position. It allows India to pursue its interests while maintaining pressure on the Taliban through diplomatic channels.

Achieving Centre's Rooftop Solar Targets to Remain a Challenge: Study

1. Context & Background

- **Scheme:** PM Surya Ghar Yojana (PMSGY)
- **Target:** 1 crore rooftop solar installations by **July 2025.**
- **Objective:** Promote renewable energy adoption and reduce residential electricity dependence on fossil fuels.

2. Key Findings of the Study

- **Study Conducted By:**
 - Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (**IEEFA**)
 - JMK Research and Analytics
- **Main Finding:** Despite a fourfold increase in applications between **March**

2024 – July 2025, only **13.1%** of the target has been achieved.

- **Progress Status (as of July 2025):**
 - **Installed Capacity:** 4,946 MW across States and Union Territories.
 - **Target Achieved:** 13.1% of installations; 14.1% of subsidy disbursed.
 - **Total Subsidy Released:** ₹9,281 crore, benefiting over **16 lakh households**.

3. Challenges Identified

Challenge	Description
Metering Delays	Time-consuming metering process (45–120 days).
Lack of Coordination	Poor coordination between consumers, installers, DISCOMs, and state agencies.
Utility Inefficiency	Procedural inefficiencies at distribution company (DISCOM) level.
Financing Bottlenecks	Slow government procedures in providing capital upfront via loans.

4. Performance Overview

Indicator	Data / Findings
Applications (till July 2025)	57.9 lakh applications under the residential category.
Installations Completed	4.9 GW capacity installed.
Contribution	Accounts for 44.5% of India’s total residential rooftop capacity.
Average Installation Cost	Approximately ₹12/Watt under domestic content requirement (DCR)-compliant modules.

5. Key Observations / Quotes

- **DCR-Compliant Modules:** Rooftop solar installations under PMSGY use modules manufactured entirely in India, supporting domestic manufacturing.

- **Expert Observation:**

“Establishing robust on-ground execution capacity targets at the local level is essential for scaling rooftop solar,”
 — *Vibhuti Garg, Director, IEEFA-South Asia.*

6. Broader Implications

- **Policy Concern:** Slow progress could jeopardize the 1 crore installation target by 2025.

- **Economic Impact:** Delay in rooftop solar uptake may slow India's renewable transition and carbon neutrality goals.
- **Governance Lesson:** Highlights need for decentralization, efficient disbursal, and improved coordination between DISCOMs and beneficiaries.

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