Role of Alternative Politics in India

Context:

- The **Jan Suraaj Party (JSP),** led by **political strategist-turned-activist Prashant Kishor,** contested in the ongoing **Bihar Assembly elections**, thus providing an **option for alternative politics.**

1. What do you mean by Alternative Politics?

- **Alternative politics is a determination to work** with the **bottom-up approach** rather than **top-down and a commitment to politics as peoples' work.**

- It opposes the idea of **governance that is limited to the bureaucratized and professional activity** restricted to a paid class of persons set apart from the **common people of the country.**

- It makes **strong pitch for decentralization** decision making **apparatus in the governance.**

- It aims at **overhauling the politics and political structures of the country.**

- It is not about the **seizure of power,** but about the transfer of power to the people

- Its emphasis is on **swaraj** which means **self-rule which is the ultimate goal** of any **democratic setup.**

- **Preachers of the idea of alternative politics** are trying to exhort the **social activists, NGOs** in to the **competitive politics** as they are closely **associated with people** and their problems.

- The **Aam Aadmi Party** experiment is a perfect example of an **NGO tuning in to a successful political party.**

2. Mention various features of Alternative Politics?

Features	About
Citizen-Centric Governance	- **Citizen-centric governance** lies at the **heart of alternate politics.** - It represents a shift from **power-driven politics to people-driven governance**, where **citizens** are seen as **active participants** rather than **passive recipients of state policies.** - **Participatory Decision-Making:** - Encourages **gram sabhas, public dialogues, and social audits** so people directly influence **policy decisions.**

	• **Transparency and Accountability:**
	   ▪ Promotes **open data, RTI, and citizen charters** to make the **system answerable to the public.**
	• **Decentralization of Power:**
	   ▪ Strengthens **local self-government institutions for grassroots participation.**
	• **Service Delivery Focus:**
	   ▪ Prioritizes **education, health, sanitation, and livelihoods** rather than **populist** schemes.
	• **Use of Technology:**
	   ▪ Adopts **e-governance tools to simplify procedures and ensure accessibility** for all citizens.
	• **Inclusiveness:**
	   ▪ Ensures the **voice of marginalized and underrepresented groups** in **governance** processes.

Transparency and Clean Funding	• **Transparency and clean funding are fundamental pillars** of alternate politics in India. • They aim to break the **cycle of corruption, black money, and hidden interests** that dominate traditional **political systems.** • **Public Disclosure of Finances:** ▪ **Parties and candidates** make their **income, expenditure, and sources of funding publicly available.**

	- **Crowdfunding and Small Donations:**
	    - Encourages **citizen contributions instead of corporate or lobby-based funding** to maintain **independence and accountability.**
	- **Ban on Black Money:**
	    - Rejects **unaccounted electoral funds and promotes digital transactions** for all political donations.
	- **Transparent Use of Funds:**
	    - Ensures money is used **strictly for campaigns, awareness drives, and public welfare, not personal gain.**
	- **Ethical Accountability:**
	    - Promotes **financial audi**ts and **real-time transparency portals** accessible to citizens.

Decentralization	- **Decentralization is a key pillar** of alternate politics in India.
	- It reflects the idea that **real democracy flourishes when power flows** from the top to the **grassroots, empowering people to make decisions that affect their own lives.**
	- **Empowerment of Local Bodies:**
	    - Strengthens **Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies** as true agents of governance.
	- **Participatory Democracy:**
	    - Encourages **gram sabhas, mohalla sabhas, and community meetings** for decision-making.

	Bottom-Up Policy Planning: **Policies and developmental priorities** arise from the local level, reflecting real citizen needs. **Administrative and Fiscal Autonomy:** - Ensures **local institutions have resources, authority, and accountability** to function effectively. **Citizen Responsibility:** - Promotes **active public involvement in governance, monitoring, and budgeting processes.**
Issue-Based Politics	**Issue-based politics** is a defining feature of **alternate politics** in India. - It shifts the focus o**f political discourse from caste, religion, or personality-based politics to real social and developmental issues** that affect **citizens' daily lives.** **Focus on Real Issues:** - Addresses **people's concerns** like **education, health, employment, environment, farmers' welfare, and women's safety.** **Evidence-Based Policy Making:** - Decisions are guided by **data, research, and public consultation rather than populist agendas.** **Non-Divisive Politics:** - Rejects **vote-bank politics based on caste, religion, or regional identity.**

	• **Public Awareness and Mobilization:** 　▪ Engages **citizens around policy debates and reform movements instead of emotional or communal appeals.** • **Accountability through Dialogue:** 　▪ Promotes **open discussions between leaders and citizens** on specific **developmental outcomes.**
Ethical Leadership	• **Ethical leadership** is a **cornerstone of alternate politics in India.** • It represents a shift from **power-oriented leadership to value-based**, **service-oriented politics rooted in honesty, integrity, and accountability.** • **Integrity and Honesty:** 　▪ Leaders uphold **moral principles, remain transparent in conduct**, and avoid **corruption or misuse of power.** • **Public Service Orientation:** 　▪ **Leadership is guided by social welfare** and **collective good**, not by personal ambition. • **Accountability and Responsibility:** 　▪ Ethical leaders **accept public scrutiny and take responsibility** for their actions and decisions. • **Empathy and Inclusiveness:** 　▪ They remain **connected with the needs of the poor, marginalized, and voiceless sections of society.**

	• **Role Model for Society:** ▪ **Ethical leaders** set an example that inspires **clean politics and civic virtue among citizens.**

Use of Technology	• **Technology** plays a **vital role in strengthening alternate politics by promoting transparency, participation, and efficiency in governance.**
	• It acts as a **bridge between citizens and political institutions, making politics more open, accessible, and accountable.**
	• **Transparency and Accountability:**
	  ▪ Online portals for **funding disclosure, social audits, and performance tracking.**
	  ▪ Real-time access to government data enhances public trust.
	• **Citizen Engagement:**
	  ▪ Use of s**ocial media, apps, and digital platforms for public feedback, awareness, and consultations.**
	  ▪ Promotes **two-way communication between citizens and leaders.**
	• **Digital Governance:**
	  ▪ Implementation of **e-governance systems to simplify services and reduce corruption.**
	  ▪ Initiatives like **Digital India strengthen citizen access to information.**
	• **Crowdfunding and Mobilization:**
	  ▪ Encourages **small digital donations instead of corporate funding – ensuring clean politics.**

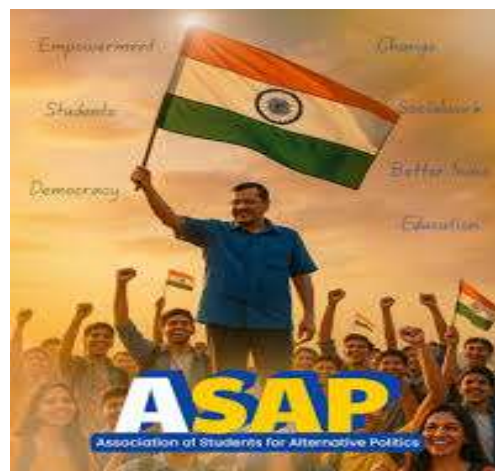|	
	• **Data-Driven Decision Making:** ▪ **Policy formulation and campaign strategies** based on **surveys, analytics, and public opinion trends.**

3. Mention various examples of Alternative Politics?

Movement/Party	Founders	Ideological Focus
Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)	**Arvind Kejriwal, 2012**	Anti-**corruption, governance** reform, **urban issues**
Swaraj India	**Yogendra Yadav, 2016**	**Participatory democracy, decentralization**
Jan Suraaj Party (JSP)	**Prashant Kishor, 2021**	**Development-oriented, clean politics** in Bihar
Lok Satta Party	**Jayaprakash Narayan, 2006**	**Governance reforms, citizen rights**
Voters' Awareness Movements	**Civil society groups**	**Clean elections, ethical voting**

4. What is AAP's student wing 'ASAP'—Association of Students for Alternative Politics?

- In a bold **political pivot, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) National Convenor Arvind Kejriwal** relaunched the **party's student wing with a new name and mission—Association of Students for Alternative Politics (ASAP)**, promising to **turn student activism** into a force for **national transformation.**

- Declaring that **"mainstream politics of the past 75 years is the root cause of all problems in India,"** Arvind Kejriwal pitched **ASAP** as the vanguard of a **new political culture—one free from education mafias and grounded in equity and reform.**

- **Arvind Kejriwal** said the **student wing would champion the AAP's model of alternative politics** , one that **prioritises education, healthcare and equity** as opposed to the **"mainstream politics of corruption, communalism and corporate control" practiced by the Congress and the BJP.**

- **Arvind Kejriwal** accused **both the parties of deepening social divides for political gain.**
- Calling education the **AAP's core strength, Manish Sisodia** said **ASAP** would push for the a**doption of global learning methods and push back against outdated curricula.**

5. Mention various challenges to Alternative Politics?

- While **alternate politics offers a new vision of clean, people-centric governance**, it faces several **practical and structural challenges in India's political landscape.**

Challenges	About
Dominance of Money and Muscle Power	• Elections are **highly expensive, and alternate political groups** often lack **financial resources to compete with established parties.** • The influence of **money, liquor, and freebies in elections weakens issue-based politics**. **High Cost of Elections:** • Alternate parties with **limited funds cannot match the massive spending by established parties on rallies, advertisements, and publicity.** **Influence of Black Money:** • Use of **unaccounted funds** in **elections reduces fairness** and discourages **transparency-based models like crowdfunding.** **Criminalization of Politics:**

	• Candidates with **criminal backgrounds use intimidation, bribery, and coercion to secure votes, sidelining ethical leadership.** **Voter Manipulation:** • Distribution of **freebies, cash, and liquor distorts voter choice, weakening issue-based and reform-oriented campaigns.**
Voter Mindset and Political Culture	• Many voters still make choices based on **caste, religion, or short-term benefits rather than issues or integrity.** • The **culture of patronage and populism limits** the appeal of **reformist politics.** **Caste and Religion-Based Voting:** • Many voters **still prioritize social identity and community** ties over **competence or ethics.** **Dependence on Patronage:** • Voters often **expect personal favors, freebies**, or cash **benefits from politicians rather than systemic reforms.** **Lack of Political Awareness:** • Limited **civic education** leads to low understanding of **policy issues, governance models, and the long-term importance of reformist politics.**
Media Neglect and Limited Visibility	• **Mainstream media** often focuses on big **parties and sensational news**, ignoring **smaller or reformist movements**. • **Lack of visibility reduces mass outreach** and **public recognition**.

	Commercialization of Media:
	• News outlets **prioritize profit and viewership over public interest.**
	• Issue-based **debates and clean politics rarely make headlines.**
	Bias and Political Influence:
	• Some **media houses maintain ideological or political alignments,** giving **disproportionate coverage** to their preferred parties.
	Neglect of Grassroots Movements:
	• Local or **citizen-driven initiatives — the backbone of alternate politics** — get **minimal national attention.**
	Limited Access to Resources:
	• Alternate **political groups** cannot afford **large-scale advertising, PR campaigns, or media partnerships.**
Institutional Resistance	• **Bureaucracy and political elites resist reforms** that may threaten their **power and privileges.**
	• **Electoral and administrative systems** are often **rigid and slow to change.**
	Resistance from Political Elites:
	• Established parties **view reformist groups as threats** and may use **legal, procedural, or political barriers to block their rise.**
	Bureaucratic Inertia:
	• The **administrative system often functions on rigid hierarchies** and outdated **procedures, making it slow to adapt to participatory governance models.**

	Electoral System Constraints: • The **First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system** favors **big, resourceful parties, making it hard for smaller, issue-based movements to gain representation.** **Lack of Institutional Support:** • Limited access to media platforms, funding, or fair election coverage hinders the outreach of alternate political parties. **Legal and Regulatory Challenges:** • Complex laws **regarding party registration, campaign funding, and compliance** make it difficult for new entrants to operate smoothly.
Fragmentation of Movements	• Many **reformist groups** work in **isolation without forming a unified national front.** • This **division weakens their collective political influence.** **Ideological Differences:** • **Reformist leaders and groups often differ on approach, priorities, and strategies, making collaboration difficult.** **Leadership Rivalries:** • **Competing ambitions among leaders dilute unity** and **lead to multiple small movements** rather than one cohesive front. **Regional Focus:** • Many **alternate political movements remain** regionally confined and fail to connect at the **national level.**

	Lack of Organizational Structure: • Most movements are **voluntary and loosely organized, making sustained political action and coordination difficult.** **Absence of Common Agenda:** • Without a **shared political vision or unified manifesto**, alternate groups struggle to present themselves as a **credible national alternative.**
Lack of Organizational Structure	• **Alternate political parties** often **lack strong cadres, local networks, and long-term strategy to sustain their presence.** **Absence of Strong Cadre System:** • Unlike **established parties with well-trained workers, alternate political groups** often lack **grassroots-level cadres** for outreach and mobilization. **Poor Internal Coordination:** • **Informal or volunteer-based structures** can cause **communication gaps, inconsistency, and inefficient decision-making.** **Limited Institutional Memory:** • Since many movements are **leader-driven**, they struggle to survive **leadership transitions or internal disagreements.** **Weak Organizational Resources:** • **Inadequate funding, logistics, and training limit** their ability to contest elections or sustain long-term campaigns. **Lack of Strategic Planning:**

	• Many **alternate movements** focus on activism or protests but **fail to develop clear political strategies, manifestos, or governance models.**
Public Cynicism	• Repeated **political failures** have made citizens skeptical of any **"new" political alternative.** • Building **trust takes time** and consistent **ethical performance.** **Loss of Trust in Political Leadership:** • People often **assume that new parties will eventually** become corrupt or self-serving like the old ones. **Voter Apathy and Disengagement:** • Many citizens choose not to vote or **participate in public affairs**, believing their **involvement won't make a difference.** **Short-Lived Enthusiasm:** • Initial excitement for new **movements fades** quickly when visible **change takes time to appear.** **Negative Media Narrative:** • **Media skepticism or criticism of alternate parties** often **reinforces public doubt about their credibility.** **Failure of Previous Experiments:** • Some **reformist experiments that faced internal conflicts** or governance issues have deepened **public pessimism.**

6. What are the views of Political Scientists towards Alternative Politics?

"The task before India is not to seize power, but to restore politics as an instrument of social transformation." — Rajni Kothari

- **Rajni Kothari (1928 – 19 January 2015)** was an **Indian political scientist, political theorist, academic and writer.**

- He was the founder of **Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) in 1963**, a **social sciences and humanities research institute**, based in D**elhi and Lokayan (Dialogue of the People), started in 1980** as a forum for interaction between activists and intellectuals.

- **Rajni Kothari** emphasized the need for **alternatives models of governance for a lively and vibrant democracy.**

- He laid the **intellectual foundation** for **later reform movements** like **Jayaprakash Narayan's Total Revolution and Anna Hazare's anti-corruption campaign.**

- Inspired the idea that **democracy** must **extend beyond elections** – into **everyday struggles for justice and equality.**

Rajni Kothari views	Description
From Party Politics to People's Politics	• **Rajni Kothari** emphasized the shift from **party-centered politics** to **movement-based politics that empowers citizens directly.** • He viewed **social movements, NGOs, and grassroots activism** as vehicles for **genuine democracy.**
Empowerment of Marginalized Groups	• Stressed that **alternate politics** must give voice to the **poor, women, Dalits, and rural communities** — those excluded from **mainstream power.**
Critique of the Party System	• **Rajni Kothari** warned that the **dominance of parties leads to centralization, corruption, and alienation of the masses.** • Proposed an **alternate system where citizens' initiatives and issue-based movements** complement or even replace **rigid party structures.**

7. What is NOTA?

- **NOTA, or None Of The Above, is an option on the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)** that allows voters to **register their discontent with available options of candidates.**

- Until 2013, if people wanted to exercise a **similar option, they had to do it under Rule 49-O of Conduct of Elections.**

- However, this **involved filling out a form at the polling station**, which meant the **secrecy guaranteed to the voter was compromised.**

- Hence, in 2013, a **civil rights organisation called PUCL** moved the **Supreme Court with a writ petition**, demanding for the inclusion of a **NOTA option in the electoral process.**

- The court then directed the **Election Commission of India (ECI) to include the NOTA option** on **ballot papers and electronic voting machines (EVMs) for elections to the Lok Sabha (the lower house of India's Parliament) and the respective State Assemblies.**

- **You may wonder why this option is important. Can't the disinterested voters simply abstain from voting? Well, the Supreme Court and advocates for NOTA have valid points to disagree.**

- One, all those **abstaining from voting** do not necessarily disapprove of or reject the candidates in the fray.
  - They could not be **voting for a variety of reasons.**
  - NOTA, on the other hand, **helps make the disapproval loud and clear.**
  - The disapproval could be **due to a variety of reasons such as, the voters demands not being heard, all candidates having criminal records or charges of financial misdemeanour, etc.**

- Two, using **NOTA instead of abstaining from elections** ensures there is **no misuse of votes or fraudulent voting.**

- The NOTA option was **first implemented in the 2013 legislative assembly** elections held in four States- **Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh and the union territory of Delhi.**

8. Does NOTA make a difference?

- **Experts and voters** are **highly divided on the merits and demerits of NOTA.**

- In a **recent media interview**, former **Chief Election Commissioner OP Rawat** said that in the present situation, **NOTA has only symbolic significance and cannot have an impact on the election result of any seat.**

  - In an election, **if 99 votes out of 100 go to NOTA and a candidate gets only one vote, still the candidate, and not NOTA, will be declared the winner.**

- **Motivational speaker Shiv Khera** petitioned the **Supreme Court asking for the ECI to treat NOTA** as a fictional character, and **establish guidelines for conducting re-elections in constituencies where NOTA garners a majority.**

- The court has issued a notice to the **ECI seeking its response on the matter.**

- Regardless, **according to an analysis by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), NOTA has secured over 1.29 crore** votes in the **state assembly elections and the Lok Sabha elections** combined in the **last five years.**

- Overall in **different state and general elections**, votes polled on **NOTA have been between .5 per cent to 1.5per cent, according to data compiled by the ADR.**

Election Commission of India

"Some people argue that the implementation of NOTA will drive up election expenses. But a tainted candidate who indulges in corruption and malpractices is a greater cost for the country. It is only the desire to continue in power and the greed for money that take prominence over values."

Sanjay Parikh

Supreme Court advocate (2013)

"NOTA has made no difference as far as criminality is concerned, in fact the number of candidates with criminal cases has increased....Unfortunately, it turned out to be a "toothless tiger." It merely provided a platform to express dissent or one's anger for political parties to take note and nothing more. "

Major General (Retd.) Anil Verma

Head of ADR

9. Who is Zohran Mamdani?

- **Zohran Mamdani** is the **New York's first Muslim mayor, the first of South Asian heritage, the first born in Africa, and the youngest in more than a century.**

New York City's next mayor:
Zohran Mamdani

New York City's youngest mayor in more than a century

34 years old

Democrat

Born in Uganda to a family of Indian origin

Elected in 2020 as a lawmaker representing Queens in the New York State Assembly

Became a naturalised US citizen in 2018

Inspired by a rapper to go into politics after a short-lived hip-hop career

Mayoral campaign focused on affordability through more rent control, free daycare and buses

- His bold, **left-wing platform has energised progressives**, shaken up his Democratic Party, and drawn harsh **criticism from President Donald Trump** and other Republicans.

- Unlike his more established opponents, **Mamdani's new perspective, youth and new left-wing platform** excited and ultimately **won over voters eager for a fresher politician.**

- **Mamdani** was born in Uganda, to parents of Indian descent, and later moved to New York with his family aged seven.

- With a complex set of identities - **Indian, African, American** - he has faced accusations of gaming identity politics when he identified his race as both **"Asian" and "Black or African American"** in his 2009 application for Columbia University.

- During his campaign, the **Mamdani** has leaned into his roots in a diverse city.

  - He has also made his Muslim faith a visible part of his campaign. He visited mosques regularly and released a campaign video in Urdu about the city's cost-of-living crisis.

- **Mamdani's** critics have argued that he **does not have enough experienc**e to lead the **largest US city effectively.**

- **Trump has tried to paint him as radical**, repeatedly calling him a **communist, though Mamdani has frequently rejected that label.**

- The president also has threatened to **withhold federal funds from a Mamdani administration.**

- In his victory speech before a jubilant crowd in **Brooklyn,** the **34-year-old former state assemblyman** declared, *"Tonight, New York has stepped from the old into the new."*

- Quoting from **Jawaharlal Nehru's 'Tryst with Destiny'** speech, Mr. Mamdani said, *"Standing before you, I remember the words of Jawaharlal Nehru. A moment comes, which comes but rarely in history, when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance."*

10. How Zohran Mamdani has taken the Kejriwal Model to New York?

- **Zohran Mamdani's New York City** mayoral win is historic, but his **free bus ride pledge** resembles the **Kejriwal Model.**

- **AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal** wooed voters with **free bus rides** and other freebies in **2019.**

- **Mamdani's socialist schemes**, which hint at Indian-style populism, come in **NYC**, the heart of **capitalist America.**

- Mamdani's main proposal is to eliminate fares on the **Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (MTA)** bus network.

- The plan would reportedly **cost $1.2 billion** per year and **increase ridership by 20-30%,** according to **Riders Alliance,** a New York-based non-profit organisation.

Mamdani Rides Slow Bus to 'Fast and Free' Buses Event

Zohran Mamdani, the leading candidate in the race to be New York City's next mayor, held a campaign event on a bus that crawled across Midtown Manhattan to highlight a signature proposal.

▶ Listen to this article · 5:08 min Learn more   🎁 Share full article ↱ 🔖

The M57 traveled at about 2.3 miles per hour on Wednesday afternoon, far below the citywide average speed of about 8 miles per hour. Olga Fedorova for The New York Times

- These projections are derived from the **fare-free bus experiments** conducted by the **MTA between 2020-2022**, during the **Covid-19 pandemic.**

- Mamdani's proposal mirrors **AAP's 'Pink Ticket' scheme,** which has provided **free bus travel for women in Delhi since 2019**.

- The Delhi scheme was **funded by the state budget.**

- That initiative in **Delhi led to a 25% surge in bus ridership**, and played a **significant role in AAP sweeping** the **2020 Assembly election.**

Zohran Kwame Mamdani ✔   X.com
@ZohranKMamdani

And we've already seen the transformative impacts of eliminating the fare when we won and implemented a historic fare free bus pilot on one line in each borough.

Ridership went up. Assaults on operators went down. And people saved money.

A Year Without Fares: Lessons From New York's Free Bus Pilot

- Apart from free bus rides, **Mamdani** also proposes **universal childcare for children aged six weeks to five,** expanding the city's **3-K programme to limit costs to $500 per year** for low-income families, a **savings of $15,000 for some.**

- Rent **stabilisation for 1 million units** would cap increases at **3%, compared to the current 7% annual rises.**
- **Mamdani's schemes** somewhat **resemble the poll promises made in Indian elections.**

What is interesting is that free bus rides have takers not just in Bihar, one of the poorest places in the world, but also in New York City, among the world's richest.

11. How does the use of technology make alternative politics more transparent and effective?

POSITIVE IMPACTS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ON POLITICS

1 INCREASED ACCESSIBILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

BETTER INFORMED CITIZENS THROUGH ACCESS TO INFORMATION 2

3 IMPROVED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA AND OTHER PLATFORMS

ENHANCED POLITICAL ADVERTISING AND CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES 4

Use of Technology	Aspects
Open Data Initiatives	• **Technology allows for the proactive release of government** and **political data in accessible formats, enabling citizens, journalists**, and watchdog groups to **monitor activities, track public spending**, and identify potential corruption or mismanagement.
Real-Time Monitoring and Reporting	• **Platforms using real-time data sharing and reporting systems** create an immediate overview of **public projects** and policy implementation, making it **easier to hold officials accountable** for their actions or inactions.
Transparency Portals	• **Online platforms can centralize information on budgets**, **legislative activities, and procurement processes**, making it **user-friendly and readily accessible to the public.**

Citizen Journalism and Whistleblowing	• **Digital platforms and encrypted communication** tools provide **safe, anonymous channels for whistleblowers and citizen journalists** to expose wrongdoing, thus **increasing accountability when traditional media might be constrained.**
Immutable Records	• **Technologies like blockchain and distributed ledgers** can provide **tamper-proof records of transactions and decisions, building trust and reducing opportunities for fraud.** **Transparent Political Funding:** • **Blockchain-based ledgers** can record **donations and expenditures** in real-time. • **Prevents black money and ensures citizens know** where **political funds** come from and how they are used. **Tamper-Proof Voting Systems:** • **Immutable records can be used in digital voting platforms** to ensure every vote is **securely stored** and cannot be manipulated. **Public Record Verification:** • **Government contracts, policy decisions, and welfare data** can be placed on public blockchains for citizen monitoring. **Trust Building:** • **Immutable records enhance citizen** trust in **governance processes, supporting the alternate politics** goal of **people-centric** and **ethical democracy.**

Streamlined Processes	• **E-governance systems and automation** can streamline **administrative tasks, reducing bureaucracy** and allowing for **faster**, **more efficient service delivery and project implementation**.

12. What is the difference between Alternative Politics and Alternate to Politics?

- **Alternative politics** refers to a **different approach or system within politics**, while **alternate to politics** implies **a position or choice that is outside of politics altogether.**
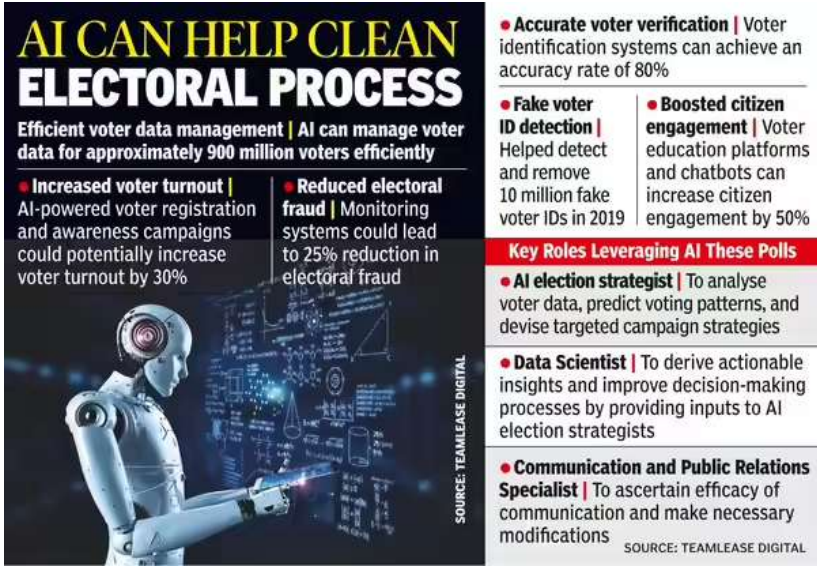
Alternative Politics	Alternate to Politics
This refers to **new or unconventional ways** of engaging within the existing **political system or striving to democratize** it further.	This **implies a rejection of the entire political system** or the **very idea of engaging in politics** as a means of **societal change.**
It involves **working within or alongside the established framework** (e.g., **forming new parties like the Aam Aadmi Party in India, social activism**, **grassroots movements**, or **adopting extra-legal strategies to improve outcomes**) to achieve change and challenge the **status quo.**	**People or groups** who advocate for **"alternatives to politics"** wish to a**chieve transformation** outside the **constitutional or democratic framework.**
The **ultimate goal is to reform or change** the type of politics	The **ultimate goal** of such **movements or ideas** is generally

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being practiced, not abandon the **concept of politics entirely.**	the **radical transformation** of **society and the transfer of power directly to the people**, often seeking to **achieve self-rule or swaraj in a true, participatory sense.**
Examples of **alternative politics in India** include the **Aam Aadmi Party's** focus on **anti-corruption and clean governance**, grassroots movements like the **Mendha Lekha community's collective land ownership**, and historical examples such as the **Swatantra Party's challenge to mainstream politics.**	**Examples** of this (in some contexts) could include certain **revolutionary or anti-government movements** that seek to entirely overthrow the existing order, such as some **Maoist or Naxalbari movements.** This approach is often associatedwith **"anti-politics" or "apolicitism".**

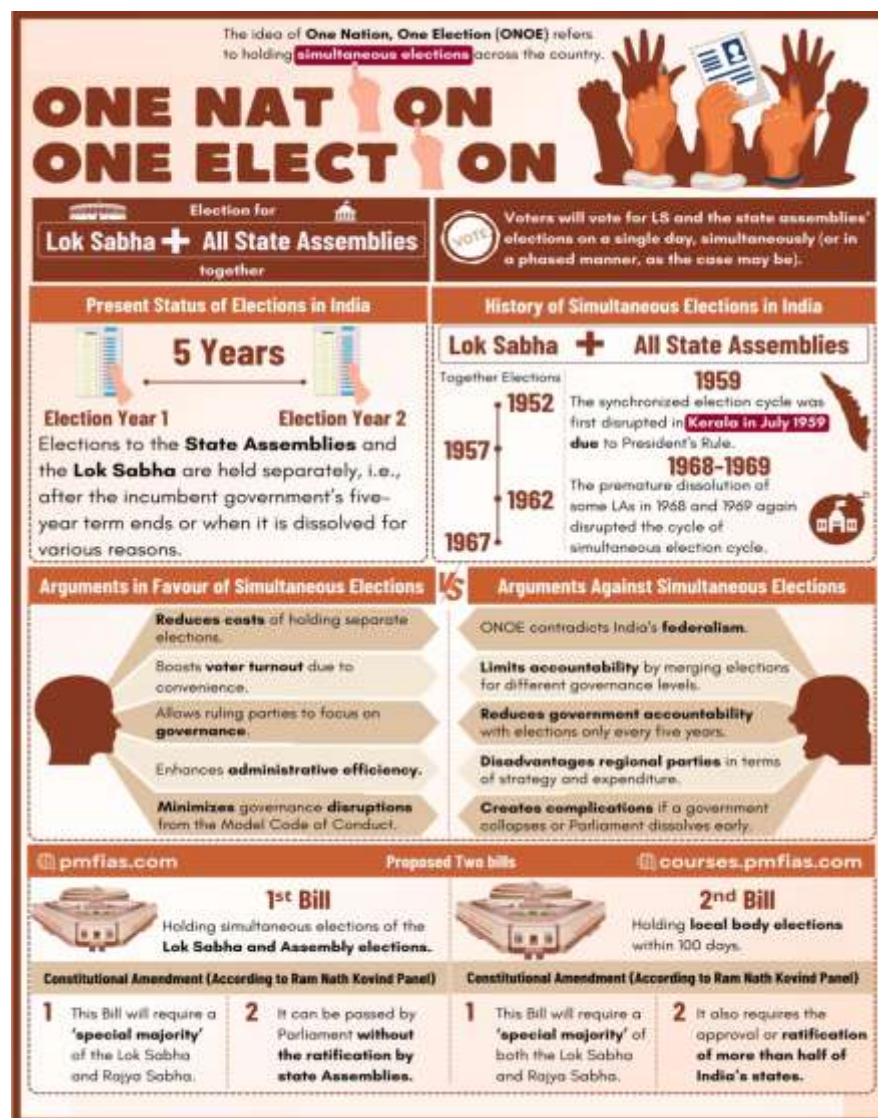## 13. What is the the future of Indian Politics?

- **Indian politics is undergoing rapid** changes, **Future in 2025 influenced by technology, shifting voter demographics**, and evolving governance models.

- As the **nation approaches** the **next general elections**, several **emerging trends are shaping its democratic landscape.**

Key trends	Analysis
The Rise of Digital and AI-Driven Election Strategies	• **Technology** is **now a core component** of election campaigns. • **Political parties** are using **AI-powered tools for voter outreach, sentiment analysis, and data-driven campaign strategies.**

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- However, the **challenge of misinformation remains a critical concern.**
- For **businesses and political campaigns** looking to **leverage digital marketing effectively**, **Winso Business** provides expert solutions to **enhance online reach and engagement.**

AI CAN HELP CLEAN ELECTORAL PROCESS

Efficient voter data management | AI can manage voter data for approximately 900 million voters efficiently

● **Increased voter turnout |** AI-powered voter registration and awareness campaigns could potentially increase voter turnout by 30%

● **Reduced electoral fraud |** Monitoring systems could lead to 25% reduction in electoral fraud

● **Accurate voter verification |** Voter identification systems can achieve an accuracy rate of 80%

● **Fake voter ID detection |** Helped detect and remove 10 million fake voter IDs in 2019

● **Boosted citizen engagement |** Voter education platforms and chatbots can increase citizen engagement by 50%

Key Roles Leveraging AI These Polls

● **AI election strategist |** To analyse voter data, predict voting patterns, and devise targeted campaign strategies

● **Data Scientist |** To derive actionable insights and improve decision-making processes by providing inputs to AI election strategists

● **Communication and Public Relations Specialist |** To ascertain efficacy of communication and make necessary modifications

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Youth as the Driving Force of Political Change

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- With **India's youth forming** a significant portion of the **electorate**, their influence on **policy priorities and election outcomes** cannot be ignored.
- Key issues such as **employment, education, climate action, and technological advancements are shaping political discourse.**
- To effectively connect with **young voters, political parties must adopt innovative engagement strategies**, including **social media campaigns, interactive discussions, and grassroots activism.**

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The Increasing Influence of Regional Leaders	- As **national parties** continue to **dominate, regional and independent leaders** are also making significant inroads. **Voters** are **placing a greater emphasis on local governance and leadership**, leading to stronger **regional parties and the potential for more coalition governments.** - This shift highlights the **increasing importance of state-level politics** in shaping **national policies, potentially altering the balance of power.**
The 'One Nation, One Election' Debate	The proposal to **conduct simultaneous** elections for the **Lok Sabha and state assemblies** has been a subject of ongoing discussion.

	• Advocates believe it would streamline governance and reduce election expenses, while **critics argue it may undermine state autonomy.** • As **2025 approaches**, this debate is expected to **gain further traction, influencing policy discussions and electoral reforms.**
The Role of Social Media in Political	• **Social media platforms** continue to play a crucial role in **shaping political discourse, voter opinions, and election strategies**.

Narratives	• However, the **rapid spread of misinformation and political propaganda is raising serious concerns**, It may affect the **Future of Indian Politics in 2025.**
Women's Empowerment in Politics	• The push for **greater women's representation** in politics is gaining momentum. • The **Women's Reservation Bill and initiatives** promoting **female leadership** are expected to **play a significant role** in shaping the **political landscape in 2025.** • As more **women take on leadership roles, policies focusing on gender equality** and **inclusivity will likely be prioritized.**

Economic Policies and Voter Sentiment	• **Economic stability, employment opportunities, and industrial growth** remain at the forefront of **political debates.**
	• Additionally, **populist measures such as direct benefit transfers and subsidies** will continue to be key factors shaping **electoral strategies, determining how political parties** position themselves in **upcoming elections.**
	It ain't over till it's over: the behavioral economics of elections *Ogilvy*

14. What is the relevance of the topic for UPSC CSE?

- **For Prelims:** Supreme Court, Election Commission of India, Aadhaar, Electoral Roll, Representation of the People Act, 1950, Article 324,India's electoral landscape, Representation of the People Act 1951,Law Commission of India, Model Code of Conduct, Election Commission, Electronic Voting Machines, 15th Finance Commission.

- **For Mains:** Need of revision of electoral rolls and associated concerns, Steps needed to ensure integrity and accuracy of electoral rolls revision,Electoral reforms

Some previous years prelims questions.

Q1. **How many Delimitation Commissions have been constituted by the Government of India till December 2023? (2024)**

(a) One

(b) Two

(c) Three

(d) Four

Ans: (d)

Q2. **Consider the following statements: (2023)**

1. If the election of the President of India is declared void by the Supreme Court of India, all acts done by him/her in the performance of duties of his/her office of President before the date of decision become invalid.

2. Elections for the post of the President of India can be postponed on the ground that some Legislative Assemblies have been dissolved and elections are yet to take place.

3. When a Bill is presented to the President of India, the Constitution prescribes time limits within which he/she has to declare his/her assent.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one

(b) Only two

(c) All three

(d) None

Ans: (d)

Q3. **Consider the following statements in respect of election to the President of India. (2023)**

1. The members nominated to either House of the Parliament or the Legislative Assemblies of States are also eligible to be included in the Electoral College.
2. Higher the number of elective Assembly seats, higher is the value of vote of each MLA of that State.
3. The value of vote of each MLA of Madhya Pradesh is greater than that of Kerala.
4. The value of vote of each MLA of Puducherry is higher than that of Arunachal Pradesh because the ratio of total population to total number of elective seats in Puducherry is greater as compared to Arunachal Pradesh.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) Only three
(d) All four

Ans: (a)

Some previous years mains questions.

Q1. Discuss the 'corrupt practices' for the purpose of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. Analyze whether the increase in the assets of the legislators and/or their associates, disproportionate to their known sources of income, would constitute 'undue influence' and consequently a corrupt practice. **(2025-10 Marks)**

Q2. Examine the need for electoral reforms as suggested by various committees with particular reference to "one nation-one election principle. **(2024-10 Marks)**

Q3. Discuss the procedures to decide the disputes arising out of the election of a Member of the Parliament or State Legislature under The Representation of the People Act, 1951. What are the grounds on which the election of any returned candidate may be declared void? **(2022-15 Marks)**

Q4. Discuss the role of the Election Commission of India in the light of the evolution of the Model Code of Conduct. **(2022-10 Marks)**

Some questions from this year and previous years interview transcripts.

Board Suman Sharma mam:

- What two changes you would like to bring in the present electoral system.

Board Suman Sharma mam:

- What Electoral reforms would you suggest in the current election mechanism?

Board Suman Sharma mam:

- If you are asked to choose between One Nation One Election and Waqf Bill , which one will you choose and why ?

Board Lt gen Raj shukla sir:

- One nation one election - Do you support or oppose?

Board Suman Sharma:

- You are an electronics engineer.
- Tell me whether EVM can be hacked?
- Should state sponsored elections be promoted?
- What should be done regarding criminalization of politics?

Some questions for QUIZ.

Q1. Consider the following features:
1.   Qualifications and disqualifications of voters
2.   Allocation of seats to Lok sabha
3.   Delimitation of constituencies
4.   Manner of filling the seats
5.   Preparation of electoral rolls

How many of the above features are part of the Representation of People's Act, 1950?
(a)   Only two
(b)   Only three
(c)   Only four
(d)   All five

Ans: (d)

Some questions for POLL.

Q1. Do you think India needs an alternative form of politics beyond traditional party systems?
(a)   YES
(b)   NO
(c)   Can't say.

Q2. Can alternate politics bring real change in society without capturing political power?
(a)   YES
(b)   NO
(c)   Can't say.

Q3. Does the dominance of money and muscle power make alternate politics difficult in India?
(a) YES
(b) NO
(c) Can't say.

Q4. Is public cynicism the biggest barrier to the success of alternate politics?
(a) YES
(b) NO
(c) Can't say.

Q5. Can the use of technology make alternate politics more transparent and effective?
(a) YES
(b) NO
(c) Can't say.

Q6. Can the use of technology make alternate politics more transparent and effective?
(a) YES
(b) NO
(c) Can't say.

Q7. Can local governance reforms (like Panchayati Raj or participatory budgeting) strengthen alternate politics?
(a) YES
(b) NO
(c) Can't say.

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