

MAINS MATRIX

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Problem of Outdated Administrative Nomenclature in the Indian Judiciary

1. Introduction

A recent report by the **Supreme Court's Centre for Research and Planning (CRP)** highlights the persistence of outdated, hierarchical, and caste-coded administrative job titles within the Indian judiciary. These terms—many inherited from feudal, colonial and caste-based social structures—are not only anachronistic but actively undermine the constitutional promise of dignity and equality.

2. Issue Identified

The CRP report notes that several designations used in court administration reflect a “**grammar of inequality**”, embedding discriminatory hierarchies into institutional language. Such terms carry the imprint of caste, colonial labour relations, and unequal social status.

3. Problem with the Existing Terms

These job titles are problematic because:

A. They normalize caste hierarchies

- Terms such as *halalkhor* and *scavenger* contain explicit caste associations, especially with historically ostracized communities.

B. They reflect feudal–colonial labour practices

- Terms like *coolie*, *basta barahar*, and *cycle sawar* come from exploitative labour structures, reinforcing servitude rather than dignity.

C. They hinder a modern, respectful work culture

- Language shapes institutional behavior. Using pejorative titles creates stigma, reduces morale, and perpetuates symbolic violence.

4. Constitutional Concerns

The report explicitly states that certain titles—especially *halalkhor* and *scavenger*—**violate the Constitution**, particularly:

- **Article 14:** Equality before the law
- **Article 15:** Prohibition of caste-based discrimination

- **Article 17:** Abolition of untouchability
- **Article 21:** Dignity as a facet of the right to life

Thus, the continued use of such terms contradicts the judiciary's obligation to uphold constitutional morality.

5. Action Taken

Recognizing the severity of the issue, the former **Chief Justice of India** has forwarded the CRP report to all **State High Courts**, urging them to:

- Update the administrative nomenclature
- Ensure caste-neutral, modern, and respectful job titles
- Align judicial administration with constitutional values

This marks an important institutional acknowledgment of linguistic discrimination.

6. Proposed Reforms & Modern Nomenclature

The report provides specific, dignified alternatives:

Outdated Term	Proposed Term
halalkhor / scavenger	sanitation assistant
coolie	freight assistant
cycle sawar	logistics assistant

Outdated Term	Proposed Term
basta barahar	document handler

These new titles recognize the dignity of labour and reflect contemporary professional standards.

7. Significance of the Reform

A. Promotes Constitutional Morality

Revising caste-coded job titles aligns with the spirit of equality, dignity, and social justice.

B. Removes Symbolic Violence (Bourdieu)

Language that encodes hierarchy perpetuates inequality. Reforming nomenclature reclaims dignity for marginalized workers.

C. Participates in Social Transformation (Ambedkar's vision)

Changing institutional language is a step toward dismantling deeply embedded caste ideologies.

D. Enhances institutional credibility

A modern judiciary must reflect modern values—not feudal remnants.

8. Conclusion

Updating casteist and colonial-era job titles within the judiciary is more than a semantic exercise; it is a **constitutional, ethical, and symbolic commitment** to equality. The

Supreme Court's proactive stance marks an important step toward building a judicial system that respects the dignity of every worker and embodies the values of the Constitution it seeks to defend.

HOW TO USE IT

This move by the judiciary is not merely an administrative change but a profound **constitutional and ethical imperative**. It represents the state's duty to actively dismantle **deeply entrenched social hierarchies and stigmatizing language** inherited from history, thereby aligning the institution's internal culture with the **liberal, egalitarian, and dignified values of the Constitution**.

Primary Relevance: GS Paper II (Polity, Constitution, Governance)

1. Indian Constitution—historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

- **How to use:** This is the core constitutional dimension. The change is a direct operationalization of foundational principles.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Preamble (Justice, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity):** The use of derogatory, caste-based terms is antithetical to the

ideals of **social justice and fraternity**.

- **Fundamental Rights:**
 - **Article 14 (Right to Equality):** The discriminatory language creates an unequal status for employees based on the nature of their work, which is often linked to caste.
 - **Article 15 (Prohibition of discrimination):** Specifically prohibits discrimination on grounds of caste. Terms like "halalkhor" are intrinsically casteist.
 - **Article 17 (Abolition of Untouchability):** This is a direct extension of the spirit of Article 17. The term "scavenger" is associated with tasks historically imposed on Dalit communities, and its continued use

perpetuates a form of untouchability.

- **Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty):** The Supreme Court has interpreted this to include the "**Right to Live with Dignity.**" Stigmatizing job titles are a direct assault on the dignity of the individuals holding those posts.

2. Important Aspects of Governance:

- **How to use:** Analyze this as a best-practice model of responsive and ethical governance.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Institutional Reform:** It demonstrates **self-correction and introspection by a key institution of the state.** The judiciary is reforming its own internal administrative structure to be more inclusive.
 - **Symbolism and Substance:** Changing language is not just symbolic; it has a substantive impact on workplace culture, self-esteem, and how

employees are perceived and treated.

Linkages to Other GS Papers

GS Paper IV (Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude)

- **Ethics and Human Interface:** This issue is rooted in **dignity and respect for the individual**, which are core ethical values. The old terminology objectified individuals by their tasks, stripping them of their identity and dignity.
- **Attitude:** The change reflects a conscious effort to reshape **social attitudes and administrative behavior** away from hierarchy and discrimination towards empathy and respect.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** The initiative demonstrates empathy and social awareness by recognizing the psychological harm caused by derogatory labels.
- **Contributions of Moral Thinkers:** This action resonates with the philosophy of **B.R. Ambedkar**, who fought tirelessly for the annihilation of caste and for the dignity of the marginalized.

GS Paper I (Indian Society)

- **Salient features of Indian Society:** This is a direct intervention to change one of the most salient and negative features of Indian society—the **caste system and its associated hierarchies**.
- **Social Empowerment:** It is an act of empowering the most marginalized sections by affirming their dignity within one of the most powerful institutions of the state.

How can State PSCs be reformed?

Key Questions Addressed

- How did the Montagu–Chelmsford Report lead to the creation of modern Public Service Commissions (PSCs)?
- What is the role of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions?
- Is a periodic review of PSC examination syllabi necessary?

2. Background / The Story So Far

- The 2023 national conference of chairpersons of State Public Service Commissions (PSCs) is hosted by the Telangana State PSC on December 19–20.
- Many PSC exams are marred by controversies, alleged leakages, and lack of transparency,

creating a “**trust deficit**” among aspirants.

- Repeated court cases delay recruitments, affecting lakhs of candidates.

3. History of PSCs

Origin

- Emerged from India’s demand for Indianisation of the civil services.
- **Montagu–Chelmsford Report (1918)** recommended a Public Service Commission.
- **Government of India Act, 1919** provided for establishment of PSCs.
- **First PSC set up in 1926**, concerned mainly with the Indian Civil Service.

Constitutional Mandate

- Articles **315–323** provide for Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and State PSCs.
- UPSC is central; State PSCs cater to state recruitment.

4. Structure of Commissions

UPSC

- Functions in a relatively insulated political environment.
- Recruitment process is standardized and national.

State PSCs

- Heavily influenced by the state government.
- Chairpersons/members appointed by the Governor.
- No fixed criteria for qualifications → politicisation and ad-hocism.

5. Key Issues With State PSCs

1. **Trust deficit** among aspirants.
2. **Irregular examination cycles** → delays in recruitment.
3. **Politicised appointments.**
4. **Inconsistent syllabus updates.**
5. **Lag between academic development and exam content.**
6. **Judicial interventions** slowing processes.
7. **Lack of manpower planning** → posts remain vacant.

6. Why Syllabi Need Review

- Current syllabi often:
 - Do not reflect **contemporary knowledge.**
 - Are not updated in coordination with universities.
 - Fail to incorporate new research and technology.

7. Recommendations / What Can Be Done

1. Manpower Planning

- Should be **systematised.**
- Create a **separate ministry** for State PSC administration (similar to UPSC).
- Annual recruitment calendar must be strictly followed.

2. Syllabus Reform

- Syllabi should be:
 - Periodically reviewed.
 - Aligned with academics and real-world developments.
 - Updated through public consultation.

3. Examination Reforms

- Test both:
 - **Static knowledge** (history, polity)
 - **Applied knowledge** (problem-solving, analytical abilities)
- Move towards a **mixed model** (objective + descriptive).

4. Full-Time Experts

- Commission members should include:
 - Academics,

- Experienced administrators,
- Domain specialists.

5. Tenure & Retirement Age Reform

- Increase member tenure from **6 years or 62 years to 6 years or 65 years.**

6. Technology Integration

- Introduce:
 - Computer-based testing (CBT),
 - Transparent evaluation systems,
 - Updated online portals.

7. Better Coordination

- PSCs should coordinate with:
 - State universities,
 - Administrative Training Institutes (ATIs),
 - UPSC norms.

8. The Gist (as per article sidebar)

- Entry of Indians into Civil Services began with demand for self-rule.
- State PSCs face issues of:
 - Underfunding,
 - Outdated syllabus,
 - Politicised appointments,
 - Delays in recruitment.

- A systematic, modernised approach is needed with:
 - Academic relevance,
 - Technology,
 - Moderation in evaluation.

HOW TO USE IT

The efficient functioning of State PSCs is fundamental to the **health of state administrations and cooperative federalism**. The current crisis of trust, delays, and politicization undermines the **constitutional mandate of merit-based recruitment**, leading to administrative inefficiency and eroding public faith. Reforming State PSCs is not just an administrative exercise but a **constitutional imperative to strengthen the state's executive arm**.

Primary Relevance: GS Paper II (Governance, Constitution, Polity)

1. Appointment to various Constitutional Posts, Powers, Functions and Responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.

- **How to use:** This is the core of the topic. State PSCs are Constitutional Bodies established under **Articles 315-323**.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Constitutional Mandate vs. Ground Reality:** While the Constitution envisages independent and impartial bodies, the

reality is **political interference in appointments**. The lack of fixed criteria for the appointment of Chairpersons and members leads to politicization and ad-hocism.

- **Comparison with UPSC:** Highlight the relative insulation and standardisation of the UPSC versus the heavily influenced State PSCs. This creates a disparity in the quality of recruitment between the centre and the states.
- **Role of the Governor:** The Governor appoints the members, making the selection process critical. There is a need for a **transparent, collegium-like system** for appointments to ensure independence.

2. Important Aspects of Governance, Transparency and Accountability:

- **How to use:** Analyze the operational failures of State PSCs as a governance deficit.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Trust Deficit:** The article mentions controversies, paper leaks, and lack of transparency creating a

"trust deficit." This is a fundamental failure of accountability.

- **Impact on Service Delivery:** Delays in recruitment due to judicial cases or irregular exam cycles lead to **vacant posts** in crucial state services (e.g., police, education, revenue). This directly impacts the state's capacity to deliver services and implement schemes, affecting development and public welfare.
- **Lack of Manpower Planning:** The absence of systematic manpower planning reflects poor governance, where human resource needs are not anticipated or met strategically.

3. Development Processes and the Development Industry:

- **How to use:** Link efficient recruitment to the state's development goals.
- **Key Points:**
 - A state's administrative machinery is the engine for implementing development projects. If this machinery is understaffed or staffed

through a compromised process, the entire **development agenda suffers**.

Linkages to Other Dimensions

GS Paper IV (Ethics, Integrity & Aptitude)

- **Impartiality and Non-partisanship:** The very purpose of a PSC is to be impartial. Politicization is an ethical violation of this core principle.
- **Ethics in Governance:** Repeated court cases and allegations of corruption point to a severe ethical crisis within these institutions.
- **Aptitude for Governance:** The call for syllabus reform to test "applied knowledge" and "analytical abilities" aligns with building the right aptitude in future civil servants.

Essays

- This topic can be a core example for essays on: "The Crisis of Institutional Integrity," "Good Governance: From Intent to Implementation," or "Federalism and the Challenge of State Capacity."

The future of health lies in harmony and balance.

1. Introduction

Traditional medicine forms a vital component of global health systems, shaping a shift from reactive, disease-focused care to a holistic model rooted in balance, prevention, and personalisation. The future of health increasingly lies in achieving harmony—within the body and between humans and the natural environment.

2. Key Principles of Modern Health Paradigm

- **Health as Equilibrium:** Not mere absence of disease, but a dynamic balance within the body and between humans and nature.
- **Shift to Preventive Care:** Movement from episodic, reactive healthcare → **preventive, proactive, personalised** models.
- **Integrated Well-being:** Emphasis on harmony of **mind-body, human-environment, and science-spirituality**.

3. Role & Relevance of Traditional Medicine

Definition

- Conceived as the **presence of equilibrium**, grounded in indigenous knowledge systems.

Global Usage

- Used by **billions worldwide**.
- Serves as the **first line of healthcare for ~90% of WHO member states**, especially in LMICs.

Contribution Beyond Healthcare

- Supports:
 - **Biodiversity conservation**
 - **Nutrition and food security**
 - **Livelihoods**, especially rural and tribal
- **Economic Value:** India's **AVISH sector** is valued at **\$8.4 billion**.

4. Institutional Framework & Key Initiatives

WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre (GTMC)

- **Location:** Jamnagar, Gujarat.
- **Role:** Global knowledge hub for evidence-based collaboration.
- **Focus Areas:**
 - Evidence & learning
 - Data & analytics
 - Sustainability, equity, and ethical practices
- **Guiding Principle:** Respect for heritage, local resources, and community rights.

Government of India Initiatives

- Establishment of a dedicated **AVISH department** in **BIS**.
- Development of international standards via **ISO/TC 249/SC 2**.
- Institutional support for WHO-GTMC and global standardisation.

5. Major Events and Global Declarations

1st WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine (2023)

- **Location:** Gandhinagar, Gujarat (during G20 Health Ministerial).
- **Outcome: Gujarat Declaration:**
 - Conservation of biodiversity
 - Ethical benefit-sharing
 - Digital innovation
 - Equitable access to traditional medicine

2nd WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine (2025)

- **Dates:** 17–19 December 2025
- **Location:** New Delhi
- **Co-hosts:** WHO & Government of India (MoU signed)
- **Theme:** “*Restoring Balance: The Science and Practice of Health and Well-being*”

- **Purpose:** Mobilise action for the **WHO Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–34**.

6. India's Strategic Position & Global Contribution

Cultural Heritage

- Birthplace of **Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa**.

Global Role

- Emerging as a hub for **innovation and research** in traditional medicine.
- Advocates **integration**:
Tradition + Technology
Research + Community Knowledge
Health + Sustainability

Strategic Approach

- Demonstrates how traditional knowledge can coexist with modern scientific validation.

7. Key Figures & Institutions

- **Author:** Prataprao Jadhav
Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for AVISH & MoS Health and Family Welfare
- **Institutions:**
 - WHO
 - Government of India
 - Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

- ISO/TC 249/SC 2

8. Conclusion

Traditional medicine is evolving from cultural knowledge to a **scientific and globally recognised health asset**. Its future rests on being:

- **validated by science,**
- **empowered by digital technologies, and**
- **guided by ethics, sustainability, and community rights.**

India, with its civilisational heritage and leadership in global health diplomacy, is positioned to shape the next decade of traditional medicine worldwide.

HOW TO USE IT

Traditional medicine is transitioning from a **marginalized, alternative system** to a **mainstream, globally recognized component of holistic healthcare**. India, with its rich heritage and strategic global initiatives, is positioned to lead this integration, balancing **scientific validation, economic opportunity, and cultural preservation** while promoting a preventive and sustainable model of health.

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

1. India and its International Relations:

- **How to use:** Analyze India's leadership in global health diplomacy through traditional medicine.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Soft Power and Global Leadership:** The establishment of the **WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre (GTMC) in Jamnagar, India**, and hosting global summits (2023, 2025) positions India as the **global knowledge hub and norm-setter** in this field. This is a classic example of leveraging cultural heritage to enhance soft power and influence global health agendas.
 - **South-South Cooperation:** India's model of integrating low-cost, accessible traditional medicine is highly relevant for other **Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs)**, fostering cooperation and sharing best practices.

2. Government Policies and Interventions for Development in various sectors:

- **How to use:** Examine the government's institutional

approach to promoting traditional medicine.

- **Key Points:**
 - **Policy Push:** The creation of a separate **Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy)** and now the **AVISH department** demonstrates a high-level policy commitment.
 - **Standardization and Mainstreaming:** Efforts through the **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** and **ISO** to develop international standards are crucial for quality control, global acceptance, and building trust.

Primary Relevance: GS Paper III (Economy, Science & Technology, Environment)

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

- **How to use:** Highlight the significant economic dimension of the traditional medicine sector.
- **Key Points:**

- **Sunrise Sector:** The **\$8.4 billion valuation** of India's AVISH sector underscores its potential as a major economic driver, contributing to exports, tourism (medical tourism), and creating livelihoods, especially in rural and tribal areas connected to herb cultivation.

2. Science and Technology:

- **How to use:** Discuss the critical interface between traditional knowledge and modern science.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Evidence-Based Validation:** The core challenge and opportunity lie in using modern scientific methods (clinical trials, pharmacognosy) to **validate the efficacy and safety** of traditional remedies. The WHO-GTMC's role as a knowledge hub is pivotal for this.
 - **Digital Integration:** The push for **digital innovation** in documenting, standardizing, and disseminating knowledge is essential for preserving

and scaling these systems.

3. Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation:

- **How to use:** Link traditional medicine to biodiversity and sustainability.
- **Key Points:**
 - **Biodiversity Conservation:** Traditional medicine is directly linked to the sustainable use of medicinal plants. Its promotion, if managed correctly, can incentivize the **conservation of biodiversity**.
 - **Ethical Benefit-Sharing:** The **Gujarat Declaration's** focus on ethical benefit-sharing is crucial to ensure that local and tribal communities who are the custodians of this knowledge are rightfully compensated, aligning with laws like the **Biological Diversity Act, 2002**.

Linkages to Other GS Papers

GS Paper I (Indian Heritage and Culture)

- The promotion of Ayurveda, Yoga, etc., is directly linked to the **preservation and promotion**

of India's intangible cultural heritage.

GS Paper IV (Ethics)

- The expansion of this sector raises ethical questions about **Intellectual Property Rights (Bio-piracy vs. Bio-prospecting)**, ensuring **ethical benefit-sharing** with local communities, and maintaining **integrity in advertising and claims**.



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