

Abolition is the way: On the higher judiciary's move on the death penalty

The issue is the death **penalty** itself, not **merely** the method of **execution**

Forty years after **holding** that the **mode** of **executing** prisoners by hanging **cannot** be **termed** too **cruel** or **barbaric**, the Supreme Court of India has now **ventured** to find out if there is a more **dignified** and less painful method to **carry out** death **sentences**. The **idea** of finding an alternative mode of execution, one **considered** less painful and involves little **cruelty**, **has** been part of the wider **debate** on whether the death penalty should be **abolished**. Judicial and administrative thinking have **leaned** towards **backing** both the idea of **capital punishment** and the **practice** of hanging. The **Bench** has **sought** fresh data to **substantiate** the argument that a more **humane means** of execution can be found. There are two leading judgments on the issue — *Bachan Singh vs State of Punjab* (1980), which **upheld** the death penalty, but limited it to the 'rarest of rare cases', and *Deena Dayal vs Union of India And Others* (1983), which upheld the method by ruling that hanging is "as painless as possible" and "causes no greater pain than any other known method". The 35th Report of the Law Commission (1967) had noted that while **electrocution**, use of a gas chamber and **lethal** injection were considered by some to be less painful, it was not in a position to **come to a conclusion**. It **refrained** from recommending any change.

Even though the Supreme Court has not favoured abolition, it has developed a **robust** and humane **jurisprudence** that has made it difficult for the **executive** to carry out death sentences. It has restricted its use to the 'rarest of rare cases', **mandated** a balancing of **aggravating** and **mitigating circumstances** before sending someone to the **gallows**, and allowed a post-appeal review **hearing** in open court. At the same time, it has **evolved** a **clemency** jurisprudence that makes decisions on **mercy petitions** justiciable and penalises **undue** delay in **disposing** of mercy **pleas** by **commuting** death sentences to life. The **question** now before the Court **provides** yet another opportunity to **humanise** its approach further. **Empirical** evidence suggests that hanging need not **result in** an early or painful death, while there is a body of proof that shows electrocution and lethal injection have their own forms of cruelty. The Union government **contends** that hanging should be retained, not only because it is not cruel or inhuman but also because it **accounts for** the least number of **botched-up** executions. **The real issue**, however, **is** that any form of execution is a fall from **humaneness**, **offends** human **dignity** and **perpetrates** cruelty. Debating the mode only **deepens** the moral **dilemma** of whether the taking of life is the best response to the taking of life. If **eliminating** cruelty and **indignity** is the aim, abolition is the answer.

[Practice Exercise]

- Red/blue coloring of words in the sentence indicates subject verb relationship; where 'red' denotes 'subject' and 'blue' denotes 'verb'.

Vocabulary

1. **Abolition** (noun) – cancellation, repeal, annulment, elimination, destruction
उन्मूलन
2. **Penalty** (noun) – Punishment, fine, sentence, retribution दंड/ सज़ा
3. **Merely** (adverb) – only, purely, solely, simply, entirely केवल
4. **Execution** (noun) – the act of killing someone as a legal punishment: मृत्युदंड, फाँसी
5. **Hold** (verb) – rule, to decide legally निर्णय करना/मानना
6. **Execute** (verb) – Put to death, kill, hang, behead, guillotine, प्राणदंड देना
7. **Term** (verb) – call, name, entitle, designate, describe as कहना
8. **Cruel** (adjective) – Unkind, Mean, Nasty, Brutal, Pitiless, Malicious, Spiteful क्रूर
9. **Barbaric** (adjective) – savage, brutal, uncivilized, inhuman बर्बर/ अशिष्ट
10. **Venture** (verb) – to do something; undertake, embark, attempt, risk साहस करना
11. **Dignified** (adjective) – respectable, proper, venerated, honored गरिमापूर्ण
12. **Carry out** (phrasal verb) – perform, execute, implement, conduct, accomplish अंजाम देना
13. **Sentence** (noun) – Judgement, ruling; punishment सज़ा, दंड
14. **Consider** (verb) – think, believe, deem, regard as मानना
15. **Cruelty** (noun) – brutality, ruthlessness, inhumanity, savagery, atrocity क्रूरता
16. **Debate** (noun) – Discussion, argument, dispute, deliberation बहस
17. **Abolish** (verb) – cancel, eliminate, repeal, annul, nullify, remove समाप्त करना
18. **Lean** (verb) – incline, tend, favor, support झुकना
19. **Back** (verb) – support, endorse, sanction, approve of समर्थन करना
20. **Capital punishment** (noun) – death penalty, execution, hanging मृत्यु दंड
21. **Practice** (noun) – habit, custom, tradition, way, system, routine प्रथा, कार्य
22. **Bench** (noun) – The judge or judges composing a court. न्यायपीठ
23. **Seek** (verb) – ask for, request, solicit, call on मांगना

24. **Substantiate** (verb) – prove, validate, give proof of, support पुष्टि करना
25. **Humane** (adjective) – Caring, Humanitarian, Compassionate, Kindly, Civilized मानवीय
26. **Means** (noun) – method, way, approach, measure तरीका
27. **Uphold** (verb) – confirm, endorse, sustain, validate, ratify बरकरार रखना /समर्थन करना
28. **Electrocution** (noun) – killing of someone by electric shock. बिजली द्वारा प्राणदण्ड
29. **Lethal** (adjective) – deadly, fatal, mortal, poisonous घातक, जानलेवा
30. **Come to a conclusion** (phrase) – arrive at a decision, reach a verdict निर्णय पर पहुँचना
31. **Refrain** (from) (verb) – abstain, withhold, desist, avoid बचना, परहेज़ करना
32. **Robust** (adjective) – strong, vigorous, sturdy, tough, powerful मज़बूत
33. **Jurisprudence** (noun) – law, laws, body of law, rules, regulations. न्यायशास्त्र
34. **Executive** (noun) – The branch of a government responsible for putting decisions or laws into effect कार्यपालिका
35. **Mandate** (verb) – to order someone to do something आदेश देना
36. **Aggravating circumstance** (noun) – it refers to the factors that increase the severity or culpability of a criminal act
37. **Mitigating circumstance** (noun) – a circumstance that does not exonerate a person but which reduces the penalty associated with the offense
38. **Gallows** (noun) – a wooden frame used in the past for killing people by hanging फाँसी का तख़्ता
39. **Hearing** (noun) – trial, court case, inquiry, legal proceedings सुनवाई
40. **Evolve** (verb) – develop, advance, mature, progress विकसित होना
41. **Clemency** (noun) – mercy, mercifulness, leniency, lenience, mildness क्षमा, रहम
42. **Mercy** (noun) – leniency, lenience, clemency, compassion, grace, pity दया, करुणा
43. **Petition** (noun) – appeal, request, application याचिका
44. **Undue** (adjective) – excessive, extreme, immoderate, intemperate अनुचित
45. **Dispose** (of) (verb) – get rid of, discard, eliminate, remove निबटाना, निबटारा करना
46. **Plea** (noun) – appeal, entreaty, petition, supplication, request दलील/याचिका

47. **Commute** (verb) – reduce (a judicial sentence, especially a sentence of death) to another less severe one. कम कर देना (सज़ा, दंड)
48. **Humanise** (verb) – humanize, soften, make more humane, make more compassionate मानवीकरण करना
49. **Empirical** (adjective) – based on, concerned with, or verifiable by observation or experience rather than theory or pure logic. प्रयोगसिद्ध
50. **Result in** (phrasal verb) – cause, bring on, call forth, be the cause of (something) to happen के परिणामस्वरूप
51. **Contend** (verb) – claim, assert, argue, maintain, allege तर्क देना, दावा करना
52. **Retain** (verb) – keep, hold, maintain, preserve बनाए/ बरकरार रखना
53. **Account for** (phrasal verb) – be responsible for के लिये उत्तरदायी होना
54. **Botched-up** (adjective) – poorly executed, mishandled, failed असफल
55. **Humaneness** (noun) – compassion, kindness, empathy, benevolence मानवीयता
56. **Offend** (verb) – insult, affront, upset, displease, distress, hurt ठेस पहुँचाना
57. **Dignity** (noun) – respect, honor, integrity, self-worth गरिमा/मर्यादा
58. **Perpetrate** (verb) – commit, carry out, perform, execute, do (अपराध) अंजाम देना
59. **Deepen** (verb) – intensify, heighten, strengthen, increase, enhance गहरा करना
60. **Dilemma** (noun) – quandary, problem, difficulty, plight दुविधा
61. **Eliminate** (verb) – remove, eradicate, wipe out, annihilate, delete हटाना/समाप्त करना
62. **Indignity** (noun) – humiliation, disrespect, shame, dishonor अपमान

Practice Exercise

1. **What was the decision of the Supreme Court of India regarding the method of executing prisoners by hanging?** Editorial page
 - A. It was deemed too cruel and barbaric.
 - B. It was declared unconstitutional.
 - C. It was upheld as not too cruel or barbaric.
 - D. It was suspended until further research is conducted.
2. **Which Indian Supreme Court case upheld the death penalty but limited it to the 'rarest of rare cases'?**
 - A. Deena Dayal vs Union of India And Others (1983)
 - B. Bachan Singh vs State of Punjab (1980)
 - C. 35th Report of the Law Commission (1967)
 - D. None of the above
3. **What is the Union government's argument for retaining hanging as the method of execution?**
 - A. It is the least painful method.
 - B. It is the most efficient method.
 - C. It accounts for the least number of botched-up executions.
 - D. It is the most humane method.
4. **What is the tone of the passage concerning the death penalty and its execution methods?**
 - A. Neutral
 - B. Critical
 - C. Supportive
 - D. Ambivalent
5. **Which of the following best represents the main theme of the passage?**
 - A. The Supreme Court of India's search for a more humane means of execution
 - B. The history of death penalty methods in India
 - C. The various methods of execution considered by the Law Commission
 - D. The moral dilemma of capital punishment and the need for abolition
6. **Which of the following statements is incorrect regarding the Supreme Court of India's stance on the death penalty?**
 - A. The Supreme Court has upheld the death penalty in the past, but limited its use to the rarest of rare cases'.
 - B. The Supreme Court has restricted the use of the death penalty, considering aggravating and mitigating circumstances before sentencing.
 - C. The Supreme Court has completely abolished the death penalty in India.
 - D. The Supreme Court has allowed a post-appeal review hearing in open court for death penalty cases.

7. Which of the following statements is incorrect regarding the methods of execution considered by the 35th Report of the Law Commission (1967)?
- A. Electrocutation was considered as a less painful method of execution.
 - B. The use of a gas chamber was considered as a less painful method of execution.
 - C. Lethal injection was considered as a less painful method of execution.
 - D. The Law Commission recommended a specific alternative method to hanging.
8. Which of the following words is a **synonym** for "**abolition**" as used in the passage?
- A. Elimination
 - B. Encouragement
 - C. Retention
 - D. Implementation
9. Which of the following words is a **synonym** for "**clemency**" as mentioned in the passage?
- A. Harshness
 - B. Severity
 - C. Leniency
 - D. Rigidity
10. Which of the following words is an **antonym** for "**barbaric**" as used in the passage?
- A. Civilized
 - B. Brutal
 - C. Savage
 - D. Ferocious
11. Which of the following idioms or phrases best describes the concept of "**rarest of rare cases**" as mentioned in the passage?
- A. A drop in the ocean
 - B. A piece of cake
 - C. Few and far between
 - D. A dime a dozen

Direction (Q12 – Q13): Select the option that can be used as a one-word substitute for the given group of words/phrase

12. Which of the following terms refers to **the process of officially ending a legal practice, such as the death penalty**?
- A. Amnesty
 - B. Abrogation
 - C. Reprieve
 - D. Absolution
13. What is the one word that refers to **the process of determining if a person should be granted mercy or leniency in their punishment**?
- A. Exoneration
 - B. Adjudication

- C. Vindication
D. Clemency
14. P. The first vaccine was developed by Edward Jenner.
Q. The invention of the microscope in the 17th century had a profound impact on the study of microorganisms.
R. Louis Pasteur's work led to the development of the germ theory of disease.
S. The history of immunization can be traced back to the 10th century in China
- A. PQRS
B. SPQR
C. QPSR
D. RQPS
15. P. Shakespeare's work has had a profound influence on the English language.
Q. The printing press, invented by Johannes Gutenberg, revolutionized the distribution of books.
R. The Great Vowel Shift was a major change in the pronunciation of English.
S. The development of the English language has been influenced by several factors.
- A. SRQP
B. QPSR
C. SQRP
D. PRQS
16. P. As a result, Van Gogh's work began to gain recognition.
Q. Vincent van Gogh struggled with mental illness throughout his life.
R. His brother, Theo, supported him both financially and emotionally.
S. Despite his talent, Van Gogh sold only one painting during his lifetime.
- A. QRPS
B. SQRP
C. QSRP
D. SRPQ
17. P. Many scientists and inventors contributed to the development of the television.
Q. The first electronic television was invented by Philo Farnsworth in the 1920s.
R. Television has become a ubiquitous form of entertainment and information.
S. John Logie Baird demonstrated the first mechanical television in 1925.
- A. PRSQ
B. SPQR
C. SRPQ
D. PSQR

Direction (Q18 – 22): Cloze Test

The Union government's proposed measures for regulating online gaming in a draft amendment to the Information Technology (Intermediary Liability and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 leave several questions unanswered. Some of these proposed measures, such as the establishment of a self-regulatory body, collection of know-your-customer (KYC) information from players, and appointment of a grievance officer within the company, are already in place. These are moves that industry bodies representing such companies have _____1_____. States such as Tamil Nadu want much stricter regulation of the sector than what is being proposed by the Centre in the draft, particularly for gambling with real money. The Centre's draft remains _____2_____ on the question of whether States can have additional restrictions. So far, the industry has staved _____3_____ several bans by mounting legal challenges arguing that they offer games of skill and not those purely dependent on chance — a tenuous distinction for real money gaming. Still, games that require _____4_____ are outlawed in the physical form under the colonial Public Gambling Act, 1867 or States' own gambling laws. A clear answer should come from the Union government on whether States are empowered to prohibit these games online as they do offline. While the gaming industry has huge _____5_____ as an economic driver of growth in India, there is strong case for robust regulation. Of skill or of chance, all online games impact individuals and society, in the short and the long term.

Fill in the blanks with the most appropriate combinations of words

18. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 1.

- A. Chant
- B. Pondered
- C. Encouraged
- D. Expanded

19. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 2.

- A. Disaffection
- B. Coherence
- C. Diverse
- D. Ambiguous

20. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 3

- A. Off
- B. On
- C. Upon
- D. In

21. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 4

- A. Wagering
- B. Bulky
- C. Unwieldy
- D. Mockery

22. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 5

- A. Cohesion
- B. Potential
- C. Entreaty
- D. Quip

Direction (Q23 – Q25): Read the given sentences to find out whether there is any grammatical error in them

23. I wasn't (A)/ at the last meeting and (B)/ neither was you. (C) / No Error. (D)
24. The three individuals are so different (A)/ that their tastes vary (B)/ from one another. (C)/ No Error. (D)
25. When I shall see him, (A)/ I shall tell him (B)/ the truth. (C)/ No Error. (D)

Answers

1. C 2. B 3. C 4. B 5. D 6. C 7. D 8. A 9. C 10. A 11. C 12. B
13. D 14. C 15. A 16. C 17. D 18. C 19. D 20. A 21. A 22. B 23. C 24. C
25. A

Explanations

1. C

Explanation: Forty years ago, the Supreme Court of India held that the method of executing prisoners by hanging cannot be termed too cruel or barbaric. The passage states that judicial and administrative thinking have leaned towards backing both the idea of capital punishment and the practice of hanging.

2. B

Explanation: The case of Bachan Singh vs State of Punjab (1980) upheld the death penalty, but limited it to the 'rarest of rare cases'. This case established a precedent for the use of the death penalty in India, ensuring that it is only applied in extreme cases.

3. C

Explanation: The Union government contends that hanging should be retained, not only because it is not cruel or inhuman, but also because it accounts for the least number of botched-up executions. This means that hanging is considered to have fewer instances of failure or complications when compared to other methods of execution.

4. B) Critical

Explanation: The tone of the passage is critical as it argues that debating the mode of execution deepens the moral dilemma of whether taking a life is the best response to taking a life, and suggests that if eliminating cruelty and indignity is the aim, abolition is the answer.

5. D) The moral dilemma of capital punishment and the need for abolition

Explanation: The passage mainly focuses on the moral dilemma of capital punishment, discussing the debate on whether the death penalty should be abolished, and the search for a more dignified and less painful method of execution. It ultimately suggests that if eliminating cruelty and indignity is the aim, abolition is the answer.

6. Option C is incorrect because the passage mentions that the Supreme Court has not favored the abolition of the death penalty. The Court has restricted its use, upheld it in the past, and allowed post-appeal review hearings in open court, but has not completely abolished it.

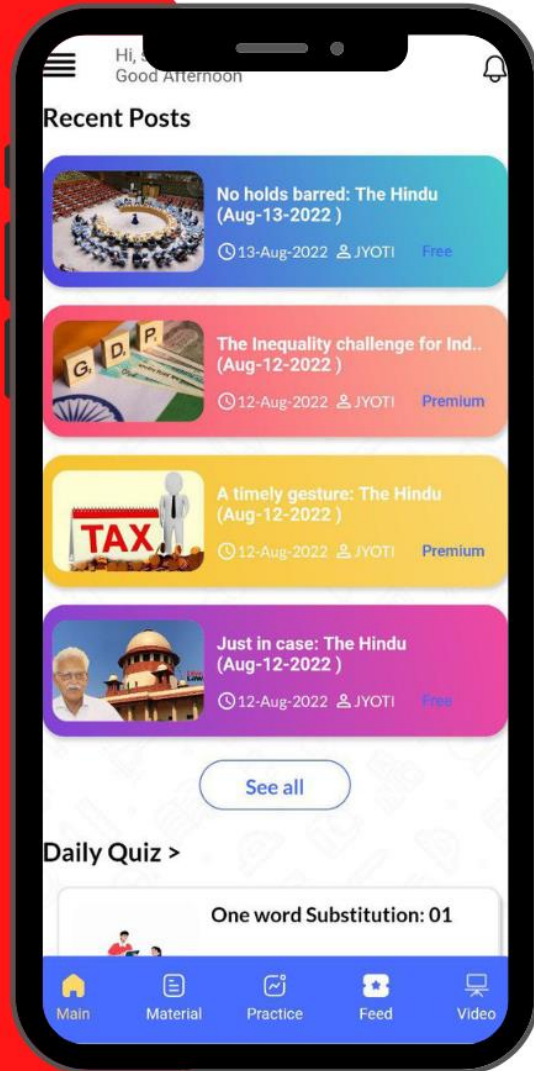
7. Option D is incorrect because the passage states that the Law Commission did not come to a conclusion on which method was less painful and refrained from recommending any change. Electrocution, the use of a gas chamber, and lethal injection were considered by some as less painful methods, but no specific alternative was recommended.

8. The correct answer is 'a) Elimination'. The word "abolition" refers to the act of putting an end to or completely doing away with something, which is synonymous with "elimination".

9. The correct answer is 'c) Leniency'. "Clemency" refers to the act of showing mercy or being lenient, especially in regard to punishment.

10. The correct answer is 'a) Civilized'. "Barbaric" refers to behavior that is cruel or primitive, while "civilized" refers to behavior that is cultured, refined, or more advanced.
11. The correct answer is 'c) Few and far between'. The phrase "rarest of rare cases" implies that these cases are very uncommon or infrequent, which is similar in meaning to "few and far between".
12. The correct answer is 'b) Abrogation'. Abrogation refers to the act of officially ending a legal practice, agreement, or system. In this context, it refers to the process of ending the death penalty.
13. The correct answer is 'd) Clemency'. Clemency refers to the process of showing mercy or leniency, particularly in regard to punishment, which is mentioned in the passage when discussing decisions on mercy petitions.
14. C. QPSR
Explanation: The correct order should be the invention of the microscope (Q), leading to Louis Pasteur's work (R), then the first vaccine by Edward Jenner (P), and finally the history of immunization (S). The sequence QPSR demonstrates the development of immunization over time.
15. A. SRQP
Explanation: The correct order starts with the general statement about the development of the English language (S), followed by specific factors such as the Great Vowel Shift (R), the printing press (Q), and Shakespeare's influence (P). The sequence SRQP presents a logical progression of the English language's development.
16. C. QSRP
Explanation: The correct order starts with the statement about Van Gogh's struggle with mental illness (Q), followed by problem in selling painting despite talent (s), the support from his brother Theo (R), and ultimately the recognition of his work (P). The sequence SQRP tells the story of Van Gogh's life and artistic journey.
17. D. PSQR
Explanation: The correct order starts with the statement about the contributions to the development of the television (P), television followed by the demonstration of the first mechanical television by John Logie Baird (S), the invention of the electronic television by Philo Farnsworth (Q), and finally the ubiquity of television today (R). The sequence PSQR outlines the evolution of television technology.
18. **Encourage** (verb) – promote, stimulate, support, foster, urge प्रोत्साहित करना
- **Chant** (verb) – Recite, intone, repeat, vocalize गाना
 - **Ponder** (verb) – Consider, contemplate, think about, deliberate विचार करना
 - **Expand** (verb) – extend, increase, enlarge, grow, broaden बढ़ना /विस्तार करना
19. **Ambiguous** (adjective) – vague, unclear, equivocal, uncertain, obscure अस्पष्ट

- **Disaffection** (noun) – dissatisfaction, discontent असंतोष
 - **Coherence** (noun) – consistency, coherency, integrity सम्बद्धता
 - **Diverse** (adjective) – Varied, various, different, distinct विविध
20. **Stave off** (phrasal verb) – avert, prevent, avoid, preclude, rule out, counter टालना, रोक देना
21. **Wagering** (noun) – a bet; a gamble जुआ
- **Bulky** (adjective) – large, heavy, hefty, massive भारी-भरकम
 - **Unwieldy** (noun) – cumbersome, awkward, clumsy, unmanageable, ponderous बोझिल
 - **Mockery** (noun) – ridicule, derision, parody, spoof उपहास
22. **Potential** (noun) – capability, capacity, ability, power क्षमता
- **Cohesion** (noun) – unity, solidarity एकजुटता
 - **Entreaty** (noun) – appeal, request, prayer विनती
 - **Quip** (noun) – a funny and clever remark परिहास; चुटकुला
23. (C) 'was' के बदले 'were' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि 'you' के साथ हमेशा Plural Verb का प्रयोग होता है।
- 'were' will be used instead of 'was' because 'you' is always used with Plural Verb.
24. (C) 'one another' के बदले 'one another's' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि तुलना 'their tastes' तथा 'one another's tastes' के बीच है; जैसे-
- i. Their ideas vary from one another's.
- 'one another' shall be substituted for 'one another's' as the comparison is between 'their tastes' and 'one another's tastes'; like-
 - i. Their ideas vary from one another's.
25. (A) 'shall see' के बदले 'see' का प्रयोग होगा।
- 'see' will be used instead of 'shall see'.



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