Clearing the water: on piped, potable water to rural households

India must give a bigger **push** to scheme to deliver potable water

Access to potable tap water **is** a basic **necessity**. However, of the roughly 25 crore households in India (2016), a tap water **connection** that delivers 55 litres **per capita** every day of potable water **is** a **rarity** in most of rural India, which **accounts for** about 19.5 crore households. In August 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised that rural households would be **assured** of piped, potable water by 2024 — before his government's **tenure** ended. When he made that **commitment**, only about 3.2 crore, or about 16% of rural households, were so connected. Today, those figures **stand** at 64%, a **substantial** increase but still below the target. In recent years, **the Jal Shakti Ministry**, which has **labelled** this plan of providing piped water connections as the 'Har Ghar Jal' missions, **has** consistently **underlined** the **scale** of the **exercise**. Since 2019, about nine crore households have their own exclusive access to piped water. This is apart from connections to village schools, anganwadis and community buildings. Yet, for all this scale, it is **unlikely** that all of rural India will be connected by April 2023, as per Mr. Modi's **claim**. The COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war **reportedly** caused the mission to **slow down considerably**, government officials claim, by **impeding** access to pipes and civil construction necessary to the enterprise. **Realistically**, it is unlikely that even 75% of households will be connected by this time. While this too, **by no means**, is an **insignificant** achievement, the challenge is the **reliability** of these numbers.

The **figures** reported by the Jal Shakti Ministry **are** **solely** based on data reported by States. One **proxy** that presents a **discouraging** picture **is** the number of villages that have been certified as 'Har Ghar Jal', or having all houses fully connected. Only 1,68,157 villages have been reported by States as 'Har Ghar Jal' and only 59,000 or about 35% have been 'certified' — meaning their gram panchayats have formally **acknowledged compliance**. The **overwhelming fraction** of villages have **somewhere** between half or three-fourths of their households connected. An independent **assessment** **commissioned** by the Jal Shakti Ministry **sampled** about 300,000 households in 13,300 villages and **reported** 62% households as connected in October last year. That is good but too small a sample to be **representative**. It also **emerges** that the large **States** with 100% compliance, i.e., Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, already **started** on a fairly high **base** in 2019. The Centre must **put in place** a **mechanism** that discloses the scheme's performance on the ground in a **transparent** way.   **[Practice Exercise]**

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

Vocabulary

1. **Piped** (adjective) – Transported/ transferred in a pipe.

2. **Potable** (adjective) – safe to drink; drinkable पीने योग्य

3. **Household** (noun) – a house and its occupants regarded as a unit. परिवार

4. **Push** (noun) – Try, attempt, endeavour, प्रयास

5. **Necessity** (noun) – Need, requirement, inevitability, stipulation, compulsion, obligation आवश्यकता

6. **Per capita** (Adv. & Adj.) – For each person; in relation to people taken individually. प्रति व्यक्ति

7. **Rarity** (noun) – a rare thing, especially one having particular value. दुर्लभता

8. **Account for** (phrasal verb) – Constitute, represent, comprise, make up, form के लिये उत्तरदयी होना

9. **Assured** (adjective) – Ensured, guaranteed, confirmed, secured आश्वासित

10. **Tenure** (noun) – term of office, period कार्यकाल

11. **Commitment** (noun) – Pledge, promise, undertaking, assurance, guarantee वादा

12. **Stand** (verb) – Remain, persist, endure, prevail, be situated होना

13. **Substantial** (adjective) – sizeable, considerable, significant महत्वपूर्ण

14. **Label** (verb) – to describe someone or something using a particular word or phrase, often unfairly वर्णन करना

15. **Consistently** (adverb) – Constantly, always, time after time, time and again लगातार

16. **Underline** (verb) – Emphasize, underscore, stress, ज़ोर देना

17. **Scale** (noun) – extent, size, scope, magnitude पैमाना

18. **Exercise** (noun) – an activity carried out for a specific purpose.

19. **Unlikely** (adjective) – Improbable, doubtful, dubious, questionable, uncertain. संभावना नहीं

20. **Claim** (noun) – Assertion, statement, declaration, contention दावा

21. **Reportedly** (adverb) – supposedly, seemingly, apparently, allegedly कथित तौर पर

22. **Slow down** (phrasal verb) – Delay, reduce speed, decelerate, retard, hinder, impede गति कम करना

23. **Considerably** (adverb) – greatly, much, very much, Significantly काफी

24. **Impede** (verb) – obstruct, hinder, hamper, delay, encumber, inhibit बाधित करना

25. **Realistically** (adverb) – in a way that demonstrates a sensible and practical idea of what can be achieved or expected. वास्तविक

26. **By no means** (phrase) – not at all; certainly not. किसी भी तरह से नहीं

27. **Insignificant** (adjective) – unimportant, trivial, inconsequential, minor, trifling महत्त्वहीन, नगण्य

28. **Reliability** (noun) – Dependability, consistency, trustworthiness विश्वसनीयता

29. **Solely** (adverb) – only, merely, just, exclusively, uniquely केवल

30. **Proxy** (noun) – a person authorized to act on behalf of another

31. **Discouraging** (adjective) – causing someone to lose confidence or enthusiasm; depressing. हतोत्साहित

32. **Acknowledged** (adjective) – recognized, accepted, approved, known, accredited स्वीकृत

33. **Compliance** (noun) – The state or fact of according with or meeting rules or standards. अनुपालन

34. **Overwhelming** (adjective) – very large, profuse, enormous, immense, inordinate भारी, बहुत बड़ा

35. **Fraction** (noun) – portion, part, piece, fragment, section अंश, भाग

36. **Somewhere** (adverb) – in or to some place. कहीं न कहीं

37. **Assessment** (noun) – Calculation, appraisal, estimation, consideration, measurement आकलन

38. **Commission** (verb) – bring (something newly produced) into working condition.

39. **Representative** (adjective) – prototypical, characteristic, illustrative, indicative सूचक

40. **Emerge** (verb) – appear, arise, come out, surface, develop उभरना

41. **Base** (noun) – a number used as the basis of a numeration scale.

42. **Put in place** (phrase) – To establish स्थापित करना

43. **Mechanism** (noun) – procedure, process, system, operation, method तंत्र, क्रियाविधि

44. **Transparent** (adjective) – obvious, explicit, unambiguous, unmistakable, apparent पारदर्शी/ स्पष्ट

Summary of the Editorial

1. Access to potable tap water is a basic necessity, but a significant proportion of rural Indian households lack this infrastructure.

2. In 2016, India had approximately 25 crore households, out of which 19.5 crore are rural, but the majority of these lacked piped, potable water.

3. Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised in August 2019 to provide piped, potable water to all rural households by 2024, a pledge made when only 16% of rural households had such access.

4. As of now, approximately 64% of rural households have piped water, marking a substantial increase but still below the target.

5. The Jal Shakti Ministry's 'Har Ghar Jal' mission has seen around nine crore households gain access to piped water since 2019, in addition to connections in village schools, anganwadis, and community buildings.

6. However, it is doubtful that all of rural India will achieve piped water connectivity by April 2023 due to various impediments, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

7. Government officials claim that these events have hampered the procurement of pipes and necessary civil construction.

8. It is also suggested that even 75% household connectivity by the set date is unrealistic.

9. The Jal Shakti Ministry relies on state-reported data, but independent verification presents a discouraging picture of progress.

10. A small proportion of villages have been certified as 'Har Ghar Jal', indicating complete water connection.

11. A majority of villages have only half to three-fourths of their households connected to piped water.

12. An independent assessment commissioned by the Jal Shakti Ministry reported 62% household connection in a sample of 300,000 households from 13,300 villages.

13. The study's limited scope makes it insufficient to paint an accurate nationwide picture.

14. States with 100% compliance, such as Gujarat, Haryana, and Punjab, started on a comparatively high base in 2019.

15. The central government needs to implement a transparent mechanism to disclose the ground-level performance of the scheme.

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **According to the passage, which of the following is the most significant challenge faced in the mission 'Har Ghar Jal'?**　　　　　　　　　　　　　**[Editorial page]**
   A. Lack of funding for the mission
   B. Difficulty in providing access to remote rural areas
   C. Effects of the Russia-Ukraine war and COVID-19 pandemic
   D. The reliability of the data on the number of households connected

2. Identify whether the given statements are true or false.
   A. India's target of providing potable water to all of its rural households will be met by April 2023
   B. The Jal Shakti Ministry's mission is called 'Har Ghar Jal'
   A. A is true and B is false.
   B. A is false and B is true.
   C. Neither A nor B is true.
   D. Both A and B are true.

3. "One **proxy** that presents a discouraging picture" Here, '**Proxy'** means all of the following EXCEPT:
   A. Representative
   B. Substitute
   C. Initiative
   D. Deputy

4. What does the term **"Har Ghar Jal"** indicate in the context of the report given by the Jal Shakti Ministry?
   A. Villages where every household has electricity
   B. Villages where every household is partially water-connected
   C. Villages where every household has a stable income
   D. Villages where every household is fully water-connected

5. **Based on the passage, which of the following statements about the independent assessment commissioned by the Jal Shakti Ministry is true?**
   A. It reported 62% of households as connected in the entire country.
   B. It found 100% compliance in large states like Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab.
   C. It sampled about 300,000 households in 13,300 villages.
   D. It was fully representative of all villages in India.

6. **What tone is primarily exhibited in the passage?**
   A. Optimistic
   B. Critical
   C. Enthusiastic
   D. Apathetic

7. **What is the main theme of the passage?**
   A. The effect of war on the economy
   B. The challenge of providing partially water piped connections in urban India

C. The challenge of providing piped water connections in rural India

D. The role of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in India's technological growth

8. What is a synonym for the term "**rarity**" as used in the context of the passage?
   A. Abundance
   B. Familiarity
   C. Uncommonness
   D. Universality

9. **Parts of a sentence are given below in jumbled order. Arrange the parts in the correct order to form a meaningful sentence.**
   Data is a great explainer,/ reasons green think tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), /because what we can measure,/ we can fix.
   A. Reasons green think tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) data is a great explainer because what we can measure, we can fix
   B. Data is a great explainer, reasons green think tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), because what we can measure, we can fix.
   C. We can fix reasons green think tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), because what we can measure DATA is a great explainer
   D. Data is a great explainer because what we can measure, we can fix reasons green think tank Centre for Science and Environment(CSE)

10. Select the most appropriate meaning of the given idiom
    The construction crew saw the amount of heavy digging work ahead of them and realised it was going to be a _**Herculean task**_ .
    A. Easy task
    B. A task made to something in order to correct or improve it
    C. Resolution
    D. An extremely difficult task

11. Some sentences are given below. While the first and the last sentences (1 and 2) are in the correct order, the sentences in between are jumbled up. Arrange the sentences in the correct order to form a meaningful and coherent paragraph
    1. **Other than a few bright spots for Indian institutes, the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2024, released on Tuesday, have failed to bring cheer to the country's education sector.**
    A. Ranked 149th, IIT-Bombay has made it to the top-150 list.
    B. The University of Delhi (ranked 407th) and Anna University (427th) have entered the top-500 tier.
    C. In all, 45 Indian universities — up from 41 — find a place in the latest rankings that feature 1,500 institutions.
    D. However, the situation is largely bleak as most other so-called prestigious institutes and universities have slipped in the QS rankings, including other IITs and IISc-Bangalore.

2. **The shift in positions could be attributed to a reset in the methodology applied in this QS edition, which introduced Sustainability, Employment Outcomes and International Research Network in the assessment criteria.**

   A. ABDC   B. CDBC   C. BADC   D. ABCD

12. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**

    P. The authorities' preparedness for digital privacy protection is under the scanner once again following reports of a major data breach leading to the leaking of personal information of the recipients of the Covid-19 vaccine.

    Q. Now's the time for a relook at the safety regime and allay doubts about the security aspects of e-platforms. The challenge for the nodal cybersecurity agency only gets tougher, but that's the requirement of the day.

    R. The possibility that this could be previously stolen data adds to the mounting concerns. Every citizen providing information to a database would expect regular risk assessment, with a mandated policy to monitor the inbuilt safety provisions.

    S. While ordering an inquiry, the Centre has been quick to deny claims that data on vaccination-tracking platform CoWIN had been accessed by a Telegram bot (web robot).

    A. PSQR   B.PSRQ   C.SQPR   D.PRQS

13. Select the most appropriate meaning of the highlighted idiom

    To be on cloud nine

    A. To be in a state of extreme happiness and joy

    B. To be in a state of deep sadness and despair

    C. To be confused and unsure of what to do

    D. To be angry and frustrated

14. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**

    P. The trend of getting an IIM degree after IIT has slackened a bit, but not the yearning to crack the UPSC code. Choosing non-core work is an individual's right, but what IIT-Madras Director V Kamakoti is alluding to warrants attention at the highest level.

    Q. IIT graduates making a beeline for higher studies or employment abroad is a well-entrenched rite of passage.

    R. Graduates of reputed institutions making career choices unrelated to what they have studied puts a question mark on the utility of state-funded academic programmes helmed by highly qualified faculty.

    S. One can only nod in agreement when the Director of the country's top-ranking Indian Institute of Technology, IIT-Madras, observes that more and more engineers opting for non-engineering jobs is a waste of resources.

    A. RPQS   B.RSPQ   C.SRQP   D.SPRQ

15. **Select the most appropriate ANTONYM of the underlined word**

    The new employee's behavior was quite **amicable** when he met his colleagues for the first time.

    A. Hostile

    B. Friendly

    C. Cooperative

D. Polite
16. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in the blank**.
    The team is hoping that their innovative approach will help them _____ the competition.
    A. extirpate
    B. obliterate
    C. surmount
    D. engender

Comprehension

In the following passage, some words have been deleted. Read the passage carefully and select the most appropriate option to fill in each blank.

In recent years, the global media landscape has undergone a _____1_____. The rise of digital platforms and social media has _____2_____ the way information is disseminated and consumed. With this change comes the growing issue of _____3_____ news, which has led to widespread misinformation and eroded public trust in traditional media outlets. To combat this, it is imperative that governments, media organizations, and citizens take _____4_____ measures.

17. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 1.**
    A. transformation
    B. reduction
    C. stagnation
    D. depletion
18. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 2.**
    A. maintained
    B. hindered
    C. revolutionized
    D. diluted
19. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 3.**
    A. fictional
    B. outdated
    C. biased
    D. fake
20. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 4.**
    A. passive
    B. counterproductive
    C. precautionary
    D. aggressive

Answers

1. D   2.B   3.C   4. D   5. C   6. B   7.C   8.C   9.B   10.D   11.A
12. B   13.A   14.C   15.A   16.C   17.A   18.C   19.D   20.C   **[Practice Exercise]**

Explanations

1. **D) The reliability of the data on the number of households connected**
Although the passage mentions several obstacles to the 'Har Ghar Jal' mission, such as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, it specifically emphasizes that the most significant challenge is the reliability of the data on the number of households connected. The passage does not suggest that lack of funding or difficulty in accessing remote areas is a primary issue. Therefore, option D is the correct answer.

2. B) **A is false and B is true**
Statement 2 is correct 'Har Ghar Jal' is the name given by the Jal Shakti Ministry to the mission of providing piped water connections
Statement 1 is incorrect because the passage states that it is unlikely that all of rural India will have access to potable water by April 2023.

3. C) The term "**proxy**" usually means a representative, substitute, or deputy - someone or something that acts on behalf of another person or thing, especially in a specific capacity or role. For example, a proxy vote means that one person is voting on behalf of another who is unable to vote themselves
An initiative is usually an action or step taken to achieve a goal. It doesn't really have the same connotations of representation or substitution that the term "proxy" does.
So, the answer to this question would be C. Initiative

4. **D) Villages where every household is fully water-connected**
In the passage, the term 'Har Ghar Jal' is referred to as the number of villages that have been certified as having all houses fully connected, indicating water connectivity in this context.

5. **C) It sampled about 300,000 households in 13,300 villages.**
The passage mentions that the independent assessment commissioned by the Jal Shakti Ministry sampled about 300,000 households in 13,300 villages. The other options are not supported by the details provided in the passage. It reports 62% of households as connected, but it does not specify this as being for the entire country. It also doesn't specify the compliance rate in large states like Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, and it is not said to be fully representative of all villages in India.

6. B) **Critical**
The tone of the passage is primarily critical. The author acknowledges the progress made by the Indian government in providing piped water connections to rural households. Still, they highlight that the progress falls short of the promises made, with the ministry's reports being questioned for their reliability and the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war on the mission. The tone is critical, as the author seems to critique the government's efforts, approach, and transparency.

7. **C) The challenge of providing piped water connections in rural India**
   The passage primarily deals with the issue of providing piped water connections to households in rural India, a plan labeled as the 'Har Ghar Jal' mission by the Jal Shakti Ministry. It examines the progress made since 2019, the challenges faced such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, and the likelihood of achieving the set targets. The author also discusses the reliability of the figures reported and the need for transparency. Therefore, the main theme of the passage is the challenge of providing piped water connections in rural India.

8. C) **Uncommonness**

   Rarity (noun) – a rare thing दुर्लभता

   The term "rarity" in the context of the passage refers to the uncommonness or infrequency of something. Hence, "uncommonness" is a synonym for "rarity".

9. **B) DATA is a great explainer, reasons green think tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), because what we can measure, we can fix.**

10. **D) Herculean task** (phrase) – daunting task, An extremely difficult task, mammoth task, gigantic task, enormous challenge, colossal undertaking कठिन कार्य

11. A) **ABDC**
    - The first sentence sets up the context about the overall negative performance of Indian institutes in the QS World University Rankings 2024. Sentence A follows logically as it talks about a "bright spot" for Indian institutes with IIT-Bombay making it to the top-150 list
    - The connection between A and B is established through a continuation of the discussion on specific Indian institutes' rankings. While sentence A talks about IIT-Bombay, sentence B expands this by talking about the University of Delhi and Anna University
    - Sentence B ends with the mention of top universities' ranking and sentence D continues this theme but focuses on the negative side — those universities that have slipped in their rankings. The phrase **"so-called prestigious institutes and universities"** in sentence D directly refers to the universities previously mentioned in sentence B, hence establishing a noun-pronoun relationship.
    - The connection between D and C is based on the mention of "other IITs and IISc-Bangalore" in sentence D and the reference to the total number of Indian universities in the latest rankings in sentence C. Sentence D outlines the negative performance and then sentence C gives an overall number of Indian universities ranked
    - Sentence C talks about the latest rankings and then sentence 2 provides a possible reason for the changes in rankings - a shift in the methodology of the QS rankings. This presents a logical flow of information

12. B) **PSRQ**
    P: This sentence sets the context and introduces the problem, that is, a data breach and leaking of personal information. It serves as a good starting point.
    S: The "Centre" referred to here is most likely the same "authorities" referred to in sentence P. Also, "CoWIN" is the acronym for "Covid Vaccine Intelligence Work," which makes it related to the "Covid-19 vaccine" in sentence P.

R: Sentence R logically follows S. The pronoun "this" in sentence R refers back to the data breach mentioned in sentence S. The citizens' expectation of regular risk assessment and safety monitoring suggests a response to the denial from the Centre mentioned in sentence **Q:** Finally, sentence Q logically follows R, "Now's the time" suggests a response or next steps after the events and concerns expressed in sentences P, S, and R. It outlines the course of action that needs to be taken in light of the problem discussed in the preceding sentences.

13. A.) **To be on cloud nine** (phrase) – To be in a state of extreme happiness and joy सातवें आसमान पर होना

14. **C) SRQP**
    S: This sentence introduces the topic and the key player (the Director of IIT-Madras).
    R: This sentence follows S because it expands on the point made by the Director of IIT-Madras in S about engineers opting for non-engineering jobs. The Noun-Pronoun Relationship and Acronym are present here as the "Graduates of reputed institutions" mentioned here are clearly the engineers from IIT mentioned in S.
    Q: This sentence follows R as it provides a specific example of the graduates mentioned in R (the IIT graduates). The "IIT graduates" are the "Graduates of reputed institutions" referred to in R.
    P: This sentence follows Q because it introduces a new trend related to IIT graduates' career choices mentioned in Q (getting an IIM degree after IIT). It also brings back the IIT-Madras Director mentioned in S, hence forming a complete circle.

15. A.) **Hostile** (adjective) – antagonistic, aggressive, belligerent, unfriendly, inhospitable शत्रुतापूर्ण

    - **Amicable** (adjective) – cordial, friendly, genial, harmonious, congenial सौहार्दपूर्ण

    - **Friendly** (adjective) – amiable, affable, warm, kind, sociable मित्रवत

    - **Cooperative** (adjective) – collaborative, helpful, supportive, team-oriented, accommodating

    - **Polite** (adjective) – courteous, respectful, well-mannered, civil, gracious सभ्य
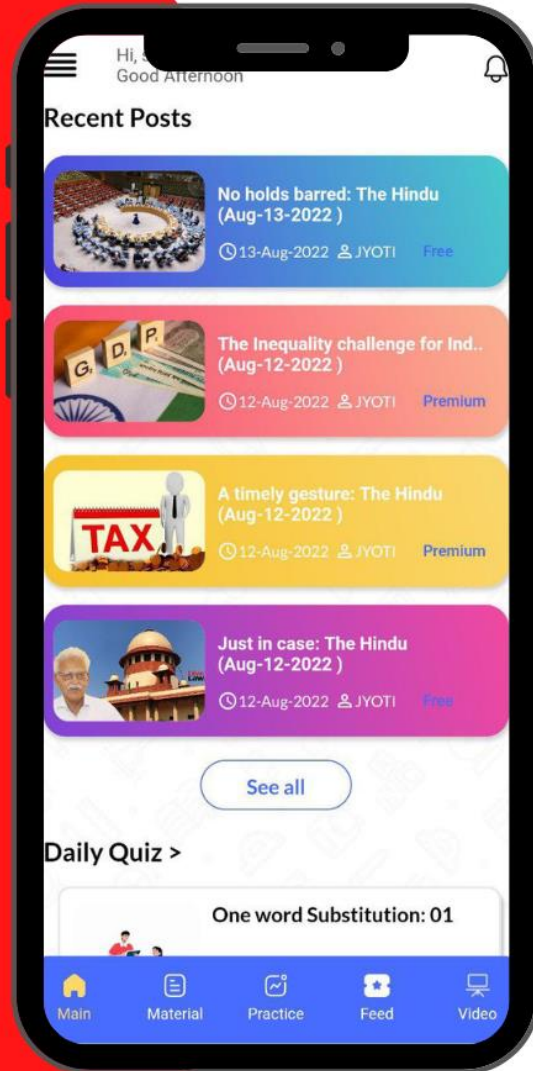
16. C.) **surmount** (verb) – to overcome or rise above a difficulty विजय पाना, जीतना

    - **Extirpate** (verb) – eradicate, eliminate, annihilate, exterminate, destroy उखाड़ना

    - **Obliterate** (verb) – annihilate, demolish, wipe out, erase, expunge मिटाना

    - **Engender** (verb) – generate, produce, create, spawn, provoke उत्पन्न करना

17. A) The passage discusses the rise of digital platforms and social media, which indicates that the media landscape has changed significantly. The word "transformation" best captures this change.
    - **Transformation** (noun) – Metamorphosis, Conversion, Alteration, Changeover, Transmutation परिवर्तन

    - **Reduction** (noun) – Decrease, Diminution, Cutback, Decline, Lowering कटौती

- **Stagnation** (noun) – Inactivity, Idleness, Stalemate, Standstill, Sluggishness गतिहीनता

- **Depletion** (noun) – Exhaustion, Reduction, Diminishment, Depletion, Depletion कमी

18. C) The passage implies that the change brought about by digital platforms and social media is significant and has impacted the way information is spread and consumed. The word "revolutionized" best describes this dramatic change.

- **Maintain** (verb) – Sustain, Keep, Preserve, Retain, Uphold बनाए रखना

- **Hinder** (verb) – Impede, Obstruct, Block, Inhibit, Hamper रोकना

- **Revolutionize** (verb) – Transform, Innovate, Modernize, Reform, Overhaul क्रांति ला देना

- **Dilute** (verb) – Weaken, Water down, Thin out, Attenuate, Diminish कम करना

19. D) The passage talks about the negative impact of the changing media landscape, specifically mentioning widespread misinformation and eroded public trust in traditional media outlets. "Fake" news best represents the type of news causing these issues

- **Fictional** (adjective) – Imaginary, Fictitious, Made-up, Fantasy, Unreal काल्पनिक

- **Outdated** (adjective) – Obsolete, Old-fashioned, Antiquated, Archaic, Dated पुरानी

- **Biased** (adjective) – Partial, Prejudiced, Discriminatory, Unfair, Favorable पक्षपातपूर्ण

- **Fake** (adjective) – False, Counterfeit, Artificial, Imitation, Sham नक़ली

20. C) The passage suggests that the problem of fake news and misinformation should be addressed to restore public trust in traditional media outlets. "Precautionary" measures best represent the actions needed to prevent the spread of misinformation and protect the integrity of the media landscape

- **Passive** (adjective) – Inactive, Submissive, Compliant, Obedient, Unresisting निष्क्रिय

- **Counterproductive** (adjective) – Unproductive, Harmful, Inefficient, Detrimental, Negligent हानिकारक

- **Precautionary** (adjective) – Preventive, Cautious, Prudent, Protective, Safety एहतिहाती

- **Aggressive** (adjective) – Hostile, Combative, Belligerent, Assertive, Forceful आक्रामक