Tiers apart: On the 'one nation, one election' trial balloon

'One nation, one election' **militates** against **federalism** and **multi-tiered governance**

In a multi-tiered governance system such as the one in India, a Union of States, electoral democracy works by allowing people to choose their **representatives** for each tier based on their **perception** of who is best suited to represent them for each specific tier. There is a reason why there is a **demarcation** of power between the Union, States and local body institutions and why there is a voter **mandate** every five years to elect representatives for Parliament, Assemblies and local bodies. The demarcation allows for specific roles for each representative across these tiers and suggests **varied** voter choices that could be based on party **affiliation**, candidate strength, **ideological** positions or simple socio-economic reasons specific to each **constituency**. **That** some **States** such as Andhra Pradesh and Sikkim **hold** **simultaneous** Assembly and parliamentary **polls** **is** a **coincidence** as their electoral cycle has **coalesced** with that of parliamentary polls. The BJP-led Union government's **trial balloon**, **exploring** the **feasibility** of simultaneous elections for all levels through a committee led by former President Ramnath Kovind, **militates** against the foundational idea of multi-tiered governance and is **anti-federalist**. Dangerously, **one** of the committee's **terms of reference** — to "**examine** and recommend, if the **amendments** to the Constitution [for the purpose of holding simultaneous elections] would require **ratification** by the States" — **is** a **proposition** that is anti-constitutional and **will** not **stand** legal **scrutiny**. It also **advances** a motive that would **curtail** many Assemblies much before their scheduled tenures — an **untenable prospect**.

Ostensibly, the proposal speaks of the need for simultaneous elections as a cost-cutting exercise allowing voting in parliamentary, Assembly, municipal and panchayat elections **in one go**. It also **stems from** the **flawed notion** that governments are forever in campaign mode because of frequent Assembly elections. First, there is no study to prove that there will be significant cost-saving with simultaneous elections and in any case, the **costs** **incurred** in the **conduct** of elections **are** not essentially wasteful as there is a **multiplier effect** to campaign spending and economic activity around polls. **Elections** for different levels also **allow** voters to <u>hold</u> their representatives **to account** and for their specific **grievances** to be noted. Second, the **conduct** of various elections at different points of time **is** to only elect representatives for these tiers and **is** not a **referendum** on just one tier or even an individual leader at every point of time, as the BJP has **sought** to make it. **Those** in civil and political society who are **committed** to India's federal structure **should** **argue** for separation of the Lok Sabha election from polls to Assemblies as the campaign issues and democratic choices vary. In any case, unless the **term** of each Lok Sabha and Assembly is fixed, and **premature dissolution** for whatever reason is **barred**, the idea is unworkable. **[Practice Exercise]**

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

Vocabulary

1. **Tier** (noun) – one of a number of levels स्तर

2. **Trial balloon** (noun) –something that is done or announced as a test in order to find out how people would react to something similar

3. **Militate against** (verb) – Work against, resist, hinder, discourage, oppose, counter के विरुद्ध होना

4. **Federalism** (noun) – a system of government in which powers have been divided between the centre and its constituent parts such as states or provinces. संघवाद

5. **Multi-tiered** (adjective) – Consisting of several levels or layers

6. **Governance** (noun) – The act or process of governing; ruling, controlling, leading शासन

7. **Representative** (noun) – a person chosen or appointed to act or speak for others प्रतिनिधि

8. **Perception** (noun) – Insight, awareness, acuity, discernment, observation अनुभूति

9. **Demarcation** (noun) – boundary, border, dividing line, separation, distinction सीमा निर्धारण

10. **Mandate** (noun) – Instruction, directive, direction, decree, command, order, अधिदेश

11. **Varied** (adjective) – diverse, various, mixed, miscellaneous, heterogeneous विभिन्न

12. **Affiliation** (noun) – Association, connection, attachment, alliance, relationship संबंध

13. **Ideological** (adjective) – Based on or relating to a system of ideas and ideals, especially concerning economic or political theory and policy वैचारिक

14. **Constituency** (noun) – An area whose voters elect a representative to a legislative body. चुनाव क्षेत्र

15. **Simultaneous** (adjective) – occurring, operating, or done at the same time एक ही समय में होनेवाला

16. **Poll** (noun) – Election चुनाव

17. **Coincidence** (noun) – chance, concurrence, fluke, happenstance संयोग

18. **Coalesce** (verb) –to combine into a single group or thing; merge, unite, combine, amalgamate, join सम्मिलित होना

19. **Explore** (verb) – investigate, examine, study, probe, search पता लगाना

20. **Feasibility** (noun) – practicality, viability, possibility, workability, realizability संभाव्यता/ व्यवहार्यता

21. **Anti-federalist** (adjective) – opposed to federalism, non-federalist, centralist संघवाद विरोधी

22. **Terms of reference** (noun) – The parameters and limitations that are set for a particular study, project, or report.

23. **Examine** (verb) – scrutinize, analyze, inspect, investigate, study परीक्षण करना

24. **Amendment** (noun) – modification, revision, alteration, change संशोधन

25. **Ratification** (noun) – approval, endorsement, sanction, confirmation, acceptance मंजूरी

26. **Proposition** (noun) – Proposal, plan, scheme, suggestion, intention प्रस्ताव

27. **Stand** (verb) – Go through, undergo, withstand, से गुज़रना

28. **Scrutiny** (noun) – examination, inspection, investigation, analysis सूक्ष्म परीक्षण

29. **Advance** (verb) – promote, further, forward, progress आगे बढ़ाना

30. **Curtail** (verb) – reduce, diminish, cut back, decrease घटाना

31. **Untenable** (adjective) – indefensible, unjustifiable, unsustainable असमर्थनीय/ अस्थिर

32. **Prospect** (noun) – outlook, perspective, expectation, forecast संभावना

33. **Ostensibly** (adverb) – apparently, seemingly, outwardly, superficially प्रकट रूप से

34. **In one go** (phrase) – in a single attempt, all at once, without a break, in one attempt एक ही बार में

35. **Stem from** (phrasal verb) – originate from, arise from, come from, originate from, से उत्पन्न होना

36. **Flawed** (adjective) – defective, faulty, erroneous त्रुटिपूर्ण

37. **Notion** (noun) – idea, belief, concept, thought धारणा

38. **Incur** (verb) – bring upon oneself, acquire, sustain, (व्यय) करना

39. **Conduct** (noun) – management, handling, direction, control संचालन

40. **Multiplier effect** (noun) – An economic term to describe a phenomenon where an increase in spending produces an increase in national income and consumption greater than the initial amount spent

41. **Hold someone to account** (phrase) – make someone explain or justify their actions, hold responsible, call to answer, take to task उत्तरदायी ठहराना

42. **Grievance** (noun) – complaint, objection, protest, grumble शिकायत

43. **Referendum** (noun) – a general vote by the electorate on a single political question that has been referred to them for a direct decision. जनमत संग्रह

44. **Seek** (verb) – Try, aim, strive, endeavour, कोशिश करना

45. **Committed** (adjective) – Dedicated, devoted, promised, obliged, प्रतिबद्ध

46. **Argue** (verb) – contend, assert, claim, state तर्क करना

47. **Term** (noun) – period, duration, span, tenure अवधि

48. **Premature** (adjective) – early, untimely, ahead of time असमयिक

49. **Dissolution** (noun) – termination, end, conclusion, cessation भंग

50. **Bar** (verb) – prevent, prohibit, block, stop रोकना

Summary of the Editorial

1. India has a multi-tiered governance system, allowing citizens to elect representatives for the Union, States, and local bodies.

2. This demarcation of power ensures specific roles for each representative across different governance levels.

3. Voter choices can vary based on several factors such as party affiliation, candidate strength, or socio-economic reasons.

4. Some States like Andhra Pradesh and Sikkim simultaneously hold Assembly and parliamentary polls, but it's a coincidence.

5. The BJP-led Union government is exploring the possibility of simultaneous elections for all levels.

6. This proposal challenges the foundational idea of multi-tiered governance and is anti-federalist.

7. The committee's term of reference regarding potential constitutional amendments is seen as anti-constitutional.

8. The main arguments for simultaneous elections are cost-cutting and reducing the perpetual campaign mode of governments.

9. No concrete studies show significant cost savings due to simultaneous elections.

10. The costs associated with separate elections aren't necessarily wasteful given the economic activities they stimulate.

11. Separate elections allow voters to hold representatives accountable for specific grievances.

12. Separate elections aren't always referendums on a single tier or leader, contrary to the BJP's perspective.

13. The issues and democratic choices differ between Lok Sabha elections and Assembly polls.

14. Those committed to India's federal structure should advocate for keeping Lok Sabha and Assembly polls distinct.

15. The proposal is unfeasible unless the terms of the Lok Sabha and Assembly are fixed, and premature dissolutions are prohibited.

Practice Exercise: SSC Pattern Based

1. **What can be inferred about the 'one nation, one election' proposal based on the passage?**
   A. It is a widely accepted method of conducting elections in multi-tiered governance systems.
   B. The proposal is believed to go against the essence of a multi-tiered governance system in India. **[Editorial Page]**
   C. The simultaneous Assembly and parliamentary polls in Andhra Pradesh and Sikkim were a result of the 'one nation, one election' proposal.
   D. The proposal emphasizes increasing the voter mandate duration from five years.

2. **Based on the passage, why is there a demarcation of power between the Union, States, and local body institutions in India?**
   A. To ensure that only one representative is elected for the entire country.
   B. To encourage simultaneous Assembly and parliamentary polls.
   C. To allow people to elect representatives best suited for specific roles in each tier based on varied voter choices.
   D. To ensure that the BJP-led Union government can hold simultaneous elections for all levels.

3. **According to the passage, why does the proposal for simultaneous elections appear flawed?**
   A. Because the government believes that conducting elections frequently makes the representatives more accountable.
   B. Because simultaneous elections would result in more campaign spending and more economic activity.
   C. Because there is no definitive study showing that simultaneous elections would lead to significant cost-saving.
   D. Because simultaneous elections would simplify the electoral process by having only one ballot.

4. **What is the underlying concern expressed in the passage regarding the conduct of various elections at different times?**
   A. It is primarily to enable better economic activity around polls.
   B. It is solely to elect representatives for individual tiers, not to be a referendum on a singular leader or tier.
   C. It is to avoid the multiplier effect of campaign spending.
   D. It is to simplify the voting process by reducing the number of elections.

5. **What is the tone of the passage concerning the 'one nation, one election' proposal?**
   A. Supportive
   B. Neutral
   C. Ambivalent
   D. Critical

6. **Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.**
   P. The opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has alleged that YSRCP leaders have looted sand worth ₹40,000 crore in the last four years
   Q. Ever since it withdrew the free sand policy, the YSR Congress Party government has been fending off accusations

R. That it is working hand in glove with the sand mafia and letting them go off the hook

S. Sand mining in Andhra Pradesh has once again became a political hot potato

  A. SQRP   B.PSRQ   C.SRQP   D.PRQS

7. **Select the option that can be used as a one-word substitute for the given group of words**.
   One who loves mankind
   A. Atheist
   B. Pessimist
   C. Optimist
   D. Philanthropist

8. Select the **INCORRECTLY** spelt word.
   A. Allimony
   B. Structural
   C. Hallucinate
   D. Halloween

9. **Select the most appropriate synonym of the given word**.
   Judicious
   A. Sensible
   B. Imprudent
   C. Careless
   D. Short-sighted

10. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in the blank**.
    Which _____ do you usually take to reach your office?
    A. route
    B. root
    C. rout
    D. rude

11. **Select the most appropriate synonym of the given word**.
    Extol
    A. Reward
    B. Punish
    C. Dismay
    D. Praise

12. **Select the option that can be used as a one-word substitute for the given group of words**.
    Author's explanatory remarks at the beginning of a book
    A   Preface
    2.   Foreward
    3.   Bibliography
    4.   Biography

13. **Identify how will you say that "The doctor treated the victims of the violence very carefully", in the passive voice.**
    A. The doctor was very careful while providing treatment to the victims
    B. The doctor's care was shown to the victims of the violence

C. The victims of the violence were treated very carefully by the doctor

D. The victims were treated attentively by the doctor

14. **Sentences of a paragraph are given below. While the first and the last sentences (S1and S6) 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.**

S1. He sat in his seat

A. hardly showing any signs of hearing

B. beside the bed,

C. gazing sternly

D. at the patient's face

S6. what they were saying to him.

    A. DABC

    B. BCDA

    C. DCAB

    D. DBAC

15. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in the blank**.

Hundreds of firms went bankrupt during the _____.

A. recission

B. revision

C. remission

D. recession

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.

Changes to the earth's climate, driven by increased ___1___ of heat-trapping greenhouse gases, are already having widespread effects on the environment. Shrinking of glaciers and ice sheets, occurrence of shifts in flower/plant blooming times, etc., are creating an overall ___2_____ in the natural ecosystem. Conditions like the rise in sea-levels and saltwater intrusion have advanced to the point where whole _____3_____ have had to relocate, while protracted droughts are putting people at risk of ___4_____. The effects of human-caused global warming are ___5_____ for people alive today and will worsen as long as humans keep feeding greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

16. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 1.**

A. emission

B. feeding

C. creation

D. fertilization

17. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 2**.

A. despondence

B. imbalance

C. hunger

D. creativity

18. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 3**.
    A. mobs
    B. people
    C. communities
    D. conditions

19. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 4**.
    A. pregnancy
    B. famine
    C. overpopulation
    D. surgery

20. **Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank number 5**.
    A. heart breaking
    B. contradictory
    C. irreversible
    D. conditional

Answers

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

Explanations

1. B) The passage explicitly states that the BJP-led Union government's 'one nation, one election' proposal "militates against the foundational idea of multi-tiered governance and is anti-federalist." The other options are not mentioned, contradicted in the passage.

2. C) The passage indicates that the demarcation of power exists to "allow for specific roles for each representative across these tiers and suggests varied voter choices that could be based on party affiliation, candidate strength, ideological positions or simple socio-economic reasons specific to each constituency."

3. **C. Because there is no definitive study showing that simultaneous elections would lead to significant cost-saving.**

   The passage mentions that the proposal's rationale is based on a cost-cutting perspective, but it also states, "there is no study to prove that there will be significant cost-saving with simultaneous elections."

4. **B. It is solely to elect representatives for individual tiers, not to be a referendum on a singular leader or tier.**

   The passage clarifies that "the conduct of various elections at different points of time is to only elect representatives for these tiers and is not a referendum on just one tier or even an individual leader at every point of time." This emphasizes the primary goal of elections at different times, which is to elect representatives for their specific roles and not to gauge the popularity of a singular leader or tier.

5. **D. Critical**

   The passage consistently critiques the idea of 'one nation, one election' by highlighting potential flaws and concerns. Phrases like "militates against federalism and multi-tiered governance," "anti-federalist," and "flawed notion" underline the author's disapproval of the proposal.

6. **A) SQRP**

   S: It sets the context for what follows, which appears to be some controversy or conflict about **sand mining. Therefore, it is logical for this sentence to come first.**

   Q: After establishing the topic with Sentence S, Sentence Q offers a reason for the controversy by mentioning a specific action - "withdrew the free sand policy." The use of the pronoun "it" logically refers to a noun introduced previously, and in this case, "it" is most likely referring to the government or authority overseeing "Sand mining in Andhra Pradesh."

   R: This sentence further elaborates on the "accusations" mentioned in Sentence Q. The pronoun "it" in Sentence R refers back to the "YSR Congress Party government" from Sentence Q. The word "That" at the beginning of Sentence R indicates that it's continuing or specifying a

previously mentioned topic, in this case, the nature of the accusations against the YSR Congress Party government.

P: After discussing the accusations in Sentences Q and R, Sentence P specifies who is making these allegations, namely the "opposition Telugu Desam Party (TDP)."

7. D) **Philanthropist** (noun) – A person who seeks to promote the welfare of others, especially by the generous donation of money to good causes; one who loves mankind. मानवता प्रेमी

   - **Atheist** (noun) – a person who disbelieves or lacks belief in the existence of God or gods अनीश्वरवादी
   - **Pessimist** (noun) – thinking that bad things are more likely to happen or emphasizing the bad part of a situation निराशावादी
   - **Optimist** (noun) – someone who always believes that good things will happen आशावादी

8. A) The INCORRECTLY spelled word among the options is **'Allimony'**. The correct spelling of the word is 'Alimony', which means "a financial support that a person is ordered by a court to give to their spouse during separation or following divorce" 'गुजारा भत्ता'

9. A) **Judicious** (adjective) – Having, showing, or done with good judgment or sense; wise, thoughtful, prudent. विवेकी

   Synonym: Sensible (adjective) – Reasonable, practical, rational, logical. समझदार

   - **Imprudent** (adjective) – Not showing care for the consequences of an action; rash, unwise. अविवेकी
   - **Careless** (adjective) – Not giving sufficient attention or thought to avoiding harm or errors; negligent, inattentive. बेपरवाह
   - **Short**-sighted (adjective) – Lacking imagination or foresight; narrow-minded, lacking in foresight. दृष्टिहीन

10. A) **'Route'** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि पूरे संदर्भ में, sentence आपके कार्यालय पहुंचने का मार्ग पूछ रहा है।

    - 'Route' should be used because in the entire context, the sentence is asking about the path you usually take to reach your office.

11. D) **Extol** (verb) – Praise enthusiastically, laud, celebrate, acclaim. स्तुति

    Synonym: Praise (verb) – Express warm approval or admiration of, commend, applaud, salute. प्रशंसा

    - **Reward** (verb) – Give something in recognition of service, effort, achievement. पुरस्कार
    - **Punish** (verb) – Inflict a penalty or sanction on someone as retribution for an offense, crime or wrong. सजा

- **Dismay** (verb) – Cause someone to feel distress, consternation, disappointment. निराशा

12. A) **Preface** (noun) – A preliminary statement in a book by the book's author or editor, setting forth its purpose and scope, expressing acknowledgment of assistance from others, etc. प्रस्तावना

- **Foreword** – An introductory note or passage in a book that is usually written by someone other than the author, typically someone famous or respected in the field. भूमिका

- **Bibliography** (noun) – A list of the books, articles, etc., that are mentioned in a text, or a list of the books, articles, etc., that have been used by someone when writing a particular book or article. संदर्भसूची

- **Biography** (noun) – A written account of another person's life. जीवनी

13. C) The victims of the violence were treated very carefully by the doctor

14. B) **BCDA**

    He sat in his seat beside the bed, gazing sternly what they were saying to him hardly showing any signs of hearing what they were saying to him.

15. D) **'Recession'** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि पूरे संदर्भ में, sentence में economic business activities में गिरावट के समय को वर्णित कर रहा है, जिसमें कई कंपनियां दिवालिया हो जाती हैं।

- 'Recession' should be used because in the entire context, the sentence is describing a period of decline in economic business activities, during which many companies go bankrupt. Here, through "Hundreds of firms went bankrupt during the __", it portrays that economic downturn. Thus, "recession" would be the most appropriate choice.

16. A) **'Emission'** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि "emission" का अर्थ होता है गैस या धुएं का उत्सर्जन, जो यहाँ पर ग्रीनहाउस गैसों की बढ़ोतरी से संबंधित है। 'Feeding' का अर्थ होता है खिलाना, 'Creation' का अर्थ है निर्मित करना, और 'Fertilization' का अर्थ है उर्वरक लगाना, जो इस संदर्भ में सही नहीं है।

- 'Emission' should be used because it means the release of gas or smoke, which is related to the increase of greenhouse gases in this context. Whereas, 'Feeding' means to nourish, 'Creation' means to make, and 'Fertilization' implies adding fertilizers, which don't fit in this context

17. B) **'Imbalance'** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि "imbalance" का अर्थ होता है प्राकृतिक परिस्थितियों में असंतुलन या विषमता। जलवायु परिवर्तन के कारण जैविक प्रणाली में विकृतियां हो रही हैं, जिससे प्राकृतिक पर्यावरण में असंतुलन उत्पन्न हो रहा है। जबकि 'Despondence' का अर्थ है निराशा, 'Hunger' का अर्थ है भूख, और 'Creativity' का अर्थ है रचनात्मकता, जो इस संदर्भ में सही नहीं है।

- 'Imbalance' should be used because it means a lack of balance or disproportion in natural conditions. Climate change is causing distortions in the biological system, leading to an imbalance in the natural environment. Whereas, 'Despondence' means despair, 'Hunger'

means a need for food, and 'Creativity' implies inventiveness, which don't fit in this context.

18. C) **'Communities'** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि sentence में बात उन समुदायों की है जो समुद्र-स्तर में वृद्धि और जलवायु परिवर्तन के कारण स्थानांतरित हो रहे हैं। 'Mobs' एक बड़े समूह को सूचित करता है, 'People' सामान्य जनसंख्या को सूचित करता है, और 'Conditions' स्थितियों को सूचित करता है, जो इस context में सही नहीं है।
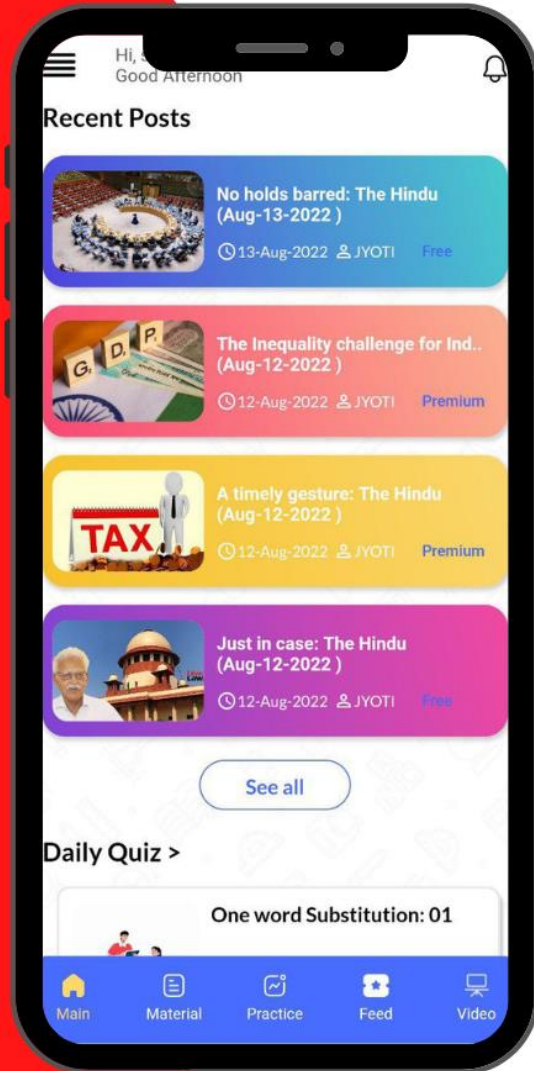
   - 'Communities' should be used because the sentence refers to those groups of people who are being displaced due to sea-level rise and climate change. 'Mobs' indicates a large crowd, 'People' denotes the general population, and 'Conditions' refers to circumstances, which are not suitable in this context

19. B) famine का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि "famine" का अर्थ होता है अकाल। 'Pregnancy' का अर्थ होता है गर्भावस्था, 'overpopulation' का अर्थ होता है अत्यधिक जनसंख्या, और 'surgery' का अर्थ होता है शल्य चिकित्सा, जो इस context में सही नहीं है

   Option 'B' (famine) should be chosen as it means scarcity of food, which appropriately fits in the context.

20. C) **'Irreversible'** का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि "irreversible" का अर्थ होता है जो अपरिवर्तनीय होता है, अर्थात् किसी परिस्थिति या स्थिति को जिसे वापस नहीं किया जा सकता। 'Heart breaking' का अर्थ होता है दिल को दुखाने वाला, 'Contradictory' का अर्थ होता है विरोधपूर्ण, और 'Conditional' का अर्थ होता है शर्तमुक्त, जो इस संदर्भ में सही नहीं है।

   - **'Irreversible'** should be used because it means something that cannot be changed back, which fits in the context. 'Heart breaking' means causing great sadness, 'Contradictory' means conflicting, and 'Conditional' means subject to a condition, which are not suitable in this context.